THE AMBIVALENT ALLY. FRANCE, NATO, AND THE LIMITS OF INDEPENDENCE 1981-1992

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THESIS

Abstract

The Ambivalent Ally: France, Nato and the Limits of Independence, 1981-1992
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My research examines the degree to which France was able to define an autonomous policy towards Nato in the period 1981-1992. In so doing, it addresses three central questions. What was the nature of French Alliance policy? To what extent did it prove capable of achieving the goals set for it by French policy makers? What constraints, if any, acted upon Alliance policy? My research, therefore, is intended to not only provide a detailed account of French Alliance policies, but also to offer a critical assessment of those policies, and explanation as to why they took the form they did.

The thesis argues that French Alliance policy under Mitterrand displayed a marked continuity with the policies of his predecessors. However, whilst de Gaulle in particular had managed to reap substantial benefits from a policy involving non-integration into Nato military commands, a policy of 'independence' proved increasingly inappropriate as a means of achieving the goals set by French officials. A rapidly shifting international situation, along with a deteriorating domestic economic capacity to maintain an autonomous defence posture, rendered the traditional options of French Alliance policy increasingly dysfunctional.

Based on this, the thesis goes on to illustrate the fact that the failure of policy to adapt to profoundly altered circumstances can be attributed to factors within France. Both the prevalent belief system in France - the so-called consensus on defence and foreign policy - and the nature of the policy-making process acted in such a way as to restrict the possibility of policy adaptation. Based on these findings, the thesis concludes by making some observations as to the limitations of many of the theories which deal with foreign policy.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my superviser, Dr. Vincent Wright, whose intelligence and sharp tongue have enabled me to complete this thesis. The thesis itself I dedicate to my parents with my grateful thanks.

'avec votre manie de l'indépendance à tout prix, vous finissez toujours par faire le contraire de ce que vous voulez'. Benjamin Constant, *Adolphe*

'Foreign and domestic policy are like siamese twins - one cannot survive without the other'. Richard Nixon, *The Independent*, 12 March 1993.

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PART ONE
FRANCE, FRENCH SOCIALISM, AND NATO
1958-1981

INTRODUCTION

The basic questions This thesis seeks to analyse the nature and major determinants of French policy towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation under the Presidency of François Mitterrand. In so doing, it has a threefold aim. Firstly, to analyse French Alliance policy and its major strands. Secondly, to examine the various constraints and pressures - domestic and international - that impinge upon that policy, and how they affect those separate strands. Finally, to consider the theoretical implications of my findings. That is to say, what do they indicate about the literature on the determinants of foreign policy in general?

The Empirical Problematic Empirically, the thesis aims to provide the first detailed analysis of the Alliance policy of François Mitterrand. Although certain works deal with this area, none has devoted much space to it.[1] Other works that address the theme are often simply politically inspired diatribes that verge on the polemic, rather than balanced assessments of the polices in question.[2] Moreover, my work intends not only to carry out an examination of Alliance policies, but also to *explain* why such policies were pursued. It goes beyond simple description, therefore, to analysis, something again which the published sources usually fail to do.

The analysis of Alliance policy, and the search for the determinants of that policy will enable the thesis to make some additional points concerning the implications of its findings for existing theories which purport to explain foreign policy outputs.

The Theoretical Problematic Both international relations and political science have tended to underplay, if not ignore, the role of domestic factors in foreign policy formulation. This is partly explicable by a common desire, amongst both analysts and practitioners, to view foreign policy as somehow distinct from other policy sectors. As William Wallace has pointed out, theorists from Hobbes to Locke and beyond have embraced the view of foreign policy as special; moreover, in 'almost all democratic countries there is a widely-held belief that foreign policy ought to be insulated from the rough-and-tumble of domestic debate, that bipartisan policies should be sought

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[1] The best two works detailing French relations with Nato are M. Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, and F. Bozo, *La France et l'OTAN: de la Guerre Froide au Nouvel Ordre Européen*, Paris, Masson, 1991. Whilst the former deals only with the subject up until the late 1970's, the latter, by virtue of its wide chronological scope, devotes only limited space to the Mitterrand Presidency.

[2] See, notably, H. Claude, *Mitterrand ou l'Atlanticisme Masqué*, Paris, Éditions Sociales, 1986, and G. Robin, *La Diplomatie de Mitterrand ou le Triomphe des Apparences*, Paris, Éditions de la Bièvre, 1985.

by both government and opposition, that politics should stop at the water's edge; that continuity in foreign policy, wherever possible, should be ensured even when governments change.'[3]

This is reflected in the paucity of political science literature dealing with questions of defence and foreign policy: 'Foreign policy phenomena are the unwanted stepchildren of political systems'.[4] In many instances, text books dealing with the political process in various states will not contain even a reference in the index to these policy sectors. Even when scholars do turn their attention in this direction, it is often merely to underline the 'separateness' of external relations from the normal policy-making processes. Sonia Mazey, for instance, contrasts the constraints which act upon domestic policy formulation with the relative freedom of manoeuvre enjoyed by policy makers in the foreign policy sphere: '[The] rationalist view of the French policy-style in the Fifth Republic may be applicable to certain policy-areas such as foreign policy where governments traditionally enjoy more latitude, and where it is possible to discern a distinctive Gaullist strategy after 1958.'[5] The problem of an excessive focus on the capacities of the executive is particularly acute in the case of France, where the introduction of the 1958 Constitution led scholars to concentrate on enhanced executive influence in all areas.[6]

Theories on foreign policy range in nature from structural theories, which regard the international system as the chief explanatory factor of international outcomes, in order to arrive at parsimonious general theories of world politics,[7] to more detailed studies of foreign policy processes within single states, suggesting internal structures as the crucial explanatory factors. This kind of unit-level study has been somewhat ignored in recent years, despite much early progress in the field,

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[3] W. Wallace, *Foreign Policy and the Political Process*, London, Macmillan, 1971, pp. 9-10.

[4] J. Rosenau cited in Wallace, op. cit., pg. 41. Note also Jack Hayward's comment that in 'domestic affairs, the policy process is discussed frequently but the policies themselves are generally neglected, whereas in foreign affairs the policies are described and assessed *ad nauseam* but the policy process is seldom investigated.' Jack Hayward, *Governing France: the One and Indivisible Republic*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1983. This in turn contributes to the tendency inherent in much of the published work on foreign policy to deal with that policy as a set of responses to international criteria.

[5] S. Mazey, 'Public Policy-Making in France: the Art of the Possible', *West European Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3, July 1986, pg. 418.

[6] '....if one compares French political and administrative practice with that of any other advanced industrial society, it still seems true that in the boldness of governmental policy innovation and the resolution with which it is implemented, the French state stands out as distinctly assertive'. J. Hayward, op. cit., pg. 119. See also V. Wright, *The Governments and Politics of France*, London, Routledge, Third Edition, 1992.

[7] See for example K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics,* New York, Random House, 1979.

which produced interesting results.[8] Certainly, recent concentration has tended to be on structural, systemic level theories, despite the weaknesses that these are admitted to possess.[9]

Traditional international relations theories tend to deal with a world in which international politics is the politics between unitary states, concerned mainly with the pursuit of - primarily military - power, and acting on the basis of rational appraisals of shifting international situations. It was in the context of such interactions that 'black-box' models of homogenous nation-states competing in an anarchical international system were developed.[10] Realist theories have posited the 'striking sameness of international life for millennia'.[11] Traditional analyses of international relations, which define the state in purely territorial terms,[12] claim that the nature of these relations can be explained with reference only to the international environment in which states operate. The nature of the international system, in particular the lack of any overarching sovereign authority, is held to necessitate certain forms of international behaviour on the part of its constituent units - states.

The common thread linking these two schools of the social sciences is an implicit or explicit belief in the possibility of 'rational' action in the foreign and defence policy domains.[13] Realism, and particularly its newer variant of neorealism, explicitly posit foreign policy as being made up of a set of rational responses to shifting international imperatives. Rationality serves as an implicit element, for instance, of Kenneth Waltz's ideas concerning the relative stability of bipolar international systems.[14]

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[8] See in particular R. Snyder, H. Bruck, and B. Sapin, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Relations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954, G. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Boston, Brown, 1971, and M. Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1974.

[9] See I. Bell, *'Foreign Policy Analysis, International Relations Theory, and Social theory: Critique and Reconstruction* Canberra, Australian National University Working Paper 1991/4, 1991, pp. 3-5.

[10] See the discussion in Edward Morse, *Modernisation and the Transformation of International Relations*, New York, Macmillan, 1976, pp. 22-46.

[11] K. Waltz, op. cit., pg. 66.

[12] For an account of the nature of the state in International Relations theory, see F. Halliday, 'State and Society in International Relations: A Second Agenda', in H. Dyer and L. Mangasarian (eds.), *The Study of International Relations: the State of the Art*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 40-59.

[13] For a discussion of the notion of rationality in international relations, see S. Verba, 'Assumptions of Rationality and Non-Rationality in Models of the International System', in J. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy* New York, Free Press, 1969.

[14] Op. cit., pp. 161-193

The absence of domestic constraints implied by rationality evokes the image of statesmen enjoying the freedom to make foreign policy decisions based on international requirements alone, and acting on the basis of carefully ordered preferences and excellent information. In this way, both traditional theories of international relations, and much political science would (implicitly in the latter case) tend to opt for the systemic level of analysis rather than that of the nation-state as the focus for attention.[15]

All this is not to say that theory has failed completely to tackle the domestic determinants of foreign policy. As pointed out earlier, the discipline of international relations did, at one stage, move towards the sub-discipline of foreign policy analysis as a means of explaining foreign policy outputs. Yet progress has been distinctly limited. Apart from the relative paucity of material in the field, there is also the fact that most of the literature deals solely with the United States as a case study, and thus is of relatively little use for other countries. In attempting this work, one of my aims has been to contribute to this literature with a case study on France, a country very much understudied in this manner (not least because of the emphasis placed on a supposedly all-powerful executive). Those studies which have tackled the domestic dimension of foreign and defence policy in this domain have tended to be somewhat anecdotal, failing to address the central theoretical issues raised in the American literature.[16] A further ambition has been to provide an analysis of *non-crisis* decision-making. Most of the foreign policy analysis literature tends to deal with situations of crisis, which are characterised by certain decision-making processes that do not characterise 'routine' policy making.[17]

Methodology The thesis is organised in such a way as to facilitate both an empirical study of the vital elements of French Alliance policy, an analysis of it, and an investigation of the major explanatory factors which lay behind it.

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[15] For an excellent analysis of the 'level of analysis' question, see J. Singer, 'The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations', in K. Knorr and S. Verba (eds.), *The International System: Theoretical Essays*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961, pp. 77-92.

[16] French works in particular tend to be highly informative, packed with empirical detail, but lacking in analysis. See notably, for excellent source material on the Mitterrand Presidency, P. Favier and M. Martin Roland, *La Décennie Mitterrand*, (2 vols.), Paris, Seuil, 1990 (vol. 1), 1991, (vol. 2), and J. Guisnel, *Les Généraux: Enquête sur le Pouvoir Militaire en France*, Paris, Éditions de la Découverte, 1990. Another informative account of decision making, again crammed with useful empirical material, is S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire: les Coulisses de la Politique Étrangère sous la V^e^ République*, Paris, Hachette, 1985.

[17] See W. Wallace, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

Part One identifies both the major strands of Alliance policy under Mitterrand's immediate predecessors, and the policy choices, and methods of policy formulation, of the *Parti Socialiste* (PS) prior to its electoral success in May 1981. In so doing, it provides both a historical backdrop - a state-of-play analysis of policy prior to 1981 - and an analysis of how Mitterrand and his supporters hoped to alter the historical legacy bequeathed to them. The importance of this section is that it will allow both a discussion of the changes - if any - made by the Socialist President, and a comparison of these with his intentions prior to May 1981, thereby facilitating a discussion of the determinants of policy.

The structure of the thesis highlights its aim of identifying key variables and their relationship. I have deliberately avoided a chronological approach to the analysis of French Alliance policy in Part Two. Chapter Three is intended as a very brief chronological survey, which highlights the major events of relevance during the period, though it is of course far from exhaustive. Chapters Four, Five, and Six tease out the main constituent elements of that policy. The three major strands of Alliance policy analysed in the three following Chapters are: relations with the superpowers and the notion of national independence; French military strategy - in particular as it related to the defence of Central and Northern Europe; and the issue of relations with the other West European states in general, and of some form of European defence organisation in particular.

I preferred a thematic approach for two major reasons. First, this avoids the problem of repetition, and also makes the subject clearer by dealing separately with the main themes of the policy under consideration. Second, a thematic approach makes it much easier to identify the effects of certain constraints and pressures on certain specific strands of the overall policy under consideration. Thus, whilst it will be shown that Alliance policy as a whole is often contradictory and incoherent, my analysis will be able to examine which particular strand of that policy is most so, and which determining factors act upon it most strongly at any given moment.

Part Three examines in detail the two crucial factors which explain the nature of Alliance policy during this period. Chapter Seven examines the so-called domestic consensus on defence and foreign policy, investigating both its nature, and the effects its proclaimed presence had on French Alliance policy during the period. Chapter Eight investigates the nature of the policy-making processes which characterised the sphere of Alliance policy. In particular, it analyses the limits to Presidential freedom of manoeuvre in foreign and defence policy, and those forces which acted as constraints upon him.

The major conclusions of the thesis can be roughly divided into five areas. First, with regard to the analysis in Part One, it is shown how, although the policies of de Gaulle and his successors displayed a remarkable continuity, and despite the fact that broad agreement concerning the *lignes directrices* of Alliance policy existed amongst leading political groups, the policy agenda of the PS in opposition encompassed a questioning of some of the fundamental elements of that policy.

Yet, secondly, Alliance policy during the years between 1981 and 1992 displayed a remarkable degree of continuity with that of previous administrations. The Mitterrand Presidency did not tackle the fundamental tensions and ambiguities contained within Alliance policy that the PS had pointed out during its time in opposition. Policy under Mitterrand certainly vacillated somewhat between declarations of solidarity with Atlantic and European partners and affirmations of national independence. Yet, if anything, such hesitations and apparent uncertainty served merely to underline the very tensions that remained at the root of French policy options.

Part Two also attempts a critical assessment of the ability of policy to fulfil its objectives. This assessment constitutes the third major conclusion of the thesis. French Alliance policy was founded on two major premises: that national independence was a necessary central element of French foreign policy, as a *sine qua non* of the achievement of *grandeur* in international politics, and this was precluded by integration within Nato military commands; and, secondly, that an independent military posture assured the security primarily of France, but also contributed to the overall security of Western Europe. Chapters Four, Five and Six illustrate the manner in which French policy proved progressively less able to fulfil its goals, becoming, rather, increasingly *dysfunctional*. This dysfunctionality was increasingly perceived by French political and military elites who came to press for a 'Europeanisation' of security structures in Europe. The fundamental tension between claimed national independence and military autonomy on the one hand, and such a 'Europeanisation' on the other represented a central problem that policy makers failed to overcome. Policy thus failed to adapt in response to the counter-productive nature of Alliance policy, which increasingly failed to achieve the goals set for it.

Both the failure of the Socialist administration to implement any of the changes it had propounded prior to 1981, and the increasing dysfunctionality of Alliance policy, especially towards the end of the 1980's raise the question of why Alliance policy took the form it did. The fourth major conclusion of the thesis, arrived at in Part Three, is that the lack of policy adaptation owed much to internal factors within France. In particular, the effects of the claimed consensus on defence and

foreign policy, and of the policy-making processes that characterised Alliance policy during the period hampered effective French responses to the changing imperatives of a shifting geostrategic landscape, and increased financial pressures on defence budgets.

Finally, the thesis casts doubt on the validity of those theories which stress the hypothesis of rational responses to shifting international pressures. If Part Two illustrated the fact that shifting international and domestic economic forces necessitated policy adaptation, Part Three revealed that such adaptation was prevented by domestic pressures. Those realist and political science theorists who posit the freedom of manoeuvre of the French executive in foreign (and domestic) policy are, therefore, shown to be mistaken. The examination of the specifically French internal pressures at work form a contribution to the foreign policy analysis literature, which should help attempts at comparative study, whilst revealing the limitations of more general comparative works which fail to do justice to the complexities revealed by this particular case study.

The problems facing the analyst stem from a surfeit, rather than any lack, of sources. Various collections of documents contain all the speeches and declarations made on foreign policy and defence matters,[18] whilst speeches made at the *Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale* (IHEDN) - a popular place for enunciations of defence doctrine - are reproduced in full in the monthly periodical *Défense Nationale*.

However, whilst declaratory policy is rather over-documented, one obvious problem facing the analyst is the fact that the actual relations between France and its allies - that is to say military agreements and cooperation accords - are all classified as confidential, and are, therefore, either inaccessible, or cannot be cited. The problem of secrecy is a real one, and is compounded by the fact that not only is some information kept classified because of its *militarily* significant nature, but much material is also kept away from public scrutiny because of the political importance attached to the maintenance of apparent continuity with what many believe to have been the legacy of Charles de Gaulle. The fact that most research institutes and French defence specialists acquiesce rather meekly in this state of affairs obviously does not help the analyst. I have tried merely to reproduce as accurately as possible the facts as they stand (being in possession of documents I am

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[18] The most notable amongst these being the Ministry of Defence's monthly publication Ministère de la Défense, *Propos sur la Défense*, Paris, SIRPA (started in 1988); the annual internal Foreign Ministry Collection, P. Dahan (ed.), *Questions Politico-Militaires (prises de positions récentes et documents)*, Paris, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, and the bimonthly *La Politique Étrangère de la France: Textes et Documents*, Paris, La Documentation Française. In addition to these extensive collections, the various Ministries, and the Élysée Palace itself produce press statements providing the full texts of major speeches and declarations.

unable to cite), without the use of classified material.

A final word on interviews. I have carried out over forty of these, with officials from the Matignon, Élysée, Defence and Foreign Ministries, as well as with former Chiefs of the General Staff, other military figures, and representatives of all the major political tendencies. Obviously, interviews cannot be guaranteed as representing accurate interpretation, or even recollection of facts, and I am aware of this limitation. However, in an area shrouded by so much secrecy and ambiguity they offer a useful insight into the subject.

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

Part One comprises two Chapters and has a twofold aim: in the first place to outline the Alliance policies pursued by France from the inception of the Fifth Republic in 1958, with a view to illustrating the policy legacy bequeathed to François Mitterrand in 1981. Secondly, to examine the development of Socialist policies with regard to the Alliance, and the way in which these policies were formulated.

Part One thus sets the scene for the subsequent parts of the work. Not only does it supply a background to the period which the major section of the thesis seeks to analyse, but it also provides a form of yardstick against which to evaluate the nature of Alliance policies after 1981. Hence, the thesis will analyse not only the ways - if any - in which Alliance policy diverged from that pursued under previous Presidents, but also the issue of whether Alliance policy after 1981 coincided with the policies propounded by Mitterrand and the Socialist movement prior to his accession to the Élysée in May 1981. Such comparisons between intentions and actions will prove useful for the overall task of explaining the nature of Alliance policy, in that they will give an indication of the areas of policy on which constraints operated in such a way as to impede adaptation.

CHAPTER ONE
THE LEGACY OF THE PAST.
FRANCE, NATO AND THE ALLIANCE 1958-1981

What was the heritage bequeathed by the three first Presidents of the Fifth Republic to their Socialist successor? What were the main strands that comprised the Alliance policy inherited by François Mitterrand? These are the questions addressed by this chapter. It will outline a policy locked into a series of contradictions and ambiguities, though one which, for much of the period prior to 1981, provided considerable benefits for France.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the pre-1981 legacy of French relations with the Alliance and Nato.[1] This stems from two sources. Firstly, the nature of Alliance policy - the agreements and understandings reached between France and its allies - was obviously something that would influence the new Socialist leadership. Secondly, this legacy also took the form of a set of ideas outlined in numerous public declarations and speeches, which in many cases ignored, and even contradicted the reality of policy. Yet, owing to the high profile of declared policy, and the fact that agreements signed with the allies were classified as 'confidential', and, therefore, received only scant media coverage at home and abroad, rhetoric was often far more influential than policies in determining interpretations of Alliance policy both inside and outside France.

This Chapter will address the questions raised above by analysing in turn the major strands of French Alliance policy. The concepts of national independence and *grandeur*, which lay at the heart of the French rationale for policies pursued towards Nato, will be investigated, followed by an examination of the major elements of French Alliance policy. These were the rhetoric and actual policies of the first three Presidents of the Republic towards both the Alliance and Nato, and the defence policy of France, which determined its attitude towards the possibility of hostilities in Europe. Finally, in the concluding section of the Chapter, the success or otherwise of policy in achieving the goals set for it by policy makers is considered.

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[1] Paris has traditionally drawn a distinction between the Atlantic Alliance, based on the Washington Treaty of 1949, and Nato, created between 1949 and 1954, with its integrated military commands, usually stressing complete fidelity to the former, whilst distancing itself from the latter. As will be discussed later, the distinction is not a completely convincing one.

The Pretensions and the Policies

Relations with the superpowers: National Independence Of all the ideas associated with French Alliance policy, the concept of national independence was the most frequently reiterated. The writings and pronouncements of General de Gaulle in particular were permeated by references to the necessity of a France 'with free hands', acting according to its own interests, unfettered by externally imposed constraints wherever possible.

According to the General's own definition, independence 'means that we ourselves decide on what we have to do and with whom, without its being imposed by any other state and by any other collective body.'[2] Independence required France to remain free of any kind of 'subordination' which could prevent the decision-making bodies of the state from basing their decisions primarily on a consideration of French interests. This did not constitute a rejection of existing political situations, for, as de Gaulle's Foreign Minister pointed out, 'independence is not the disregard of realities'[3]. But the notion of independence *did* preclude supranational integration, as undermining the autonomy and integrity of national policy decisions.[4]

Central to the perceived need for independence was an antipathy towards the prevailing bipolar international order.[5] This was perceived as both unable to guarantee the security, or make provision for the interests of third states, whilst being itself fundamentally illegitimate. De Gaulle made clear his objections to superpower domination in a press conference of 28 October 1966:

> A....situation in which the two super-states alone had arms capable of annihilating all other countries, alone possessed, through deterrence, the means of assuring their own security, alone held the peoples of their camps in obedience....could only, in the long term, paralyse and sterilise the rest of the world by placing it either under the hammer of a crushing competition or under the yoke of a double hegemony.[6]

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[2] De Gaulle, press conference, 28 October, 1966. Cited in M. Harrison, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

[3] M. Couve de Murville, *Une Politique Étrangère 1958-1969*, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1971, pg. 481.

[4] See S. Hoffmann, *Decline or Renewal?: France Since the 1930s*, New York, Viking Press, 1974, pg. 283. See also the discussion by L. Poirier, 'Le deuxième circle', in *Essais de Stratégie Théorique*, Paris, FEDN, 1983, pp. 292-293.

[5] For a detailed if somewhat inaccessibly written discussion of this, see E. Kolodziej, 'Revolt and revisionism in the Gaullist global vision: an analysis of French strategic policy', *Journal of Politics*, 33 (2), 1971, pp. 448-477.

[6] Cited in L. Radoux, *La France et l'OTAN*, Western European Union Assembly, 13th ordinary session, Paris, June 1967, pg. 89.

Antagonism towards bipolarity translated itself into rhetorical and practical attempts to claim that France represented a separate pole of a nascent multipolarity. In October 1966, de Gaulle portrayed France as being somehow apart from the bipolar bloc system,[7] whilst his former Prime Minister, Michel Debré, stated that 'non-alignment remains the foundation [of our position]'.[8] The same point was underlined by Giscard d'Estaing who, during the Polish crisis of 1980, refused any western summit-type meeting, declaring that any 'meeting which would have as a consequence the appearance of any bloc attitudes in the present situation will not be attended by France.'[9]

In order to add credence to the declaratory expression of non-alignment, French policy often showed itself to be preoccupied with the notion of attempting to appear non-partisan during inter-bloc disputes. During the Berlin and Cuban crises de Gaulle had been the first among the Western leaders to align himself firmly with the western camp, but such instances of solidarity became rarer as greater emphasis was placed - in word and deed - on the concept of independent non-alignment. Thus, Giscard d'Estaing would not publicly declare his support for the Nato 'double decision' of 1979. The critique of bipolarity implied a refusal to treat either the Soviet Union or the United States on the basis of orthodox Cold War rationales. Giscard d'Estaing showed during his Presidency that this implied that relations with one superpower would not be influenced by those with the other, and thus attempted to bring about a *rapprochement* with both, even after the invasion of Afghanistan.

Independence was the end to which withdrawal from military integration was to be a means. Independence in itself was a necessary condition for the accomplishment of the other goal set themselves by French Presidents - that of a world role and international prestige for France.

A World Role Linked to the notion of non-alignment and independence was that of *grandeur*, which de Gaulle had associated with power, as 'international recognition of France's importance was the indispensable compensation for a decline in power in real terms'.[10] Of the three first

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[7] See L. Radoux, op. cit., pg.89.

[8] *Le Monde*, 14 December, 1971.

[9] Quoted in M. Tatu, *Eux et Nous: les Relations Est-Ouest entre deux détentes*, Paris, Fayard, 1985, pg. 125.

[10] M. Harrison, op. cit., pg. 53.

Presidents of the Fifth Republic, it was the General who was the most preoccupied by this notion.[11] Michel Debré noted that Pompidou's interest in the concept was limited,[12] yet official policy under him still reflected the General's preoccupation with it.[13] Giscard d'Estaing referred to *grandeur* less than had de Gaulle, but it is interesting to note that in his election manifesto of 1974, he wrote that:

> If I am elected, I will maintain the dignity and independence of France, which the last two Presidents have given it. I will make it into a country which is....respected.[14]

France was thus to be an influential member of the international community. In particular, when combined with opposition to existing bipolarity, it could play the role of arbiter between the two existing blocs. By fulfilling this function, not only would it be performing a service of value to all third nations, by increasing the stability of an otherwise dangerously unstable world;[15] it would also be helping to overcome the Cold War.[16] In similar vein, it was argued that arms transfers to the third world were justifiable, in that they helped to undermine bipolarity.[17]

Such a role necessitated independence, however, and could hardly be fulfilled from within the heart of an American-dominated integrated military organisation.

...if there was a voice that might be listened to and a policy that might be effective

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[11] To a large extent, the General's concern with *grandeur* stemmed from resentment at the perceived exclusion of France from crucial international negotiations. In particular, he had been angered by the fact that France was not present at the Yalta talks during the Second World War. International prestige was to serve as a means for preventing such exclusion in the future, and ensuring that France's voice would be heard. The word 'Yalta' was to take on a particular meaning in French rhetoric, conjuring up images of superpower attempts to regulate international affairs, attempts which France, through the achievement of *grandeur* for itself, would be in a position to foil.

[12] Interview with former Prime Minister Michel Debré, Paris, 1991.

[13] In particular, Debré himself in his writings and speeches was to stress the ideas of *grandeur* and rank. See, for example, 'La Politique Nationale de Défense', *Défense Nationale*, 26, December 1970, pg. 1771.

[14] Cited in A. Grosser, *Affaires Extérieures: La Politique de la France 1944-1989*, Paris, Flammarion, 1989, pg. 256.

[15] See de Gaulle, press conference at the Élysée, November 10, 1959. Cited in J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle: Tome 3, Le Souverain*, Paris, Seuil, 1986, pp. 458-459.

[16] See de Gaulle's press conference of 28 October 1966, cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

[17] See E. Kolodziej, *Making and Marketing Arms: the French Experience and Its Implications for the International System*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987, esp. pp. 59-61.

> with a view to setting up a new order to replace the Cold War, that voice and that policy were predominantly those of France. But only on the condition that they were really her own and that the hand she held out in friendship was free.[18]

De Gaulle had tried, in 1958, to achieve such a role in association with allies, by means of the memorandum of September, which he sent to President Eisenhower. Recognising relative French weakness at that time, he proposed the creation of a tripartite directorate (Britain, France and the United States) to oversee Western security interests. Once the demand for such an enlargement of the geographical competence of the Alliance had been refused, the General turned towards other solutions.[19]

Military Integration The most obvious facet of the Alliance policy of de Gaulle, Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing was that it centred around the concept of non-integration into the military organisation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. That is to say, no French forces were placed under supranational military command in peacetime, giving Paris alone the authority to decide where and when French forces would be engaged in any conflict in Europe. Further, France refused to allow the presence, on her soil, of allied troops or military sites.

The French critique of military integration, which was mainly formulated by de Gaulle in order to explain (and in some cases rationalise) his policy of withdrawal, was a wide-ranging one. Fundamental to it was the idea that dependence on others for national defence was dangerous, and hence that independence was a necessity. As de Gaulle stated in 1959:

> The defence of France must be French...If a country like France should be called upon to wage war, it must wage its own war...Naturally, the defence of France will be combined with that of other countries if necessary...but it is indispensable that France be responsible for its own defence, that it defend itself for its own ends, and in its own way.[20]

Édouard Balladur, former General Secretary of the Élysée described Pompidou's opinion on the reliability of a protector in the following way:

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[18] Cited in M. Harrison, op. cit, pg. 69.

[19] The text of the memorandum can be found in *Espoirs*, June 1976. See also de Gaulle's statements in his press conference of 5 September 1960, cited in Radoux, op.cit., pg. 28.

[20] Speech at the École Militaire, 3 November, 1959. Quoted in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 27.

> "A country in time of danger" he repeated "must count only on itself." Moves towards others must always be tempered by a certain lucidity: only the strong have allies, the others have only protectors who might prove unreliable.[21]

Reliance on others for one's own protection and security could prove ultimately disastrous, as it had so nearly done during the two World Wars.[22] Moreover, if a state entrusted the task of national defence to another organisation, it would lose its very *raison d'être*,[23] and weaken its authority over its armed forces. The aborted coup of 1961 helped to convince de Gaulle that a national defence was essential in order to ensure the loyalty of the troops:

> Since the insurrection in Algiers, I cannot rely on my generals and officers. That has to be changed, but loyalty can be restored only if the army and the officers know what they are fighting for, that is France; they cannot fight for, or be loyal to, some philosophical concept like Nato, and they cannot be loyal to some unknown American general or admiral.[24]

Integration also diminished the effectiveness of any forces placed outside national control, and was thus harmful to the security not only of each individual integrated country, but of the Alliance as a whole.[25] Foremost amongst the rationales for non-integration was the perceived need to ensure French independence, reinforced by the desire to achieve international status, or *grandeur*. A further ambition related to this - in that it promoted both independence and *grandeur* - was to equip France with its own independent nuclear deterrent force,[26] which in itself heightened the need for withdrawal from the integrated organisation because of differences that were bound to arise over

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[21] Cited in S. Rials, *Les Idées Politiques du Président Georges Pompidou*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1977, pp. 137-138.

[22] De Gaulle in particular was preoccupied with memories of the World Wars as proving that countries should take care of their own defence because of the unreliability of others. See J. Lacouture, op.cit., pg. 466.

[23] See de Gaulle's speech at the École Militaire, 3 November, 1959, cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 27.

[24] Cited by D. Stikker in 'France and its Diminishing Will to Cooperate', *Atlantic Community Quarterly*, 3, no. 2, summer 1965, pg. 201.

[25] See the remarks de Gaulle made in his press conference of 11 April, 1961, cited in H. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1965, pg. 52.

[26] For a good summary of the early stages of the French development of a nuclear capability, see C. Simon, *La Politique de Défense Nucléaire de la France depuis le départ du Général de Gaulle (1969-1990)*, Thèse pour le Doctorat en Droit, Université de Droit d'Economie et des Sciences d'Aix-Marseille, Faculté de Droit et de Science Politique, April 1991, pp. 14-52.

both command and control,[27] and deterrent doctrine more generally.[28] Importantly, given the achievement of parity by the Soviet Union, and the corresponding decrease in effectiveness of the American guarantee to Europe, independence coupled with a national nuclear force was claimed to provide greater security for France.[29] Indeed, at a stage when the nascent French *force de frappe* was conceived of merely in terms of fifty Mirage bombers, each carrying a single nuclear warhead, French leaders were willing to claim that, because of the geographical proximity that bound France to its European partners, the French nuclear force afforded a more efficient deterrent than the huge American arsenal.[30]

Military integration being unacceptable, and attempts to redefine Atlantic security structures having failed, de Gaulle, in a letter to President Johnson, dated 7 March 1966 declared his intention to:

> recover the full exercise of [French] sovereignty on its territory, currently hindered by the permanent presence of allied military forces, or by the use which is made of its sky....cease its participation in the integrated commands and no longer to put its forces at the disposal of Nato.[31]

The need for national defence precluded the acceptance of military integration. This position was accepted by both of the General's immediate successors. Pompidou's Defence Minister, Michel Debré, was unequivocal on the question of a possible return to the integrated military structure:

> It is a question which is discussed in the salons.... of Paris. It does not trouble any serious person involved in French or international politics. France has adopted a certain position , and no one asks that it should be changed. I mean no one. The page has been turned.[32]

Giscard d'Estaing too, though less abrasive in tone, and despite hopes among influential American

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[27] For an example of the importance the Americans attached to the need for one single centre of nuclear decisions, see H. Kissinger, op. cit., pg. 101.

[28] See J. Klein, 'La Stratégie de Dissuasion de la France et la Stratégie des États-Unis dans l'Alliance Atlantique', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, *L'Aventure de la Bombe: de Gaulle et la Dissuasion Nucléaire*, Paris, Plon, 1985, pp. 175-188.

[29] See various comments by de Gaulle in the press conferences of 15 May 1962, in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 29, and 14 January 1963, in ibid, pg. 30.

[30] See Pompidou's speech reprinted in *Le Monde,* 3 December 1964.

[31] Letter from de Gaulle to President Johnson, 7 March 1966, cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 47.

[32] Interview with *Europe 1*, quoted in *Le Monde*, 15 July, 1973.

circles that his election would eventually lead to French reintegration,[33] was equally adamant as to the need to preserve French control over its armed forces.[34]

Defiant rhetoric and the actions of 1966 had clearly defined French policy with regard to the integrated military organisation. It remains now to consider the major elements of French policy towards both the Atlantic Alliance, and Nato allies.

The Alliance The withdrawal from military integration was not accompanied by a decision to quit the Atlantic Alliance. French membership of this continued, with all the legal obligations this entailed. De Gaulle privately toyed with the idea of leaving the Alliance, sometimes going so far as to posit the latter's uselessness,[35] whilst some of his public statements led to increased speculation as to his plans with regard to the Washington Treaty.[36] In general, however, in both word and deed, he tended to imply that continued membership of the Alliance was essential.[37] The distinction between Alliance membership and participation in an integrated military organisation was made by Pompidou:

> Our relations with our allies are extremely important....we are faithful allies. We sincerely believe the Alliance is necessary to everyone, and in particular for French security, otherwise we would have left it. If France has remained within the Alliance, it is because it is indispensable. But our position is unique because we have a different conception of the Alliance, and consider that France, a nuclear power which is particularly exposed geographically, owes it to itself to have freedom of manoeuvre and of decision. As faithful allies and loyal partners we have a unique perception because we think that no one can assume our security in place of us, for that would be to abandon ourselves.[38]

Membership of the Alliance was never openly questioned by Paris prior to 1981. At a special ministerial session of the North Atlantic Council, in November 1968, Defence Minister Michel

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[33] Interview with General Georges Fricaud-Chagnaud, at the time French military liaison officer in Washington, Paris, 1991. The Giscard d'Estaing Presidency did, however, witness a new warmth, after the bitter rhetoric of the Jobert days, in relations between France and her Alliance partners. See, for example, *Le Monde*, 11 January 1975.

[34] In this respect, see noticeably the content of his 'fireside chat' of 25 March 1975, cited in *Le Monde*, 9 April 1975.

[35] See the conversation he had with Hervé Alphand, in May 1965, cited in J. Lacouture, op. cit., pp. 375-376.

[36] For instance his press conference of 21 February 1966, cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

[37] Importantly his note to President Johnson clearly stressed continued French adherence to the Washington Treaty. His last act of foreign policy was to sign a renewal of the Treaty.

[38] Speech at French Embassy in Brussels, cited in *Le Monde*, 27-28 May, 1971.

Debré underlined French commitment by signing a joint communiqué stressing the indispensability of the Alliance, whilst adding that, barring a radical change in East-West relations, 'the French government considers that the Alliance must continue as long as it appears to be necessary.'[39]

Nevertheless, from an allied point of view, the most serious aspect of the 1966 withdrawal was the possibility that France might not participate in the common defence. Although formal automaticity of engagement did not exist even within the integrated military organisation,[40] 'the supplemental arrangements made in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation have established institutions and procedures that in actual effect insure (sic) that the armed forces of the members of the Atlantic Alliance would be committed 'automatically' in the event of attack'.[41] As for the Alliance itself, Article Five of the Washington Treaty bound the interested parties to consider 'an armed attack against one or several of them as 'an attack directed against all' of them. In this event, each of the signatories would take 'such action as it judged necessary, including the use of armed force' to restore and maintain peace in the North Atlantic area.[42] Obviously, this stipulation failed to provide for automatic and meaningful military assistance. Paris, moreover, was sometimes equivocal with regard to French interpretation of the Treaty:

> When one is part of an Alliance,....the Alliance treaties indicate under what circumstances the member states will combine their defence forces; but naturally, there is always a question of judgement. For example, when the last war broke out, France had Alliance treaties with certain states and the government deliberated the question of whether the Alliance should come into play. This is now the case in the Atlantic Alliance.... France, no longer part of the integrated military forces, is part of an Alliance, as it has often been in the past, therefore it effectively has freedom to judge the conditions in which the clauses of the Alliance come into play.[43]

Less often mentioned, however, was the fact that French 'independence' with respect to military

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[39] See M. Harrison, op. cit., pg. 168.

[40] For details of the implications of integration as far as automaticity is concerned, see F. de Rose, *La France et la défense de l'Europe*, Paris, Seuil, 1976, pp. 27-28, and F. Bozo, op. cit., pg. 35.

[41] C. Amme Jr., *Nato without France: A strategic appraisal*, Stanford, The Hoover Institution, 1967, fn. 4, pg. 191.

[42] In L. Freedman, (ed.), *Europe Transformed: Documents on the end of the Cold War*, London, Tri-Service Press, 1990, pp. 14-17. This work contains lengthy extracts from both the Washington and Brussels treaties.

[43] Giscard d'Estaing in an interview on *Antenne 2*, 12 November, 1975, cited in R. Tourrain, *Rapport d'Information N°. 1730 déposé en application de l'article 145 du Règlement par la Commission de la Défense Nationale et des forces armées sur l'état et la modernisation des forces nucléaires françaises*, Paris, National Assembly, 22 May 1980, pp. 27-28.

engagement in Europe was severely limited - to the point of implying automaticity of engagement - by two other formal agreements. Article Four of the Brussels Treaty, of which France was a signatory, made intervention automatic in the case of armed aggression against a member of the Western European Union.[44] Another case in which automatic French commitment was required was West Berlin, whose security was entrusted to the Four Powers.[45]

Automaticity was implicit in at least two of the three European Alliance Treaties to which France was a signatory, yet its leaders claimed they had achieved autonomy of decision. However, successive French Presidents continued to make joint plans and carry out military manoeuvres with their allies.

Cooperation and Operational Planning France continued to participate in the technical weapons development group at The Hague, whilst ties to the Nato Air Defence Ground Environment (NADGE) alert system were retained.[46] Nor did non-integration preclude the signing of further agreements between France and its allies. Indeed, if the obligations of the Alliance Treaty were to be effectively honoured, French and allied action needed to be carefully planned and coordinated. As one Air Force General has written:

> ....the aim of the General was that [French forces] could be engaged efficiently beside the allies, with the shortest possible delay, as soon as the government had so decided. That implies above all that there are, starting in peace time, appropriate links and continual exchanges of information.[47]

It was not long, therefore, before the French began secret discussions with the allies concerning cooperation in times of crisis or war.

Between 22 November 1966 and February 1967, a series of meetings occurred between French Chief of Staff General Charles Ailleret, and the then Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

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[44] 'If any of the High Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting Parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, afford the party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power.' L. Freedman, op. cit., pg. 12.

[45] For a fuller (and as far as I am aware the only) discussion of this point, see D. Yost, *France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe Part 1: Capabilities and doctrine*, Adelphi Paper 194, London, IISS, 1984, pp. 10-11.

[46] See M. Harrison, op. cit., pg. 136.

[47] F. Maurin, 'L'Originalité Française et le Commandement', *Défense Nationale*, 45, July 1989, pg.47. The first such arrangements had indeed been signed between French and Alliance naval commands in 1964, see ibid, pg. 48.

(SACEUR), General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, concerning possible modalities of use of the Second French Corps stationed in Germany. The exact details of their discussions have remained confidential. It seems clear, however, that the Ailleret-Lemnitzer agreements were both detailed and far-reaching.[48]

The accords provided a military framework for the French role in time of war whereby the French Second Army Corps, based in Germany, could, in a situation of crisis, and should the French political authorities so decide, be engaged as an operational reserve or counter-offensive force for Nato's Central Army Group. The placing of these forces under the *operational control* of allied commands was envisaged, though not their allocation to Nato *operational command*, leaving allied commanders with less flexibility in their use of French forces (assuming French authorities took the *political* decision to engage in the first place).[49]

Under de Gaulle's successors, further progress was made in planning for cooperation between French and allied forces.[50] On 2 December 1970, the Fourquet-Goodpaster agreements were signed, to improve coordination between Nato and French air defence systems, which included provision for French membership in the Nato *Ace High* network, eight of whose stations were placed on French soil. In July 1974 the Valentine-Feber accords were signed between the commander of the French First Army and the commander of Allied Forces Central Europe. The First Army was created in 1969, merging the Second Corps in Germany and the First Corps, stationed in north-eastern France, under a single command. The accords were intended to work out the modalities of possible engagement of this sizeable force, equipped with *Pluton* technical nuclear weapons, alongside the allied forces in Central Europe. Again, the French reserved the right to make the political decision committing their forces, but the accords made provision for use of the First Army in a counter-attacking role, or in concerted defence manoeuvres with allies.[51]

Practical cooperation with allies also extended to joint participation in military manoeuvres. In

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[48] See on the accords F. Bozo, op. cit., pp. 109-113, and F. Maurin, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

[49] The distinction between *operational command* and *operational control* resides in the fact that the former allows the command a large degree of flexibility with regard to how it uses the forces assigned to it, whilst the latter takes place within the framework of tightly defined deployment and operational agreements. For a discussion of the accords, see F. Bozo, op. cit., pp. 109-115.

[50] See M. Harrison, op. cit., pp.169-170, and F. Maurin, op. cit.

[51] F. Maurin, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

November 1966, the French Navy and Air Force participated in a Nato exercise in the Western Mediterranean, and in early 1971 eight French warships, including the helicopter carrier *Arromanches* took part in the *Sunny Seas* exercise. Still more impressive was French involvement in the 1972 *Strong Express* manoeuvres.[52]

It is striking, however, just how low a profile was accorded the instances of cooperation between France and its allies. The Ailleret-Lemnitzer agreements went almost unnoticed, whilst initiatives of even limited practical significance were undertaken almost surreptitiously. At the other extreme were the statements of military doctrine made by leading French politicians and soldiers, and it is to these that we now turn.

Military Policy and the Defence of Europe Military cooperation and legal obligation were meaningless if not accompanied by a defence doctrine and military planning which reflected the need to intervene in a battle in Western Europe that did not directly concern French forces, population, or territory. De Gaulle was often explicit about the need for French participation in the event of a conflict in Central Europe. At the *École Militaire* in 1959, he remarked that:

> It goes without saying, that our defence, the implementation of our means, our conception of the way a war will be fought, must be combined with those of other countries. Our strategy must be coordinated with that of others. On the battlefield it is highly probable that we will find ourselves side by side with our allies. But let each play his own part.[53]

On 15 May 1962, he stressed that if 'the free world were attacked, in the old or the new continent, France would take part in the common defence beside its allies and with all the means it possesses.'[54] Perhaps most importantly of all, the same theme was repeated in the letter to President Johnson of 7 March 1966:

> Unless events change the fundamental facts of relations between East and West, [France] would be, in 1969 and later, resolved, as today, to fight by the side of her allies, in the case of unprovoked aggression.[55]

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[52] See *L'Humanité*, 26 May, 1972.

[53] L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 27.

[54] Press Conference in Paris, quoted in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 29.

[55] Ibid, pg. 47.

Such involvement alongside European allies was not pure altruism, for, as the General pointed out in a speech to the *Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale* in 1963:

> If the battle for Germany, the first battle of the war, goes badly, if it has been more or less nuclear in form, or if it has not been nuclear at all, the destruction or invasion of France would follow instantaneously, and, simultaneously, the loss of any bridge-head for the free world.[56]

Such statements were not, however, as loudly proclaimed, nor as widely publicised as other declarations of policy. Indeed, perhaps the most enduring legacy, and certainly the most well-known aspect of the period of de Gaulle's presidency in terms of military doctrine was a speech that never, in fact, became official policy.

The article by Chief of Staff Charles Ailleret which appeared in the prestigious and semi-official *Revue de Defense Nationale* in December 1967 marked a firm policy stance against military alignment, leaving military options, including the choice of eventual adversary, open.[57] Certainly it was intended to mark another stage in the break with Atlantic military orthodoxy, stressing the rejection of any concept of war-fighting in Europe. Yet its purpose was related mainly to domestic rather than international politics. As well as marking a stage in the conversion of the armed forces - especially the land army - to the notions and doctrines associated with nuclear weapons, it was a useful domestic tool, capable of rallying both the nationalist right and the radical left to the defence policies of the President. Noticeably, the doctrine Ailleret expounded was never adopted by the French forces, and was never publicly justified by de Gaulle himself.[58]

The question of the French role in the defence of Europe, and in particular in the battle for Germany was discussed amongst both military and political leaders in Paris, as they attempted to define a military strategy for France, in the light of the return to France of the troops from Algeria, and the imminent operability of the first elements of the *force de frappe*.[59] Certainly, many

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[56] See C. de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, vol. 4, Paris, Plon, 1970, pp. 86-7.

[57] C. Ailleret, 'Défense "Dirigée" ou Défense "Tous Azimuts"', *Revue de Défense Nationale*, 23, 1967, pp. 1923-1932. The major elements of the article were twofold: a rejection of the Alliance doctrine of flexible response in favour of a massive retaliation policy, and an insistence on the abandonment of a concept of 'a preferential eventual enemy' in favour of a *tous azimuts* concept, whereby the French strategic nuclear force would be in a position to strike at any foe in any direction.

[58] For a comprehensive discussion of Ailleret's speech and its meaning see J. Lacouture, op. cit., pp. 476-482.

[59] The first Mirage IV aircraft were operational in 1964.

influential figures pointed towards the necessity - both political and military - of a policy of 'two battles' in which the first battle (for Germany) was of less importance than the decisive second battle for France.[60]

General de Gaulle never spelled out in public any coherent deterrent doctrine for France, his references to the subject comprising mainly allusions to the concept of *dissuasion du faible au fort*, rather than a detailed exposé of the means and objectives of the *force de frappe*. It seems from the above that he did, however, stress the hypothesis of French participation in the common defence of Europe.[61] His definition of political and military independence merely stressed the need for the decision for involvement to be taken at the national level.

Yet independence necessitated a distancing from the doctrines of Nato, thus a greater emphasis on the requirements of national security, in order to highlight the *national* role of the returning colonial forces, who were not placed under Nato command. Declarations regarding the possible or probable French role in the defence of Central Europe were exaggerated in order to act as a further rationale for the processes of Atlantic disengagement, and development of the nascent *force de frappe*.[62]

The point of Gaullist rhetoric on independence was that defence was more efficient if national, both in terms of command and mission. As such, there was bound to be a conflict between a nationally-oriented defence strategy and the requirements of Alliance solidarity, when such a policy was pursued by a state not in the front line. What is of most significance is the ambiguity, often deliberate, surrounding French policy in this sphere, resulting from the failure to reconcile the twin aims of autonomy and allied solidarity. Hence, whilst apparently in favour of participation in the defence of Europe, de Gaulle issued a series of secret directives to the Commander of the First Army in 1967 and 1968, limiting its engagement in both time and place, which former

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[60] In particular, the thinking of General Noiret, and Pierre Messmer pointed along these lines. The former derived the idea from the military necessities of nuclear war fighting, while the latter was particularly concerned with the political issues, in particular the possibility of an omni-directional threat. For a full discussion, see L. Ruehl, *La politique militaire de la V^e^ République*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1976, pp. 175-186.

[61] A prominent German observer has expressed the view that while 'for de Gaulle, symbolism was sacrosanct', one can still reasonably speculate that 'in retrospect....even in 1967 President de Gaulle did not truly, let alone confidently, project the luxury of France's neutrality in any conflict that would engulf Germany and threaten the defeat of Nato forces on the German battlefields'. See L. Ruehl, 'Franco-German Military Cooperation: an Insurance Policy for the Alliance', *Strategic Review*, vol. 16, summer 1988, pg. 52. See also the comments of Pierre Messmer in an interview with Jean Lacouture in J. Lacouture, op. cit., pg. 483.

[62] L. Ruehl, op. cit., pg. 233.

Defence and Foreign Minister Pierre Messmer later interpreted as excluding French participation in a battle.[63] Meanwhile, declaratory policy, in particular Ailleret's article, loudly proclaimed French independence, to the exclusion of all else.

The major statement of military strategy under de Gaulle was made some time after the 1966 withdrawal. On 3 March 1969, in an address to the IHEDN, Ailleret's successor as Chief of Staff of the French forces revised the doctrine propounded by his predecessor.[64] He outlined the major ideas, and introduced the fundamental ambiguities that were to continue to characterise that policy under the General's successors. In particular, Fourquet addressed the issue of the operational significance of the tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) France was constructing.

Fourquet's speech questioned the concept of a deterrent strategy based on the concept of *tout ou rien*, as expounded by his predecessor. The pure doctrine of massive retaliation, he stated, deprived the French deterrent doctrine of credibility in 'a number of circumstances'.[65] The alternative was a strategy founded on the principle of a deterrent manoeuvre whose first aim was to 'test' the intentions of an enemy.

The important questions with regard to the French role in the defence of Central Europe centre on this conception of the 'test' role of the French forces: namely, what form would it take? If nuclear, how long would it be before the French escalated to the tactical nuclear level? Would French forces act independently or with the allies? And, finally, where and when would the test manoeuvre occur?

Fourquet addressed each of these issues, though his answers were not always clear or satisfactory. The test would be carried out by the five divisions comprising the *forces de manoeuvre*, supported by the tactical arm of the nuclear air force. It would be divided into two stages, the first comprising the very process of contact between these forces and the enemy, as a sign of French will to resist, the second consisting of the opening of tactical nuclear fire. With respect to duration, this would almost certainly be short, since the five mechanised divisions would be

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[63] See *Le Monde*, 9 and 11 June, 1976. It must be said that such directives did not preclude a French role as a second echelon force, and it was for these purposes that the Ailleret-Lemnitzer accords were signed. See below.

[64] This address appeared in print as M. Fourquet, 'Emploi des Différents Systèmes de Force dans le Cadre de la Stratégie de Dissuasion', *Revue de Défense Nationale*, 25, May 1969, pp. 757-767.

[65] Ibid, pg. 759.

outnumbered by the enemy.[66] Resort to the tactical nuclear level would thus occur if the enemy showed no signs of stopping its progress after initial (brief) contact with these forces.

Fourquet went on to point out the implications for relations with the allies:

> Engaged at the northern and eastern frontiers against an enemy coming from the East, the battle corps would normally act in tight coordination with the forces of our allies. Nevertheless, its autonomous use, however remote the chances of such a hypothesis, *can* and *must* be envisaged, in particular in the case of a complete lack of agreement with our allies as to the level at which nuclear fire should be unleashed. In this case, it is possible, if not probable, that our allies would refuse to allow our troops to come into contact with the enemy during the first engagements. As a result, it is also possible....that the French deterrent covers only the national territory. It would, on the other hand, benefit from increased credibility.[67]

Should there be disagreement between France and the allies, the test manoeuvre would take place relatively late in any conflict, after the Soviets had penetrated Nato lines, and purely in defence of the national territory. This, however, was far from optimal, the situation of 'defender' being a distinctly unfavourable one, and so:

> The search for maximum efficiency leads to an examination of the hypotheses of the use [of the battle corps] on a European scale and of confronting the enemy as far as possible from the frontiers. However, the need for the government to act as well as possible in circumstances that cannot be foreseen, and, among others, the difficulties presented by committing troops to areas where allied forces - perhaps already somewhat disorganised - are stationed, may lead to the action being carried out only a short distance from [our] frontiers, making the most out of the effort made on the forward line by the allies.....To wait for the enemy on national territory is a risky operation which is more in line with a situation of defence at all costs foreseen for the time when deterrence has failed rather than with a real deterrent manoeuvre.[68]

The doctrine articulated in this speech by General Fourquet, although he was careful to include a criticism of the allied strategy of flexible response,[69] obviously marked a rapprochement between French and allied nuclear doctrines, given the new French emphasis on gradual escalation with the possibility of participation in some form of forward defence. The 'two battles' concept was

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[66] Ibid, pg. 762.

[67] Ibid, pp. 762-763.

[68] Ibid, pp. 764-765.

[69] Ibid, pp. 760-761.

obviously relegated to the level of an undesirable second best. Both politically (enemy in the East), and militarily, the new doctrine marked a move away from the extremes of French isolationism that had been expressed earlier. It was not, however, without its own problems and ambiguities. In particular, there was something incongruous about a doctrine which emphasised the desirability of solidarity with allies, whilst focusing on the idea of testing the intentions of an enemy, to see if they were aggressive, conceivably after France's closest ally had been overrun, using nuclear weapons that would land on West German soil.

French official policy after the resignation of de Gaulle continued to reflect such ambiguity. Indeed, the contradictions and ambivalence inherent with regard to a French role in the defence of Western Europe as a whole were incorporated into a doctrine fossilised through official publication in the White Paper of 1972.

The *Livre Blanc sur la Défense Nationale,*[70] published in 1972, is still valid today as an exposé of the means and objectives of French defence policy. In it one finds a bewildering juxtaposition of affirmations concerning the need for France to participate in the defence of Europe, along with statements stressing the purely national nature of nuclear deterrence:

> How can the vital interests of a country be defined if not by sole reference to the country itself?.....But it is necessary to add that if deterrence is reserved for the protection of our vital interests, the limits of these are necessarily ambiguous.....France lives in a network of interests which go beyond its borders. It is not isolated. Therefore Western Europe as a whole cannot fail to benefit indirectly from French strategy which constitutes a stable and determining factor of security in Europe....Our vital interests lie within our territory and the surrounding areas. The deterrent strategy covers this geographic zone.[71]

The *Livre Blanc* also made reference to an idea that was to come to be widely used as a justification for French ambivalence concerning their position in the event of a crisis in Central Europe. The idea of there being no firm French commitment in so far as defining her vital interests were concerned was seen as a positive one in terms of Western deterrence, since 'the dialectic of deterrence feeds off a relative uncertainty'.[72]

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[70] Ministère de la Défense Nationale, *Livre Blanc sur la Défense Nationale*, 2 vols., Paris, 1972.

[71] *Livre Blanc*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

[72] Ibid, pg. 8.

This may be so. Yet it is not surprising that France's European partners were less than impressed by such ambiguity. Far from the *Livre Blanc* clarifying the uncertainty that had surrounded French perceptions of their role in a Western European conflict, it merely made them public.

Under Giscard d'Estaing, an attempt was made fundamentally to alter the content of French deterrent strategy.[73] Certainly, the five-year military planning law of 1977[74] reflected increased concern with the questions of solidarity with Alliance partners, and with procuring the necessary conventional capabilities in order to do so.[75] Yet such efforts proved abortive: Giscard d'Estaing and his leading ministers were soon to resort to the old clichés of Gaullist strategic thought.[76]

The European Dimension The presidencies of de Gaulle and Pompidou witnessed attempts to pursue the creation of some form of European defence entity. In both cases, the European alternative was considered as a result of a perceived failure on the part of one or both of the superpowers to take into account the legitimate security and other interests of third states, and as such, was an extension of the French antagonism towards superpower hegemony. At times, the role which only France could play of arbiter between the two superpowers was conceded to Europe. De Gaulle, for instance, stated as his objective:

> To bring together, from the political, economic and strategic points of view, the states which touch the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees. To make of this organisation one of the three world powers, and, if, necessary, one day, the arbiter between the two camps - Soviet and Anglo-Saxon.[77]

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[73] The attempted modifications to French strategy occurred in speeches to the IHEDN by Giscard d'Estaing and his Chief of Staff, Guy Méry. These were reproduced in article form. See G. Méry, 'Une armée pour quoi faire et comment?', *Défense Nationale*, 32, June 1976, pp. 11-34, and V. Giscard d'Estaing, 'Allocution', *Défense Nationale*, 32, July 1976, . For an excellent discussion see 'French defence policy' *Strategic survey 1976*, London, IISS, 1976, pp. 67-69.

[74] *Loi n° 76-531 du 19 juin 1976 portant approbation de la programmation militaire pour les années 1977-1982*, JO Lois et Decrets, 20 June 1976, pp. 3699-3707.

[75] Between 1977 and 1978, spending on conventional programmes increased by 20.3%, while that on the nuclear section did so by only 16.6%. See M. Harrison, op. cit., pg. 199. For details of conventional force improvements undertaken under Giscard d'Estaing, see D. Yost, *France and conventional defense in Central Europe*, Marina del Ray, European American Institute for Security Research, 1984, pp. 23-29.

[76] Some months after the IHEDN speech in which he had attempted to alter French strategy, Giscard d'Estaing returned to the 'verities' of Gaullism, stating that 'our tactical nuclear weapons are not of a nature....to deter aggression against Germany'. Cited in N. Gnesotto, 'Le dialogue franco-allemand depuis 1954: patience et longueur de temps....' in K. Kaiser et P. Lellouche (eds.), *Le couple Franco-Allemand et la défense de l'Europe*, Paris, IFRI, 1986, pg. 22.

[77] C. de Gaulle, *Mémoires de Guerre*, Vol 3, Paris, Plon, 1971, pp. 179-80.

In 1963, faced with the failure of the 1958 memorandum to achieve any results, the General had turned towards a European solution to the problem of restructuring the Atlantic security structure, in signing the Élysée Treaty of January that year with the German Federal Republic. The fact that this initiative was to prove largely abortive - at least in the short term - was due to the insistence of the Bundestag that a preamble stressing German loyalty to Nato be inserted in the Treaty. Certainly, de Gaulle held this to be the case and, interestingly, he said so clearly soon after his withdrawal from the integrated command of Nato: 'We are not responsible for the fact that the preferential ties established without us, and constantly reinforced, between Bonn and Washington, deprives the Franco-German agreement of its substance....[The Germans] do not apply our bilateral agreement but its preamble, which fundamentally alters its meaning.'[78]

The year 1973 saw a renewed burst of Euro-enthusiasm, based on European - and particularly French - horror at several incidents which seemed perfectly to illustrate the truth of French denunciations of superpower hegemony. The French urged their colleagues to take positive steps in the realm of defence cooperation. Paris submitted a new version of the Nato declaration under negotiation, in which it was acknowledged that the EEC move toward unity should affect defence policies as well.[79]

The idea of some form of European defence also gradually took on a more practical form. Defence Minister Robert Galley went to London in June 1973, where there was talk of joint arms manufacture,[80] whilst *The Times* reported that the 'French want a European version of SAM missile'.[81] Later in the year, talks took place between Britain, France and the Federal Republic on the question of a programme to study Franco-British nuclear collaboration.[82] However, whilst guarding their basic distrust of the American-dominated Atlantic Alliance, and increasingly aware of the limitations imposed on them by France's relative weakness compared to the superpowers, French statesmen were still unwilling to take the step of involving their nation in another military organisation.

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[78] Press conference of October 1966, cited in Y. Boyer, 'La France et la Sécurité dans la Nouvelle Europe', in Yves Boyer (ed.), *Les Européens Face aux Défis d'Une Politique de Sécurité commune*, Paris, Les Cahiers du CREST. 1992, pg. 8.

[79] *New York Times*, November 19, 1973.

[80] *Le Monde*, June 27, 1973.

[81] *The Times*, November 15, 1973.

[82] *L'Express*, November 26, 1973.

Basically, a vicious circle had been created, whereby the French desired independence from integrated military structures, yet wished to ensure that Europe would not be overlooked by the superpowers in their bilateral discussions - Europe being a more viable equal of the superpowers on the international stage than France alone. The only way to achieve this, however, was to create some form of European organisation that was responsible for defence as well as other issues. It would, however, be impossible to convince fellow Europeans of the viability of such an idea without providing a degree of joint control at least equivalent to that in the Atlantic Alliance, and probably much greater (since at least the United states could claim to have a deterrent capable of deterring), thereby precluding the achievement of the 'standing' which the Gaullists[83] held to be essential.[84]

European initiatives failed because of French inability to persuade the Germans. As Fritz Erler pointed out at the time, 'by de Gaulle's definition, foreign influence on the French atomic force is excluded',[85] and thus the European allies could realistically have hoped for more influence on the American than on the French force.[86] This was especially true of the Federal Republic, as the French force owed its existence at least partly to the desire of France's leaders to ensure a degree of supremacy over their eastern neighbour. Contradictions and inconsistency were thus inevitable because of the fundamental tension behind French policy in Europe, namely that 'France's foreign policy is based on an attitude of trust towards West Germany, whereas her defence policy reflects an attitude of distrust of that country.'[87]

Alliance Policy and the Limits of Independence. A Critique

France and the Alliance The French used many explanations in support of their gradual estrangement from the Alliance, and it is interesting to compare these with the costs and benefits

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[83] See, for example, M. Debré, op. cit., pg. 1771.

[84] Thus, discussions with the Germans on the possibility of joint control over *Pluton* missiles begun in 1971, had reached an impasse by the summer of 1972. See M. Harrison, op. cit., fn. 94, pg. 267.

[85] F. Erler, 'The Basis of Partnership', *Foreign Affairs*, October 1965, pp. 84-95.

[86] Note the comments of former defence minister Franz Josef Strauss: '....Germany does not want atom patronage, but atom partnership, and we certainly are not prepared to exchange American atom patronage, which from its size and technical efficiency is at least a determining instrument, for French atom patronage.' Franz Josef Strauss, *The Grand Design*, London, Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1965, pp. 63-64.

[87] The phrase is that of M. Ullmann, 'Security aspects in French foreign policy', *Survival*, November-December 1973, pg. 263.

involved in the decision to withdraw from the integrated structure entailed. It is difficult, for instance, to accept the contention made increasingly frequently by de Gaulle after 1965 that membership of the integrated military structure seriously limited French freedom of manoeuvre. On 14 April, 1966, during the furious National Assembly debate which followed the withdrawal, even Couve de Murville was forced to admit that '[it] has been said over and over again that Nato never prevented a nation from pursuing its own political policies. On the whole, this is true'.[88] Indeed it is; nothing is more striking than the fact that neither France in Indochina and Algeria, nor Britain in Malaya, nor Greece and Turkey in their regular and bloody skirmishes over Cyprus had any difficulty in providing the necessary forces; nor did membership of Nato prevent France from openly and roundly criticising American actions in Santa Domingo and Vietnam. Even before formal withdrawal, Paris enjoyed more freedom to make its own decisions than most other Nato members. The fleet was withdrawn from Nato command in 1963, whilst even in the case of the first *Commandement Aérien Tactique* (CATAC) , included in the framework of the Nato air defence system, Paris reserved the right not to follow SACEUR's orders in a crisis if they did not coincide with French decisions.

Another argument was mentioned by de Gaulle in the press conference at which the first hints concerning eventual French disengagement were dropped:

> The wars that America is fighting in other parts of the world - yesterday in Korea and Cuba, today in Vietnam - may be escalated to such an extent that a general holocaust will ensue. If this happens, Europe, whose strategy is that of the United States, would automatically be involved in a struggle not of its choosing.[89]

This was complete fiction; juridically, the Atlantic Pact was categorical in not committing members to take any action outside the geographical scope of the Treaty.[90] Moreover, the notion of France preserving a greater autonomy of decision with regard to Nato commands than its allied partners was not a valid one in one sense. All the allied powers in effect retained the sole right to decide upon the engagement of their forces, and their placing under Nato integrated command. Further, even had France completely pulled out of the Atlantic Alliance, it would still have been bound by its most specific commitment to act in defence of allies - those contained in Article IV of the Treaty

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[88] Cited in M. Guy de Carmoy, *The Foreign Policies of France*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1979, pg. 247.

[89] Press conference of 21 February, 1966, cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 46.

[90] Ironically, de Gaulle had, as we have seen, attempted to extend the ambit of the Alliance in his 1958 memorandum to Eisenhower.

of Brussels, which made French intervention quasi-automatic.

Moreover, the notion of loyalty to the Alliance without integration into the organisation raises problems. In the first place, the Atlantic Treaty bound its signatories to maintain and increase individual *and collective* defensive capacities, and the withdrawal of 1966 appears to have been responsible for a diminution of the latter.[91] Furthermore, the distinction drawn between Alliance and military organisation, was in many ways a false one. The Atlantic Treaty calls for the formation of the organisation which was created after the February 1952 Lisbon conference. The integrated command had existed as from December 1950. As one French former member of the Nato Secretariat General has pointed out:

> The differences between the Alliance and Nato are comparable to those....between a law and the decree which implements it: there is no decree without a law, and a law has meaning only with a decree. It is therefore....difficult to claim to be attached to the Alliance and to reject Nato, since all the concrete measures concern the latter.[92]

It is also important to bear in mind that de Gaulle's policy of withdrawal was not entirely the result of some long thought-out strategy based on an individual view of the requirements of national independence and *grandeur*. In particular, many of his actions can be seen to have been the consequence of a feeling of pique he experienced when faced with the 'special relationship' that bound the United States and Great Britain. It has been pointed out how he perceived his memorandum to Eisenhower as a means of putting an end to 'Anglo-Saxon' dominance within the Alliance. His resentment had been sparked off as early as the immediate post-war period when he complained that 'Washington and London claimed exclusive rights to strategic leadership' which was, for him, 'unjustifiable'.[93] It appeared again with regard to the close nuclear cooperation between Britain and the United States that followed the amendments made to the Macmahon acts. Such sentiments were intensified as a result of the December 1962 Nassau agreement, and revealed by his references to Britain as the 'Trojan Horse' of Atlanticism offered to the European

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[91] Immediately after the withdrawal, expert analysis concluded that France's unilateral action had not affected the defensive capabilities of the Alliance as a whole. See for example Brigadier K. Hunt, *Nato without France: the Military Implications*, Adelphi Paper 32, London, IISS, 1966, pg. 10. Later works have come to stress the importance of the loss of France, especially because of the invaluable logistical role its territory could fulfil. See D. Yost, *France and conventional defence in Central Europe*, op. cit., esp. pp. 53-77. See also the discussion in Chapter Five.

[92] C. Delmas,'La France ancré dans l'Alliance', *L'Express*, 4-10 July 1983.

[93] Cited in M. Harrison, op. cit., pg. 58.

Community.[94] It is important not to exaggerate, as some have done, the degree to which resentment lay behind de Gaulle's policy towards the Alliance,[95] yet it would be equally erroneous to ignore this particular incentive for his moves towards Atlantic disengagement.

The rhetoric of independence masked the presence of numerous constraints on French policy which guided its development. In some cases, such rhetoric denied the presence of constraints. As such it helped to build the myth of a France 'with free hands', successfully formulating and implementing an independent defence policy that allowed it to rely on itself alone.

Quite apart from the fact that the autonomous development of the *force de frappe* is a concept of which it is difficult now not to be suspicious - France was directly indebted to the United States for the creation and development of its deterrent force[96] - the idea of France being capable of guaranteeing its own defence was illusory. De Gaulle and his successors never wanted to see American forces leave Europe, being only too aware that France's position in the second line meant that it benefited directly from American protection offered to the Federal Republic.

Obviously the General, being engaged in the construction of a myth, never expressed such a point of view in public, for it would have undermined his claim to be restoring French *grandeur* to admit that his country was actually 'free-loading' on the back of an Alliance which, whatever, the French position in relation to it, would be forced to defend it. He did, however allude to it in a conversation at the Élysée with American Under-Secretary of State George Ball in May 1965, proclaiming that 'with or without a treaty, you will have to defend us.'[97]

The concept of France with 'free hands' which was so ubiquitous in the rhetoric, especially that of de Gaulle, was an illusory one. France did not have the means to carry out the kind of policy

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[94] De Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir* I, Paris, Plon, 1970, pg. 200.

[95] See, for example, J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons*, New York, Viking Press, 1970.

[96] On the subject of France receiving external help for the construction of its nuclear force, see in particular R. Ullmann, 'The covert French connection', *Foreign Policy*, summer, 1989. See also *Politis*, 16-22 June, and 12 July 1989.

[97] Cited in G. Ball, *The Past is Another Pattern*, New York, Norton, 1982, pp. 323-3. A note circulated at the Quai d'Orsay on 21 March, 1966 clearly illustrates that French policy makers were aware that the independent defence posture was largely predicated on the relatively secure geographic position of France: '....if the hypothesis (practically impossible) of a Soviet conventional aggression is nevertheless evoked, it would evidently not first aim at France. Germany is situated in front of France, and there the presence of American troops could not fail to throw the United States into the conflict.' Quoted in J-R Tournoux, *La Tragédie du Général*, Paris, Plon, 1967, pg. 653.

of independence and grandeur that its leaders claimed for it, if only because the rhetoric of independence concealed the reality of constraints imposed by the international system. International conditions in some cases acted as direct constraints on desired policies. This was the case under Giscard d'Estaing with regard to the question of some form of European defence entity; no such initiatives were pursued simply because of a desire not to upset Soviet sensibilities.[98]

The viability of de Gaulle's declaratory policy vis-à-vis the Alliance was largely conditional on the prevailing international situation, and in particular on the state of relations between the superpowers. Thus, at a time when the Soviet Union appeared threatening, in particular during the first years of his Presidency, there was no question of disengagement, and a noticeable firmness in his attitude towards the Soviet Union. The policy of detente which he pursued in the latter part of his presidency depended on an easing of tensions between the two giants, and a refusal to see the Soviet Union as a military threat.[99]

More fundamentally, despite repeated claims about the role France could play in helping to bring about the dissolution of the bloc system and the end of the Cold War, it is doubtful that French policy objectives could have been achieved in a post-Cold War Europe. The objective of *grandeur* in particular seemed to be predicated on a realisation that France could achieve maximum room for manoeuvre in international politics in a Europe whose security was guaranteed by the United States, and within which Germany remained both divided, and unassertive. Any crumbling of the 'Yalta' system so frequently attacked in French rhetoric would undoubtedly have had the effect of limiting its aspirations to a 'world role' in a continent whose largest member was free to exert itself independently of the constraints of the two blocs. Moreover, the presence of a Germany *glacis* enabled the French to prevaricate on the question of the French contribution to the defence of Europe. This allowed for the preoccupation with purely *national* security, as the security of the continent as a whole was assured by the two giants. On the other hand, French freedom of manoeuvre was limited in periods of acute tension between the two blocs, and the immediate French reaction at such times, as was demonstrated during the Berlin and Cuban crisis, and in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968, was to strengthen links with Western allies.

All this is not to say that positive consequences of the withdrawal of 1966 (from the French

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[98] See his statement at a press luncheon on 21 May 1975, cited in Tourrain, op. cit., pg. 26.

[99] M. Debré, in an interview with the author, Paris 1991, stated that the General did not perceive the Soviet Union as a military threat - and that this was true of 'all the heirs of Stalin'.

perspective) cannot be found. De Gaulle had gained greater military independence for France; henceforth, if French troops were posted in Germany, it was because the Germans requested it and it suited Paris for the moment. Similarly, France could participate if it wished in Nato joint manoeuvres, but was under no obligation to participate in the event of hostilities breaking out on the continent. France still retained a seat on the Atlantic Council, (which after 1966 discussed only non-military questions), whilst having access to the majority of the minutes of the Defence Planning Group, formed after its withdrawal to discuss defence in its absence. Certainly, this new found special status elevated the French to a sort of privileged rank, as Secretary-General Brosio grudgingly admitted: 'because it participates in certain bodies of the Alliance and abstains from participating in others, France has established itself as an ally enjoying a special status.'[100] In terms of military independence, and particularly autonomy of decision, France enjoyed a *de facto* increase in its autonomy of decision, in that its forces would not be automatically embroiled in any European conflict, avoiding the kind of 'trip-wire' front-line commitment of the Americans and the British. In this sense, the much proclaimed 'independence' of France was in some senses a reality (although, as will be shown in Chapter Five, the military rationale on which this was based - French ability to defend its own territory against attack - was flawed.)

On a broader level, repeated French declarations of 'non-alignment' and claims to represent a 'third way' in international politics, in short, the whole panoply of deliberate obfuscation that characterised much of French rhetoric were to gain France a certain degree of influence especially among less developed countries. The claim that the French struggle against multipolarity was made on behalf of all third states was a useful tool in the quest for international recognition which, as we have seen, was a primary aim of successive French Presidents.

Conclusions

Apparent in all French Alliance policy during this period was a distinction between rhetoric and the reality of policy. This was especially the case with regard to instances of cooperation with allies, which were usually down-played, if publicised at all. Reintegration into the integrated military structure was never seriously considered by any French leader, and as such, French military doctrine crystallised around the possibility of non-belligerency in the case of hostilities in Europe. This process, along with the continued ambiguities of Alliance policy, was hastened by constraints which necessitated the continued gulf between the reality of dependence and the rhetoric

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[100] Cited in *Le Monde*, 15 November 1966.

of independence.

The policy was justified by using many arguments of dubious validity, and in some instances was based merely on pique. It was also a policy which was unclear in content. Yet in many ways it was remarkably successful both at home and abroad. France benefitted in terms of prestige from a position apparently outside the prevailing bipolar order. The appearance of a certain 'rank' in world politics and self-sufficiency in defence was maintained, whilst Nato effectively assured French security. Criticisms of American policy coupled with enormous sales of weaponry to Third World States enhanced French prestige as a somehow 'independent' state, whilst, through the Ottawa Declaration of 1974, France obtained recognition of its role in preserving European security.

It was this policy and this legacy that François Mitterrand was to inherit when he acceded to the Presidency in May 1981. It is time now to turn to those policies which he, and his party, had formulated with regard to Nato and the Alliance.

CHAPTER TWO
FRENCH SOCIALISM AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, 1945-1981

What were the attitudes towards the Alliance of the French Socialist movement during the period prior to 1981? What factors conditioned these attitudes? These are the questions that this chapter will address.[1] It will address these questions by examining, in turn, the following issues: the legacy of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO); the Socialist *Programme de Gouvernement* of 1972; the period of internal debates within the Party between 1972 and the eventual acceptance of the *force de frappe* in January 1978; and, finally, the development of Socialist Alliance policy immediately prior to the Presidential elections of 1981.

Anti-Nuclear Atlantic Solidarity, 1945-72

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the SFIO was quick to recognise its priorities:

> The French debacle of 1940, whose effects, despite participation in the victory, were still felt, the role played by the United States and especially the fears born as a result of Soviet expansionism pushed the French Socialists to align themselves resolutely on the side of the west, without its capitalist domination seeming to worry them too much.[2]

Yet, the clear alignment of the French Socialists behind the emerging western bloc did raise ideological problems, and involved abandoning, at least for the moment, a Marxist stance based on an economic analysis of international and domestic politics, which would certainly have identified the United States, rather than the Soviet Union, as the major threat to a Socialist France. The Marxist approach was gradually to be re-adopted in the early 1970s, with profound implications for the Socialist analysis of international relations.[3]

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[1] The best general accounts of the defence debates throughout this period within the socialist movement are P. Krop, *Les Socialistes et l'Armée*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1983, and P. Buffotot, 'Le Parti Socialiste Face aux Questions de Defense en France du Programme de Gouvernement "Changer la Vie" au Gouvernement Laurent Fabius (1972-1985)', in H. Portelli and D. Hanley (eds), *Social-Démocratie et Defense en Europe*, Nanterre, Université de Paris X, 1985.

[2] P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 35.

[3] See R. Gombin, 'Le Parti Socialiste et la politique étrangère - le programme de 1972', *Politique Étrangère*, vol 42, no 2, 1977, pp. 199-212.

Overt reliance on American protection, and support for the creation of both the Atlantic Alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, were balanced by the attachment of much of the SFIO to a notion of French *grandeur* not dissimilar to that of de Gaulle. The idea that France should have a certain 'rank' and 'role' in world politics was not easily reconciled with that of Atlantic integration, yet for the moment the Socialist movement seemed largely both willing and able to overlook this fact. The tension between integration and ideas of *grandeur* was, however, to become increasingly important with regard to attitudes towards the Alliance during the 1970s.

It was on the issue of possible French production of its own nuclear arsenal that the themes of loyalty to an American ally that guaranteed West European security, and concern for French *grandeur* really came into conflict. The seeds of the debates of the 1970s can be found in Socialist pronouncements of the 1950s and 1960s. On 12 March 1955, the first declaration of the SFIO *comité directeur* to deal with the question of French nuclear weapons attacked the idea as militarily inefficient, technically unsustainable and financially unbearable.[4] Another objection was that the creation of a French nuclear force would result in a strengthening of the Presidential system of government, and would thus be irreconcilable with the idea of a Socialist France.[5]

Although some Socialists[6] were quick to realise that France should obtain a nuclear capacity as soon as possible for political if not military reasons, as a guarantor of French rank and prestige, the *grandeur* line of what Buffotot describes[7] as the 'patriotic Socialists', took a back seat to other considerations. Significantly, one of the latter was that it would threaten the cohesion of Nato, and thus jeopardise the continued American presence in Europe. Guy Mollet, in the parliamentary debates on the first five-year military programme law, based his violent attacks against Gaullist policy on this argument. *Grandeur*, he said, was a legitimate and lasting concern, but studies had not been started on the military applications of nuclear weapons in order to construct an independent national defence. Indeed, in the face of the Soviet threat, 'national independence has become an anachronism' and thus integration of European forces with the United States was a necessary prerequisite of security. As

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[4] P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 39.

[5] For Mitterrand's written question to Pompidou concerning Presidential control over the *Force Aérien Stratégique*, see *Combat*, 24 January, 1964.

[6] Charles Hernu, who was to Mitterrand's first Defence Minister, wrote in 1957 that he was not against the manufacturing of a French nuclear bomb. See B. Boudouresques, 'Naissance d'une Opposition: 1945-1965' in *Alternatives non-violentes*, no 49, 13 December 1982, pg.10.

[7] Op. cit.

the *force de frappe* might threaten Alliance cohesion, it diminished security in Western Europe as a whole.[8] In stark contrast with the Gaullist reluctance to acknowledge the pivotal role of the United States in the defense of Europe, Mollet went on to point out the danger that, if the French position led to a reemergence of European nationalisms, the possible result could be an American withdrawal from Europe. American troops were needed on European soil and although it was 'good form' to lampoon Americans, the anti-Americanism increasingly evident in the National Assembly was 'detestable' to him.[9]

François Mitterrand, during the debates on the 1965-70 military programme law, violently attacked 'the magic bomb'; a medium-sized country could not, he claimed, deter aggression outside some form of international security system.[10] Again, the rejection of the national deterrent force was closely linked to an acceptance of overt reliance on the United States. Mitterrand reaffirmed the pro-American sentiments expressed earlier by Mollet at the time of the debate on the censure motion proposed by the opposition in response to the decision to withdraw France from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The Gaullist policy of apparently 'seeking new friends and new allies' was very commendable, but not at the price of distancing France from the Atlantic Alliance, especially when no apparent alternative was offered apart from 'nationalist isolation'.[11]

Overt reliance on an American presence in Europe, a corresponding down-playing of Socialist opposition to American capitalism, together with a firm opposition to the French nuclear force were mutually reinforcing factors conditioning the defence debate within the French Socialist movement for almost a quarter of a century after the end of the Second World War. When one of the two pillars of this stance was questioned and gradually eroded, the parameters of the debate were to alter substantially, laying the basis for the evolution of Socialist thought that was to occur during the 1970s.

The *Programmes de Gouvernement* of 1972

Well before large sections of the Party came to accept the need for French atomic weapons, another

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[8] *Journal Officiel de la République Française, Débats, Assemblée Nationale*, 24 October, 1960, pg. 2688. Henceforth JO, débats, AN.

[9] Ibid.

[10] JO, débats, AN, 2 December 1964, pp. 5770-74.

[11] See JO, débats, AN, 14 April 1966, pp. 672-7.

trend was working in favour of a change of defence thinking, namely, an increasingly Marxist interpretation of modern society which was coming to dominate official PS pronouncements. The culmination of this trend was the 1972 Socialist programme for government *Changer la Vie*.[12]

An analysis based primarily on economic conditions and forces did not allow for the Soviet Union to be perceived as the major threat to French security. An increasing Socialist concern with independence in the face of both blocs was forthrightly affirmed, as was the growing tendency to equate the two bloc systems, rather than differentiating clearly between the Americans as friends and allies and the Soviets as a potential foe.[13] Indeed, whilst both blocs were seen as tools for the imperialism of the superpowers,[14] with regard to the Soviet Union, it was merely pointed out that 'in some circumstances, *the interests of the international Socialist movement may conflict* with the great power interests of the USSR'.[15] The US, on the other hand, was accused of having refused any offers of peace in Vietnam in order to obtain 'the consolidation of an offensive system in the extreme east'.[16] The completion of the Common Market in Europe was viewed as a necessity in order to act as an effective counterweight against American - dominated international capitalism.

Moreover, the role of Nato as the guarantor of European security was becoming increasingly dubious, given the achievement of nuclear parity by the Soviet Union, and the consequent adoption by the US of flexible response. Not only was the American guarantee to Europe of increasingly doubtful value, but membership of even the Atlantic Alliance engendered the risk of France facing preventive strikes in the event of America becoming involved in a war.[17]

Nevertheless, despite such warnings, and an obvious distrust of American intentions and the efficacy of Nato, the Socialist party, whilst calling for the simultaneous dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Atlantic Pact,[18] rejected the idea of neutrality for France because of its strategic and economic

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[12] *Changer la Vie: Programme de Gouvernement du Parti Socialiste*, Paris, Flammarion, 1972.

[13] Ibid, pg. 198.

[14] Ibid, pg. 198.

[15] Ibid, pg. 198, emphasis in original.

[16] Ibid, pg. 201.

[17] Ibid, pg. 198.

[18] Ibid, pp. 199-200.

importance[19] and emphasised that a government of the Left would not question France's membership of the Atlantic Alliance.

American imperialism, was seen therefore, as the major danger that would confront a Socialist France, both because of its strategy of economic domination with the attendant risk for the target of such a strategy of economic colonisation, and because of the risks caused by American domination of Nato and the Atlantic Alliance. In fact, the left wing of the PS was at the time openly advocating immediate French withdrawal from the Atlantic Alliance should a Socialist government be formed, since the United States represented '....the imperialism that threatens us more than any other'.[20]

The *Programme* affirmed Socialist hostility to the French military nuclear programme. Criticism focused on the inability of France to equip itself with an efficient ensemble of forces including land air and sea-launched weapons, conventional forces, and a developed radar and communications system.[21]

> France does not posses, at the present time, a coherent and efficient defense system; in the event of a serious crisis, it would not be, contrary to official statements to the contrary, in a position to assure its defense alone, the argument according to which the nuclear force allows France to make its point of view triumph in major international matters is not a serious one and has been repeatedly shown to be untrue during the last ten years.[22]

Once in power, a Socialist government would postpone the construction of the *force de frappe*, and, once the decision to renounce the atomic force had been taken, steps would be taken to convert the atomic industry.

The joint programme of the Socialist and Communist parties published in 1972 reaffirmed the opposition of the left to the national nuclear force, and also the commitment towards a gradual and simultaneous erosion of the two blocs.[23] Already, however, the PS had begun its long march towards

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[19] Ibid, pg. 203.

[20] J-P Chevènement, in an article published in 1972, quoted in R. Gombin, op. cit., pg. 207, f.n.12.

[21] *Changer la Vie*, op. cit., pg. 204.

[22] Ibid, pg. 205.

[23] See Parti Socialiste, Parti Communiste, *Programme Commun de Gouvernement*, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1972, esp. pp. 169-181.

acceptance of the *force de frappe*. During negotiations on the programme, the Communists demanded insertion of the phrase 'destruction of the *force de frappe*' , whilst the Socialists managed to water the final version down to 'renunciation'.[24] The discussions on the joint programme also revealed the differences between the two parties over European defence cooperation; Mitterrand in particular was to show himself to be a staunch defender of the idea of some future form of European defence entity.[25] By the start of 1973, a heightened sense of the need for independence from both blocs systems was combined with a rejection of the nuclear option for France. The debate that was to take place within the broad left between this time and the eventual acceptance of the *force de frappe* was to increasingly link the two issues, to the point where nuclear weapons were seen as the irreplaceable basis for an autonomous policy.

Of Factions and Debates

François Mitterrand: America's Distrustful Admirer Within the internal Socialist debate, Mitterrand himself contributed regularly, and his own thought developed along lines which often did not mirror the development of the official public statements of the Socialist movement.[26] Moreover, his views, especially on security policy, were often vague, and sometimes even contradictory.[27] Hubert Vedrine, one of Mitterrand's closest advisers, has noted of the latter that 'he has a fairly utopian idea of the United States. He is attached to the myth of the founding fathers, he venerates Jefferson and Washington'.[28] Mitterrand was still willing to speak in warm terms of the Americans, terms far removed from the increasingly anti-American position of many other Socialists. In an article entitled *L'Union de la Gauche*, written in 1973, he contrasted his position with that of the

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[24] See C. Mellon,'Histoire du Ralliement: 1972-1981', in *Alternatives non-violentes*, no. 49, 13 December 1982, pg. 17.

[25] See H. Claude, op. cit., pg. 22.

[26] Mitterrand did tend to hold himself slightly aloof from the rest of the movement, utilising a 'Presidential' style of leadership within the Party. His often vague attitude towards defence questions almost certainly cost him support in the 1974 elections, and indeed some military people claimed many more of their number would have supported him had his position on the French nuclear force been more clear. See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13 April 1974.

[27] Michael Harrison claims Mitterrand 'held the Party and, until 1977, the left Alliance together through a cultivated plan for ambiguity, indecision, vacillation and dissimulation', and that 'In security matters, at any rate, Mitterrand often appears uncertain of his own attitudes and interests'. M. Harrison, 'Consensus, Confusion, and Confrontation in France: The Left in Search of a Defence Policy', in W.G Andrews and S. Hoffmann (eds), *The Impact of the Fifth Republic on France*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981, pg. 263.

[28] Cited in E. Roussel, *Mitterrand ou la constance du funambule*, Paris, Lattès, 1991, pg. 147.

Communists:

> When they opted for the East and the Warsaw Pact, I chose the West, the Atlantic Alliance and European construction. I have not forgotten that I owe my freedom to the United States of America. Perhaps I have a bourgeois conception of that freedom. But it is better to admit to this, since I have no intention of changing it.[29]

He also, however, was increasingly coming to share the view that France had to retain its independence from the bloc system, and that American economic and political hegemony was a possibility that had to be avoided at all costs, although he was careful to reconcile this attitude with a clear commitment to the Western security system as it existed:

> I voted for the Atlantic Alliance in 1949, and I do not go back on this vote because it was a question at the time of dealing with the Soviet threat. I voted for the European treaties except the EDC. But I am not one of those politicians who have conceived Europe as .... a *glacis*, as a fraction of an empire whose capital is Washington and indeed rather more at the Pentagon than the State Department. An independent Western Europe in my opinion should have become an equal partner, friendly with, because respected by, the Soviet Union. I still think the same way. The main foreign policy line of the *Convention*[30] can be summed up as follows: 'The only possible path for France is to fight against the domination of the two blocs. Anything which loosens this dual grip is good. All means to this end are good.'[31]

Following in the footsteps of successive Presidents of the Republic, however, his rhetoric was often contradictory:

> ....for France, membership in the bloc of the Atlantic Alliance does not signify a guarantee of security, but offers an additional facility for its economic colonisation by the United States.[32]

He clearly distanced himself from the 'Atlanticist' faction of the party, in laying clear stress on the dangers posed for France by American economic and political hegemonic ambitions:

> I do not dismiss American imperialism in order to ignore Soviet imperialism. The

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[29] Quoted in P. Manceron and B. Pingaud, *François Mitterrand*, Paris, Flammarion, 1981, pg 84.

[30] The *Convention des Institutions Républicaines*, a Socialist grouping within the PS led by Mitterrand.

[31] Article 'Les Deux Blocs', published in 1973, quoted in P. Manceron and B. Pingaud, op. cit., pp 131-133.

[32] F. Mitterrand, *Convention des Institutions Républicaines: Un Socialisme du Possible*, Paris, Seuil, 1970, pg. 96.

> example of Czechoslovakia shows us that it can be unbearable. But France is not in the same economic and political zone as Czechoslovakia, the division of the world did not place it on the Soviet side. It must therefore be especially preoccupied by the American ascendancy over it.[33]

American domination was to be feared far more than the prospect of Soviet military aggression:

> Those on the right and even on the left who feared lest Soviet tanks arrive in Paris have misinterpreted things. Not, obviously, that the Russian empire does not try, as a result of its very nature, to maximise its gains; but, since the leading principle of the two empires is not to confront each other in an atomic war, each acts as it pleases in its own recognised sphere of influence. Moscow can go to Prague, not Paris. Which does not mean that I fear the arrival of American tanks in Paris!....But potentially, it is in this way that balance is established. And if the idea of American tanks in Paris is unthinkable, a French military base could, like the Greek colonels, suit American diplomacy. I like the American people,....its sense of liberty, its respect for others. But I distrust the political objectives of its government, of its industrial and military leaders, and in any case I prefer to trust the wishes of the French people![34]

His aim was simple - to 'escape from the domination of one bloc or the other' [35] and although the term *grandeur* was not explicitly used, Mitterrand spoke of his vision of France's foreign and defence policy and a world role which France was to play not only for itself, but for the benefit of the many:

> it seems to me that to express [freedom from the domination of the blocs for France] is to express it for no matter which other country apart from the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.; it is to restore to France at the same time a role of moral leadership in the foreign policy common to countries of small or average importance....[36]

Independence and Nuclear Weapons Whilst Mitterrand was propounding his own views , the first stages in the conversion of the PS to a French nuclear force were getting underway. These were, as we shall see, linked to the idea of autonomy from France from either of the two blocs, and were thus of crucial importance to the debate on western security within the party. In March 1974, Charles Hernu - a close associate of Mitterrand - presented a document to the Defense Commission of the

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[33] Ibid, pg. 132.

[34] Ibid, pp. 132-133.

[35] Ibid, pg. 131.

[36] Ibid, pp. 131-132.

Socialist Party.[37] Within this, Hernu argued in favour of a nuclear deterrent force, and claimed that France's existing force was, contrary to the claims of many Socialists, able to carry out its deterrent role, and that simply to interrupt the construction of the submarine-launched missiles would be to throw away a valuable political bargaining tool. This acceptance of the utility of the *force de frappe* was vital, in that it allowed the Socialists to then deal with the question of the implications of an efficient weapon. In fact, Mitterrand had, as early as 1969, signalled a change of stance with regard to French nuclear weapons.[38] His acceptance of them, however, was tempered with an obvious scepticism regarding their utility. It would seem that in his 1969 and many later declarations he merely accepted an unfortunate reality: the existence of the *force de frappe*.[39]

In Hernu's document, acceptance of French nuclear weapons was portrayed as the price that had to be paid in order to achieve independence and the ability to pursue an autonomous defence policy. The *force de frappe* and the concept of national independence were indissolubly linked. As Raymond Aron pointed out, it was 'striking....that in the opposition ranks, those least favourable to the Atlantic Alliance have....converted to nuclear weapons.....when they discovered that basing French defence policy on nuclear weapons was a way of giving it a strictly national character and linking it as little as possible to the Atlantic ensemble'.[40]

If the Defence Commission of the PS accepted the desire for national independence as an adequate justification for Socialist espousal of the idea of a French nuclear force, this is not to say that the idea was accepted throughout the party, or that there was general agreement as to the limits and necessity of the independence that was increasingly coming to be seen to be dependent on it. If Hernu was a convert to the nuclear course, however, the Socialists in general tended to be rather vague on questions of nuclear strategy, and on the role France should pay in the defence of Central Europe. More clarity was to appear in the various reactions to the defence policy pursued by Giscard d'Estaing, and especially the doctrinal and operational changes he seemed to advocate.

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[37] See Parti Socialiste, Commission de la Défense Nationale, *Une dissuasion Globale: Resistance Populaire et Force Nucléaire*, Paris, 7 March 1974.

[38] See P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 62.

[39] E. Roussel claims that Mitterrand rallied to the *force de frappe* only because he had no choice and was under great pressure from Charles Hernu, op. cit., pg. 147. This idea is also taken up by Patrick Viveret, one of the staunchest anti-nuclear activists in the PS at this time, who was later to say that, for Mitterrand, rallying to the French nuclear force was not a question of conviction but 'resignation before a *fait accompli* due to a lack of any alternative'. In fact Mitterrand has never believed in the 'theology of deterrence'. P. Viveret, 'Comment Nous Avons Résisté' in *Alternatives non-violentes*, no. 49, 13 December 1982, pg. 24.

[40] R. Aron, 'La force française de dissuasion et l'Alliance Atlantique', *Défense Nationale*, 33, January 1977, pg. 43.

The doctrinal inflexions in defence policy advocated by Giscard d'Estaing and General Guy Méry, as well as the apparent desire of the President to see France move closer to Nato, led to a mixed response from the Socialists. Hernu was realistic in terms of the degree of French cooperation with Nato that had existed since 1966:

> If there is a change in the policy of the President of the Republic, it must be admitted that neither de Gaulle nor Pompidou had in reality left the Atlantic Alliance. There has never been a *tous azimuts* policy: the present discussion within the majority is more a *règlement de comptes*.[41]

Yet Hernu also pointed out that Giscard d'Estaing was going further than his predecessors. He was concerned about the increasing military ties that seemed to link France and the United States, and insisted on the need for France to remain independent of the two blocs. His analysis of the international system was centred round a distrust of superpower cooperation and possible condominium, and stressed the need for military and political independence. In terms of military questions, Hernu was especially troubled by the implications of the French tactical nuclear weapon Pluton, and the absence of a clear doctrine regarding its use.[42]

With regard to Giscard d'Estaing's military policy in general, Hernu was quick to point out that it represented a departure from Gaullist orthodoxy, moving towards French occupation of the front line, and an increasing reliance on conventional forces, thus signifying a shift from the previous French policy of a strategy of battle-avoidance (*non-bataille*). As a result, the Soviet Union was implicitly designated as the adversary, and there existed, if not a policy of reintegration into Nato, a '*convergence, connivance*'.[43]

Jean-Pierre Chevènement of the *Centre d'Études et des Recherches Socialistes* (CERES) faction of the Socialist party, on the other hand, was more concerned with the overtly political and ideological implications of apparent realignment, claiming that the rapprochement with Nato brought about by Giscard d'Estaing had as its goal the prevention of the left from coming to power in France.[44]

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[41] *Le Monde*, 15 June 1976.

[42] C. Hernu, *Chroniques d'Attente*, Paris, Tema, 1977, pp. 121-122.

[43] Ibid, pg. 256.

[44] See P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 86. Hernu had earlier pointed out that the Atlantic Alliance was legally merely an Alliance Treaty, rather than an ideological community of any sort. C. Hernu, op. cit., pg. 143.

A degree of apparent unity was achieved with regard to Alliance questions at a meeting of the *comité directeur* of the Party on 12 June 1976, when a confidential note seemed to stress unanimity on certain points:

> At the *bureau exécutif*....a unanimous consensus was achieved on the following points: we should not submit our decision to the United States or anyone else. The logic of this statement is that we must have a reasonable arms policy, which leads to the problem of the nuclear force. The PS is not yet ready to admit it; but if the problem is not posed, it will be necessary to settle for neutralism; but neutralism is not possible for France. We are not in favour of leaving the Atlantic Alliance and we admit that to accept the Alliance is to accept the need to come to the help of our allies; the party must not, therefore, quibble about the fact that French troops would go to the European theatre.[45]

Despite the 'unanimous consensus', many differences existed between the different groupings and individuals within the party as to the weight to attach to the idea of independence and the distance to be put between France and Nato. These divergences were most clearly visible in the three documents submitted to the *comité directeur* of the party on 6 and 7 November 1976,[46] though the fact that all three reports accepted the idea of French nuclear weapons indicated the increasing support the idea was receiving within the Party.

The report of Charles Hernu was Gaullist in tone, revealing an ample distrust of the superpowers,[47] a desire to preserve national independence in all spheres of government[48] and a corresponding defence of the *force de frappe* and the French strategy of *dissuasion du faible au fort*.[49] Even more emphasis was placed on the idea of national independence in the report by the leader of the CERES faction, Jean-Pierre Chevènement. His words recalled the strident tone of the 1972 programme:

> In the present world, the main and most constant threat is that of being manipulated by the great powers. These latter resort more and more to an indirect strategy in all its forms, and no part of the world is sheltered from the conflicts of all nature that

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[45] Quoted in P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 87.

[46] The three documents can be found in Convention pour l'Armée Nouvelle *Pour une Réflexion Ouverte sur la sécurité et la Paix*, Paris, Convention Pour l'Armée Nouvelle, 1977. The Hernu contribution, *Faut-il Assurer la Sécurité de la France? Crises et Menaces Perspectives du Programme Commun* is also reproduced in full in Hernu, *Chroniques d'Attente*, op. cit., pp. 269-283.

[47] 'Who can guarantee that the two greats will never carry out a conventional war or will not unleash a crisis, a blackmail by means of powers in between them in Europe?' P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 88.

[48] Ibid, pg. 88.

[49] See also *Chroniques D'Attente*, op. cit., pg. 31.

> their rivalry can cause. Especially a country like France, more and more dominated by the logic of the multinationals, and the new division of labour they create.[50]

This being the case, only an independent defense strategy could allow France to play its own role in international affairs. Chevènement pleaded for increased Socialist attention to defense questions, arguing that socialism could be protected only with the help of a strong defense.[51]

Robert Pontillon, a staunch defender of the Atlanticist tradition, argued in favour of a more organised European defense capability, with French nuclear weapons remaining under national control, though perhaps extending their deterrent role to cover its neighbours. Conventional forces could cooperate more widely with European partners in order to build such a 'European', defense.[52] Pontillon was the international relations expert of the PS Secretariat until 1979, and exerted a sizeable influence over Party policy. In particular, his view of the Soviet Union as a military threat which necessitated the maintenance of both Nato, and France's adherence to the Alliance had important policy results; in November 1977 the PS *bureau exécutif* agreed on a defence platform singling out the Soviet Union as the only power to have carried out military actions in Europe since 1945, and this was posited as the main reason justifying continued adherence to Nato.[53]

Many of the defence experts of the PS made repeated references to the idea of a European defence, but apart from a few committed Europeans such as Pontillon, these tended to enumerate the numerous problems involved in the process of building such a defence. In part, such reservations were political, stemming from either limitations resulting from German status,[54] or worry as to the possible reactions of the condominium-seeking superpowers.[55] More fundamentally, however, the pro-European rhetoric was interspersed with pessimism because, during its conversion to the cause of the *force de frappe,* the leadership had very much taken on board Gaullist strategic thinking, especially regarding the role of nuclear weapons, and the concept of extended deterrence:

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[50] Ibid, pg. 90

[51] Ibid, pg. 92.

[52] Ibid, pp. 93-4.

[53] See M. Harrison, 'Consensus, Confusion and Confrontation in France: the Left in Search of a Defence Policy', op. cit., pg. 265.

[54] Mitterrand, in a radio interview on 13 May, 1974, said he would, in an ideal world, be a partisan of the inclusion of the French nuclear force in a 'European system armed with atomic weapons' but this idea had no basis in reality, because of the restrictions on the Federal Republic. See C. Hernu, *Chroniques d'Attente*, op. cit., pg. 81.

[55] Ibid. pg. 82.

> ....nuclear deterrence, whether one is for or against it, is essentially national. No one thinks in terms of committing suicide in order to save a neighbour.[56]

However, before the Party could formulate firm ideas with regard to the Alliance and military strategy, the nuclear nettle had to be firmly grasped.

Towards Agreement on Ambiguity

Despite the evident shift among the Party defence specialists and leadership towards acceptance of the *force de frappe*, various members and tendencies within the movement were still obviously far from accepting the necessity of this cornerstone of any policy based on the idea of independence and autonomy of decision.

It would be fair to say that the gap that existed between, on the one hand the 'specialists' and leadership and on the other the Party activists resulted at least in part from the fact that the latter were rather uninterested in military questions. To the extent that they were interested, they focused on questions such as that of military service rather than more technical issues like the *force de frappe*. There also existed a certain distrust between many Socialists and the armed forces, as reflected in 'scare' articles concerning the possibility of a military coup in the event of a Socialist election victory.[57] The Right were also not slow to foster distrust between the Socialists and the forces.[58]

Even within the Defence Commission and the Party leadership obvious differences existed. Firstly, the three documents presented in 1976 had revealed differences with regard to the potential threats facing France - the staunch Atlanticism of Pontillon contrasting with Chevènement's view of nuclear weapons as being a tool of independence against threats from both East and West. More fundamentally, Mitterrand himself clouded the debate with vague remarks, and statements which took the rest of the leadership by surprise. In an interview on 26 July 1977 he proposed a referendum on the question of the maintenance of the French deterrent force.[59] Somewhat earlier, in an interview

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[56] C. Hernu, *Chroniques d'Attente*, op. cit., pg. 163.

[57] See notably *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13 April, 1974.

[58] In 1975, for instance, Jacques Chirac accused the Socialists of organising subversion in the armed forces. See *Politique Hebdo*, 4 December 1975.

[59] Given the notorious ambiguity of Mitterrand on questions related to defence, it is hard not to agree with Yvon Bourges, then Defence Minister, who declared the same day that Mitterrand's suggestion proved he was attempting to avoid making up his own mind on the question of nuclear weapons, since Mitterrand did not hint as to how he would

on *TF1*, he had again expressed grave doubts as to the efficacy of the French nuclear force:

> Personally, I am not convinced that the French nuclear force can play a deterrent role...I only believe in arrangements [with others], that is to say that I do not believe in a complete autonomy in defence matters. I fear that if one reasons otherwise, one arrives at a kind of nuclear Maginot line.[60]

On 22 September of the same year, in an exchange between Mitterrand and the Communist leader Georges Marchais,[61] the former expressed the opinion that, in the light of his lack of belief in the efficacy of the *force de frappe*, an umbrella had to be sought elsewhere, and indeed this was 'the strength of Alliances.'[62] Simply put, the French nuclear force was not to be depended on, and was, therefore, unable to guarantee the kind of independent defence policy that other sections of the leadership demanded.

Mitterrand made a clear statement of his views on defense policy in an article in *Le Monde* on 14 and 15 December 1977, which further suggested the reluctance of the First Secretary of the PS to rally whole-heartedly to the idea of the *force de frappe*. The *bureau exécutif* decision to agree on the formula of the *maintien en état* of the force was candidly explained:

> Nuclear weapons are today the essential part of our military power. To give them up *a priori*.... presupposes another definition of our international policy. We can neither ignore nuclear weapons nor deny their existence. We know the arguments of the supporters of the atom bomb. France possesses a nuclear force which, without being comparable to those of the superpowers, counts for something....
>
> And it is true that there is a real temptation to choose the nuclear option for internal and international reasons. We must not upset allies who are anxious to see France maintain its place in the defense of the West. How convenient it would be to calm these apprehensions and to follow, with some alterations, the military policy of these last years! Many reasons argue for such a course. Arriving in power after the 1978 elections, that is to say after twenty years of a nuclear policy, we must take it into account. From this springs the idea of "*maintien en état*".

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advise the French to vote. See *Le Monde*, 27 July 1977.

[60] *Le Figaro*, 28 April, 1977.

[61] The Communist Party Central Committee had adopted the Kanapa report, recommending an acceptance of the *force de frappe* on May 11 1977. This document was resolutely in favour of French independence in the defence sphere, preaching complete independence of decision, arguing against any form of European defense, and going as far as to recommend French withdrawal from the Nato Air-Defence Ground Environment (NADGE) system.

[62] Cited in H. Claude, op. cit. pg. 32.

If nuclear weapons were to be taken into account, then, it was not as a result of any real 'conversion' of the First Secretary, but rather because of the influence of numerous domestic and external constraints which left the Socialists with no choice. Despite the adoption by the *bureau exécutif* of the *maintien en état* formula, Mitterrand went on:

> This, however, is not our formula. The Socialist party is still attached to the aim of the 1972 *programme commun,* namely the renunciation of the *force de frappe*. It inserted this priority in the up-dated text of 1977. It intends, when the time comes, to unleash immediately the disarmament process, and, for that, to give an example.

The *force de frappe* might for the moment, then, be an unfortunate necessity, but the long- and even medium-term priorities were clear. Mitterrand was indicating that France's nuclear weapons met with only his grudging consent, and were not central to his long-term strategy for the country. Thus, a Socialist administration would immediately abandon its Mirage IV component.[63]

Coupled with a distrust of nuclear weapons was opposition to the French policy of reaping substantial rewards from a flourishing arms export industry.[64] Mitterrand, in his 1977 articles in *Le Monde*, had roundly criticised both the arms export-dependence of France, and the excessive influence wielded by certain large arms producing firms, notably Dassault.[65] Other leading Socialists also expressed distrust of the way in which the French military-industrial complex functioned. Thus Hernu and Jean-Pierre Cot proposed a means of counter-balancing its influence by increasing parliamentary control over arms sales.[66]

Many members of the Party continued to argue for a variety of reasons against any form of acceptance of the *force de frappe* by the Socialist movement. Some claimed that the possession of such weapons was inimitable to a Socialist policy of government.[67] Others asserted that the *force de frappe* was singularly ill-equipped to deal with the sort of threats that would face a Socialist France - economic from the United States, and conventional in the unlikely event of Soviet military

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[63] F. Mitterrand, 'Une Stratégie Pour le Désarmement', *Le Monde*, 14 December 1977.

[64] The issues were indissolubly linked in that the revenue from arms sales was vital to France to enable it to fund its ambitious national nuclear programme. See the discussion in Chapter Eight.

[65] F. Mitterrand, 'Une Stratégie Pour le Désarmement', op. cit.

[66] *L'Express*, 10-16 July 1981.

[67] See, for example, the article by Bernard Pingaud, one of the most vociferous of the Socialist anti-nuclear campaigners, *Le Matin*, 6 December 1977.

aggression. The third reason for the opposition to the nuclear force, and one very much in evidence in the amendment to the motion on Socialist acceptance of the French nuclear force at the special defence Convention of January 1978 at Paris,[68] was that:

> Western solidarity, in the only foreseeable hypothesis of Soviet territorial intervention in Western Europe, [is] infinitely more deterrent than a specifically French threat.[69]

At the Convention,[70] the acceptance of the nuclear force was ratified by a majority of the delegates, [71] though support of nearly thirty per cent of the delegates for the anti-nuclear amendment meant that Mitterrand, who at the start of the conference had thrown his weight behind not only maintenance but also modernisation of the French nuclear force,[72] had to accept the inclusion of phrases in final the motion accepted at the Convention[73] which emptied the concept of deterrence of all sense. In particular, whilst it was agreed that the nuclear force should be maintained *en état,*[74] the Convention also agreed that the concept of deterrence was not completely credible, referring, in the final motion, to *une crise de la dissuasion*. That the emphasis was still to a large degree on disarmament was revealed by the decision not to replace the Mirage nuclear force, and the statement that the future of the missiles of the Plateau d'Albion was uncertain.[75]

Even the celebrated acceptance of nuclear weapons, then, was not clear cut.[76] The CERES were violently attacked at the Convention for their nationalism, militarism, and praise for the *force de frappe*, and the CERES contribution, attempting to remove what it saw as the 'Atlanticist' tone of the

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[68] Called for at the Nantes Socialist Congress of June 1977.

[69] See P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 108.

[70] Ibid, pp. 104-112.

[71] The *bureau exécutif* motion received 68.2% of the votes.

[72] *Le Monde*, 10 January 1978.

[73] This can be found in *Le Poing et la Rose*, no 67, January 1978. The proposed motion, amendment forwarded by the anti-nuclear lobby, and CERES contribution can be found in *Le Poing et La Rose*, *supplément au no 65*, November 1977.

[74] The difference between the two formulae *maintien en état* and *maintien en l'état* was much discussed during the debates on the nuclear force. The former, which the Socialists had proposed at the time of the discussions for the updating of the common programme with the communists involved leaving the nuclear force as it was. The latter allowed for modernisation.

[75] In the text of the *bureau exécutif* motion, these measures of unilateral disarmament had ben made conditional on the progress of general disarmament negotiations.

[76] See *Le Monde*, 10 January 1978.

final text, was defeated.[77] Once the principle of maintaining the nuclear force was accepted, it still remained clearly to define the repercussions of this on Socialist Alliance and defense policies in general. A programme of maintaining the *force de frappe* left the way open for an aggressively nationalist and independent foreign and defence policy stance, which many members, especially of the CERES, called for.

Of Euromissiles and Elections

The period 1978-1981 was to witness the final stages of the refinement of Socialist defense and foreign policies before coming to power. Despite the apparent acceptance of the *force de frappe*, there remained, as we have seen, many positions within the party with regard to this and other issues. The final part of this chapter will consider the evolution of Socialist ideas during these final three and a half years.

Mitterrand and Independence Mitterrand's articles in *Le Monde* of December 1977 had dealt in some detail with his conception of the bipolar system and of the Atlantic Alliance. The emphasis was very clearly laid on the concept of national independence:

> The guiding principle which should animate the Socialist Party convention is that of autonomy of decision. It is not a question of going it alone. But, making use of our particular position, we must put forward original proposals which will allow a fixed situation to develop.[78]

Autonomy of decision was obviously important with regard to all states or organisations, but Mitterrand was fairly explicit with respect to the direction from which he felt the threat was greatest:

> ....medium powers are hardly a threat to our country....whilst one or other of the superpowers can annihilate us, especially if one knows that imperialism has diversified the means at its disposal. Military attack, now improbable, is giving way to economic pressure and technological hegemony. It is, therefore, necessary to assess our capacity for resistance on all fronts and firstly on those, said to be pacific, where the hostilities have already broken out. France loses a war when she loses command of its industrial apparatus.....Autonomy of decision, the key to our independence, implies that we accept the challenge in these spheres and determine alone or with our European partners, a course which is not dictated from outside.[79]

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[77] See M. Battesti, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

[78] F. Mitterrand, 'Une Stratégie pour le désarmement', op. cit.

[79] Ibid.

This thinly-veiled reference to American economic penetration of the French economy was followed by a critique of the superpower security system, and a defence of French non-integration and independence in this sphere. Whilst the superpower tendency to decide on the fate of the world themselves was increasing,[80] the ability of the hegemons of the bipolar system to ensure security was diminishing:

> the condominium is no longer able to assure peace. Within each of the blocs, the aspiration for independence and liberty is breaking open the corset of discipline.[81]

Moreover, in an age of ever-increasing arms proliferation, the existing Alliance system was not itself enough to ensure security:

> Today, an alliance policy, which is a necessary condition, no longer constitutes a sufficient condition for the safeguarding of our national independence. A military confrontation in Europe would perhaps spare the sanctuaries of the two superpowers. It would certainly ravage European territory and would not stop on the banks of the Rhine. The increasing sophistication of weapons and the development of the grey area between nuclear and conventional weapons, would leave in ruins a battlefield, spreading, at least, from Brittany to the Ukraine. The accumulation of nuclear and conventional weapons by the European theatre heralds unprecedented destruction, which the Chiefs of Staff envisage with equanimity.[82]

To a degree, Mitterrand was merely taking up the Gaullist idea of superpower condominium leading to Europe being turned into a battlefield on which the superpowers would decide the fate of the world, and the outcome of their power struggle. Yet his argument was inconsistent. Gaullist military orthodoxy envisaged the possibility of the 'sanctuarisation' of France in the case of hostilities in Europe: there existed, in the minds of theorists such as Fourquet, at least the possibility of a distinction between the 'first' and 'second' battles, and as such, France's position outside the integrated structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was perfectly coherent. France could simply decide that its interests were not at stake in a conflict in the European theatre. Mitterrand, however, was explicit in saying that any conflict in Europe between the superpowers would extend from 'Brittany to the Ukraine'. Not only would France be involved through choice in the battle,(as Giscard d'Estaing and Méry had intimated), but it would *automatically* be fully implicated. This being the case, any military rationale for France's position with regard to Nato was seriously weakened, for automatic engagement in a European conflict would be the result of the very initiation

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

of such a conflict, not of any orders emanating from the integrated command.

Yet the withdrawal of France in 1966 had come to be seen as a positive move by Mitterrand, with his new emphasis on autonomy of decision. In particular, its political implications were seen as having beneficial consequences, allowing France to play a unique role in international politics, respected and independent of the two blocs. France's position with respect to Nato 'gives it the means of a distinct language', and:

> In these conditions, to align France with its partners would amount to neglecting the specificity of its contribution. Let it be present, but in order to say something different![83]

Independence and autonomy of decision being such precious commodities, their preservation was another reason for the acceptance, albeit reluctant, of the *force de frappe*, since 'our nuclear disarmament would only be compatible with our alliances if we were to reintegrate into Nato.[84] Thus Mitterrand himself explicitly recognised the mutually reinforcing nature of independence and the French nuclear force. No longer was acceptance of the *force de frappe* based solely on the fact that it existed and that the French wanted it; its presence was now seen as an important prerequisite for the foreign and defense policies he advocated.

Mitterrand did not attack the Atlantic Alliance itself, although he stressed the need for initiatives to tackle challenges in other than the military domain. Indeed, he wrote soon afterwards that 'the Americans ought to know that we will be loyal allies, if there is a war and if this war is provoked by the desires of outside powers'. The Alliance as a purely defensive structure was both necessary and desirable, but it remained to clearly specify the limits of the commitments to the United States contained within the Treaty.[85]

The Debate on the Alliance Such views of loyalty to the American ally, and even of continued adherence to the Atlantic Alliance, were not universally held within the Party. Admiral Antoine Sanguinetti, for instance, claimed that there was a fundamental contradiction between the two essential

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] *Le Monde*, 10 January 1978. Hubert Vedrine states that 'The Atlantic Alliance does not bother the President. He has never hesitated to say we are allies of the Americans. But he does not accept the idea of allowing Washington to do what it likes in the world. He contests in particular the American view of the North Atlantic Treaty, which is purely defensive.' See E. Roussel, op. cit., pg 148.

principles of French defence policy namely remaining in the Atlantic Alliance and considering defence from an overall point of view, that is to say including national control of the economy.

> To stay in an Atlantic Alliance dominated by the United States under the pretext of Soviet military power, is to reduce the problem of defence once again to its military dimension alone, since it is not possible to remain tightly linked to the principal capitalist power of the world, and to claim to conserve control over our economy
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> It is the Atlantic Alliance...which promotes the political and economic subjection of Western Europe, and which covers the general counter-offensive of capitalism against the rise of Socialist aspirations on our continent.

The Alliance, Sanguinetti maintained, was moving towards a form of political federation dominated by the United States. Since, therefore, the Brussels Treaty was more constraining in terms of military security against the Soviet Union than the Treaty of Washington, and far less dangerous for the Europeans themselves, a left-wing French government should subscribe only to the Brussels Treaty, whilst working for the dissolution of the bloc system. Talk of a Soviet military threat was merely a device wheeled out by the capitalist media whenever Alliance cohesion was threatened. He concluded:

> The danger for Europe today is not military nor Soviet, but lies in the fact that Europe is growing accustomed to its economic cultural and political vassalisation to the United States. It is up to us, the French, since we alone in Europe possess the influence conferred by the atom, to break up this tutelage and thus to provoke the psychological leap which alone can begin the process of returning our continent to the path of independence in its decisions. A left-wing government will have to do this....if it accepts with François Mitterrand that the only possible Europe is one that is independent and Socialist, while the Atlantic Alliance, at the service of American capitalism, is the main obstacle to this end.[86]

The left wing of the PS, grouped around the CERES, shared with the PCF a vision of complete independence from either of the two blocs, and total non-alignment. Mitterrand was in favour of continued membership of the Alliance, and a refusal of any stance implying neutrality. Thus, Mitterrand rejected PCF proposals for the updating of the *Programme Commun* with regard to Alliance affairs[87] because they implied neutrality.[88] Again, on questions of nuclear targeting, whilst the Communists argued in favour of a true *tous azimuts* policy, most of the PS opposed such an

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[86] A. Sanguinetti, 'Les Vassaux de l'Amérique', *Le Matin*, 26 December 1977.

[87] Parti Communiste Français, *Programme Commun de Gouvernement Actualisé*, Paris, Éditions Sociales, 1978, pg. 143.

[88] *Le Monde*, 24 February 1978.

affirmation of complete independence.[89]

Charles Hernu, although a member of the *Mitterrandiste* faction of the Party, was somewhat more sceptical with regard to both the threat posed by the Soviet INF weapons, and the positive role of the Alliance. In a work published in 1980, he admitted that the accession to power of a government including Communists in a country that had signed the Atlantic Pact would necessitate at least a renegotiation of the contents of the Alliance, which was in fact controlled by the President of the United States, and therefore the leader of the capitalist world.[90] He strongly took up the Gaullist theme of independence from either bloc. It seemed to him as if the superpowers had already decided to fight a battle on European soil, and the doctrinal changes of Giscard d'Estaing and Méry clearly indicated that France would participate in this battle in the front line. France was a member of the Alliance, and Hernu did not 'exclude the possibility of France responding to the necessities, to its Alliance obligations.'[91] But his emphasis was on the danger of Alliance membership leading to an acceptance of American strategy, or to involvement in extra-European conflicts, rather than on the need for participation in accord with Alliance obligations.

The Euromissiles Crisis Battle was joined in earnest over the issue of France and the Alliance with the onset of the Euromissiles crisis.[92] Even before the decision of the Nato Council was known, at the meeting of the *bureau exécutif* of 5 December, 1979, François Mitterrand nearly found himself in a minority as a result of his stance on the issue: We do not want there to be force imbalances between East and West; if the experts think that Pershing missiles are necessary to assure this, we are in favour of this.[93]

Mitterrand eventually had to rely on the support of minorities on the *bureau exécutif* in order to overcome the opposition of the CERES. An article by Jean-Pierre Chevènement on 15 December had

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[89] Mitterrand stated simply that he 'did not perceive the necessity of pointing our missiles at our own allies', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 July 1977.

[90] C. Hernu, *Nous....les Grands*, Lyon, Galula, 1980, pg. 12.

[91] Ibid, pg. 29.

[92] On 12 December 1979, the 15 Foreign Ministers of the North Atlantic Council made public their decision to deploy on European soil in 1983 572 American medium range missiles - 108 Pershing II, and 464 Cruise missiles, while proposing to the Soviet Union a relaunch of the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks and a European disarmament conference. This 'double decision', as it came to be known, was a response to the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles, which had started in 1977.

[93] Quoted as part of interview with Georges Sarre, *La Croix*, 15 December 1979.

described the decision to deploy the Nato weapons as a 'means of control over Europe and over the Soviet Union'.[94] An interview with CERES member Georges Sarre, published on the same day, was equally dismissive.[95] Along with members of the CERES, Charles Hernu was at this time sceptical about the reality of Soviet military superiority.[96]

On the 20 December, the National Assembly debated a motion of censure put forward by the PCF criticising the 'grave responsibility' carried by the French government for the decision to deploy the new American missiles.[97] It was during this debate that Mitterrand made probably his most eloquent and impassioned defence of the Nato decision. He started off by enumerating certain points on which there existed general agreement among the French political parties: France did not participate in the integrated command of Nato; it was a part of the Atlantic Alliance; it possessed its own independent nuclear force; and it maintained 'relations of friendship' with the Soviet Union. Although France was not part of Nato's integrated command structure, it was obviously concerned by questions of security, especially as the Soviet armoury could reach French soil. The basic problem was 'why, if the Soviet Union is a friendly country....and a pacific country....does it point its missiles towards French towns, arsenals, and military installations?'. Certainly, in terms of a global balance, Mitterrand claimed, the United States probably had a slight advantage, but in Europe, with the deployment of the SS-20s, this was certainly not the case - indeed, 'Soviet superiority is established'. This being the case, rather than explicitly supporting the deployment of Pershing as a necessary step, Mitterrand returned to the Socialist preoccupation of disarmament:

> We are not those who say:" There are SS-20s, therefore Pershing is necessary". We are not those who say: "There are Pershing so we must increase our armaments [*surarmer*] on the other side". We say: "There are SS-20 missiles and there are Pershing 2....therefore we must negotiate".[98]

In order to reconcile such an attitude with his professed desire to see the end of the two-bloc system, he continued:

> We have engaged in a campaign calling for the progressive dissolution of blocs and

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[94] J-P Chevènement, 'La Défense Américaine de l'Europe: une impasse', *Le Monde*, 15 December 1979.

[95] Interview with Georges Sarre, *La Croix*, 15 December 1979.

[96] *Nous....Les Grands*, op. cit., pg. 48.

[97] The full debate can be consulted in JO, débats, AN, 20 December 1979, pp. 12423-12431.

[98] JO, débats, AN, 20 December 1979, pg. 12427.

> the nuclear neutralisation of Central Europe. But in the Left's *Programme Commun de Gouvernement*, with regard to the dissolution of blocs, was the precision, forgotten in a previous speech[99] that this dissolution should be progressive and simultaneous. The final term has disappeared from the speech of my predecessor at this tribune. Let us replace it in order to show exactly what the agreements of the left mean, a patriotic left which intends to cede to neither side![100]

While the simultaneous dissolution of the blocs was not yet a reality, decisions made by France and by French leaders would be made, not because of any particular affiliation or membership of one camp or another, but because of a consideration of *French* interests, and legitimate *French* security concerns:

> ....if I were Russian, I would not accept that missiles threatened my country, and, should the case arise, I would, of course, negotiate so that they were not installed in Europe. If I were American, I would not accept that Soviet Russia could conveniently destroy Nato and allied military installations.
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> But I am not Russian and I am not American. I am French, and I do not accept the fact that missiles can threaten the existence of France.
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> The conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on the subject of the SS-20s and the Pershing 2, can be solved and will most probably be solved by an agreement between the two superpowers. Are you sure it will not be solved to the detriment of European countries and to the detriment of France? We want to be masters of our own destiny. We do not accept that our fate depends on the good will of others. It is not up to us to work for the interest of one or another other power, but for that of our country.
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> Neither an Atlantic nor a Soviet *glacis*, neither American nor Soviet missiles of death. Solidarity with our allies, yes! Submission to their interests, no! Friendship with the USSR, yes! Submission to its interests, no![101]

Not surprisingly, the PS was far from united on the question of the Euromissiles. Mitterrand had succeeded in making his opinion prevail to a large extent at the January 1978 Defence Convention through mobilising the support of the anti-nuclear lobby against what Jean-Pierre Cot described as the 'nationalists' of the CERES.[102] Since that time, however, Cot had, at the Metz Socialist

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[99] That made by Georges Marchais when proposing the censure motion.

[100] JO, débats, AN, 20 December 1979, pg. 12427.

[101] JO, débats, AN, 20 December 1979, pg. 12429.

[102] *Libération*, 17 December 1979.

Congress, rallied to the cause of Michel Rocard, and demanded French participation in a hypothetical SALT 3 round of arms limitation negotiations. The Party was especially vulnerable to the inevitable accusations of 'alignment behind Washington' emanating from the PCF.[103] In *Le Monde* of 22 December, Charles Fiterman, of the Secretariat of the Communist Party Central Committee, claimed that he knew members of the PS who shared the Communist analysis of the Euromissiles affair.[104]

The Euromissiles affair was central to the ongoing debate within the Socialist Party over the correct attitude to take with regard to security issues, the United States and its policy in general, and the Atlantic Alliance and Nato in particular. The debate took on a new urgency because of the Presidential elections scheduled for the Spring of 1981.

The *Projet Socialiste* As from 1979, work started on the Socialist manifesto or Charter for the 1980s, which was completed by the end of the year, and published in 1980.[105] The striking feature of this document was its insistence on independence for France from either of the two military and political blocs. Thus, European construction was to take place based on a resistance to both international capitalism and Soviet power.[106] Criticisms of American cultural imperialism[107] were followed by affirmations that the Soviet Union was not a Socialist country, because it was not democratic.[108] Moreover, whilst the idea of a Soviet *imperialism* was questioned,[109] hostility towards it was made clear, if only for domestic reasons, namely that the Soviet Union had traditionally been used by French Presidents to avoid the victory of the left in France through the instrument of the French Communist Party.[110] The idea was repeated, however, of the major threat for France coming less from the possibility of Soviet aggression in Europe that from American

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[103] See *L'Humanité*, 20 December 1979, and *Le Monde* of 21 December.

[104] See *Le Monde*, 22 December, 1979.

[105] Parti Socialiste, *Projet Socialiste Pour les Années 80*, Paris, Club Socialiste du Livre, 1980.

[106] Ibid, pg. 339.

[107] Ibid, pp. 56-7.

[108] Ibid, pg. 64.

[109] Ibid, pg. 75.

[110] 'At all times, conservative heads of government, whether Laval in 1935, de Gaulle in 1944 or in 1968, Pompidou and most recently Giscard, have sought from Moscow a guarantee of the internal order in return for a foreign policy more or less open to Soviet preoccupations', ibid, pg. 76.

capitalism.[111] Moreover, conservative anti-Soviet propaganda reinforced French dependence on American power, whilst limiting the possibility of cooperation with the East European states.[112] Because of this, it 'is not by chance if national independence finds itself as the starting point from which, in a world dominated by the blocs, an original Socialist experiment claims to be possible.[113] Patriotism was adopted as a central theme of the manifesto as far as foreign policy was concerned, [114] and this was contrasted with the capitalist internationalism of the incumbent President.[115]

As for the blocs themselves, it was recognised that an active policy of disengagement should not be allowed to jeopardise the balance of forces on which detente was predicated, and thus:

> 'In the present state of affairs, the security of France prevents it from allowing the slightest doubt as to its determination to respect its alliances and to fulfil its obligations, as well as its refusal to allow itself to be dragged beyond those engagements to which it has expressly subscribed.'[116]

The Atlantic Alliance was, therefore, still a necessity for French security, as a counterweight to Soviet power in Europe, though it 'should not serve as a pretext for the alignment of France with imperialist positions in the world, and nor should it lead, directly or indirectly, in Europe to integration with the American strategic forces.'[117]

Rather than criticising either side of the bipolar order as responsible for insecurity in the world, the Socialist manifesto was keen to put forward a critique of the system itself, as a cause of instability.[118] Moreover, the growing temptation on the part of the superpowers to develop 'a joint and world vision of the security of the world'[119] increased such dangers. The most pressing danger

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[111] Ibid, pg. 78.

[112] Ibid, pg. 80.

[113] Ibid, pg. 80.

[114] Ibid, pg. 337

[115] Ibid, pg. 336

[116] Ibid, pg. 340.

[117] Ibid, pg. 340.

[118] Ibid, pg. 347.

[119] Ibid, pg. 347.

facing not only France but Europe as a whole was the risk of seeing the Old Continent turned deliberately into a battlefield by the superpowers.[120] To this Gaullist critique of the international system was added a Gaullist conclusion with regard to the defence of Western Europe: a move towards the increasingly conventional defence of the Alliance countries, in an era of a less and less reliable guarantee was simply a way of making Western Europe a dependent satellite of the American system, benefitting from no real protection. The policy propounded by Giscard d'Estaing in 1976 of French participation in the forward battle was thus tantamount to placing French forces under integrated command.[121]

For the framers of the *Projet Socialiste*:

> The fact that we remain in the Atlantic Alliance cannot mean our acquiescence to American strategy. If it is true that our country cannot give up an alliance without having another alliance or collective security system negotiated at the European or world level, the Atlantic Alliance, like the Treaty of Brussels, moreover, ...involves limited obligations. The Socialist Party intends to fulfil these obligations without fail, but no French government can accept seeing itself automatically dragged into a conflict which does not involve the responsibility and the interests of the country. That is why it is essential for us to conserve the full autonomy of decision in our defence, especially with regard to control over deterrent forces. There is no such thing as real deterrence through intermediary power. Because it can prevent the fulfilment of the hypothesis of a battle in Europe, the French deterrent force is a factor of stability for the whole continent.[122]

Membership of the Atlantic Alliance, without alignment behind Washington, or acceptance of flexible response was, then, the order of the day. Obviously, nuclear weapons should be maintained, but they should be maintained *en état* - that is to say that modernisation should proceed as and when necessary.

The *Projet Socialiste* was a document that owed much of its inspiration to the CERES.[123] It

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[120] Ibid, pg. 348.

[121] Ibid, pg. 348.

[122] Ibid, pp. 348-9.

[123] At the Metz party Congress of 1979, a new majority had been created consisting of the CERES, and supporters of Mitterrand, which explains the influence of the former group reflected in the *Projet Socialiste*. Stanley Hoffmann has described the *Projet Socialiste* as 'a museum piece, a Marxist delirium in which most of the world's woes were blamed on imperialist exploitation, multinational enterprises, and capitalist contradictions.' This in itself is revealing as to the influence of the CERES. Cited in P. Godt, *Policy Making in France*, London, Belhaven Press, 1989, pg. 63.

represented an attempt to define an overall policy for the Socialist movement, but clearly could not do justice to all the tendencies and opinions contained within the PS. Thus, whilst Mitterrand had spoken out in favour of a 'greater cohesion within what is called the "West"',[124] Jean-Pierre Chevènement responded firmly to this, claiming that:

> It is certainly necessary to invent new rules of the game at the international level. But I am not sure that this can be done by means of a tightening of western solidarity.[125]

Without questioning France's obligation to fulfil its treaty commitments, the CERES leader went on to classify the relationship between the United States and the Alliance in terms of 'hegemony' - a description that had been studiously avoided in the *Projet Socialiste*.

Mitterrand, the Alliance, and the Defence of Europe Mitterrand, characteristically, very much went his own way. When, on 25 April 1980, President Carter announced the failure of a military attempt to free the American hostages from Teheran, Mitterrand, alone among his Party, did not condemn the American attempt.[126] A detailed exposé of his views on Alliance and defence questions appeared in print in 1980.[127] This, along with his *110 Propositions* for France, which came out in the same year, were the basis of his Presidential campaign in 1981, and clearly demonstrated not only his views, but also the differences that separated him from many members of his own Party on questions of defence and foreign policy.

The future President of the Republic repeated his support for the deployment of the Euromissiles, if negotiations on the removal of SS-20s were to fail. Moreover he expressed surprise that Giscard d'Estaing had failed to take a public line on the issue.[128] Whilst admitting that there might be some truth in the claim of Chevènement that the Euromissiles debate was a result of the deliberate exaggeration of the Soviet threat in order to reinforce the position of the military-industrial lobby, he

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[124] Interview in *Le Monde*, 31 July 1980.

[125] Interview in *Le Matin*, 6 August 1980.

[126] Mitterrand spoke of 'the act which, of itself, seems....of itself hardly something to be condemned: to take back something that others have taken from you.' Quoted in F. Mitterrand, *Politique 1938-1981*, Paris, Editions Marabout, 1984, pg. 268. I would like to express my thanks to Jean-Pierre Maulny, Secretary to the PS Defence Commission in the National Assembly for pointing out the fact of Mitterrand's isolation on this question to me.

[127] F. Mitterrand, *Ici et Maintenant*, Paris, Fayard, 1980, pp. 225-252.

[128] Ibid, pg. 234.

pointed out that the danger posed by the deployment of the SS-20s was nevertheless a real one.[129] Yet although the reality of the Soviet threat was explicitly recognised, he was careful not to fall into the trap of leaving himself open top charges of 'alignment with Washington'.

He did not go as far as Chevènement in his attacks on the United States, but did express the hope that 'we will not be weak every time the Americans confuse Alliance and imperialism.' and accused the Americans of having 'never ceased waging an economic war against us'[130] He was especially severe with regard to the Atlantic Alliance, which 'has no more content' and therefore a '....re-examination of the relations which unite the countries belonging to the Atlantic Alliance seemed to me to be both urgent and necessary.'[131] He continued:

> The Atlantic Alliance foresees consultations between partners in case of a threat, that is all. The Treaty of Brussels speaks of this a little more, but in reality no-one in the West knows where the Alliance stands, what its covers, the reciprocal obligations it necessitates, and its degree of automaticity. It is at least necessary that everyone realises what he is accepting and refusing, and says it openly to the others. Afterwards, everyone will know what to believe. What is clear at the moment is that the Alliances is based on a fiction: American intervention in Europe in case of aggression.[132]

In terms of the defence policy to be followed by France in the light of this complete lack of faith in the American guarantee, Mitterrand was equally forthright; for the moment, France had no choice but to 'ensure the defence of its own territory by nuclear deterrence'.[133] He went on to explain the rationale behind, as well as the problems with, such an approach:

> Any sortie outside its own territory would fundamentally contradict this strategy, would involve us in conflicts which we can no longer dominate, and would make us return into a system within which we would lose our autonomy of decision. But this falling back on itself could in the long term push France towards a sort of neutralism with regard to world affairs, and especially with regard to its closest friends. If we refuse any form of solidarity with these latter, how are we to expect their solidarity towards us? There exists today a contradiction between a strategy based on the defence uniquely of the national sanctuary, and a strategy based on the Alliance. A

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[129] Ibid, pp. 233-235.

[130] Ibid, pg. 231.

[131] Ibid, pg. 230.

[132] Ibid, pg. 232.

[133] Ibid, pp. 232-3.

> political leader who is afraid to pose this problem is misleading public opinion. I ask that people should at last know what we are talking about, and that we discuss it.[134]

This exposé clearly shows the development that had taken place in Mitterrand's thought, especially as far as military matters were concerned. Previously, as we have seen, the political implications of military strategy had been the issue which concerned him most. Now, however, he was not only able to criticise what he saw as an inherent contradiction in present French military strategy, but also imply that, if elected, this contradiction would need to be resolved. Clearly, his intent as expressed in this speech was, if elected, to harmonise French military doctrine with the requirements of allied solidarity.

'Mitterrand was very much at ease with regard to the Gaullist theses on Nato' explained Claude Cheysson, Mitterrand's first Foreign Minister.[135] Certainly, this was true to some extent, though not entirely, and certainly not for the same reasons as de Gaulle. Mitterrand was never fully convinced of the utility of nuclear weapons, and certainly never had the same enthusiasm for them as some of his predecessors. This being the case, he was, as his predecessors had been to a greater or lesser extent, an opponent of flexible response, since it represented a strategy which rested on the notion of nuclear war-fighting.

Rejection of Nato military strategy was, as we have seen, accompanied by opposition to the bloc system as it had existed since the Second World War. Outwardly, Mitterrand's policy on this issue was very similar to that of his predecessors, with the obligatory references to 'Yalta', and the role of France as an independent middle power. The bases of such views were, however, far different to the ideas which had underpinned de Gaulle's policies, and were of crucial importance to the development of Socialist Alliance and defence policies in the 1980s.

De Gaulle had, as we have seen, based much of his alliance policy on the assumption that the Soviet Union posed no real military threat to France, and that dialogue with the USSR would mark an important symbol of French prestige on the world stage. The absence of military threat provided the necessary condition for the 1966 withdrawal. Mitterrand, however, had increasingly come to view the Soviet installation of the SS-20s in Europe as a military threat, and was in favour of severely limiting dialogue with the Soviet Union in order to force concessions on Afghanistan and Poland.

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[134] Ibid, pg. 233.

[135] Interview, Paris, 1991.

As a prominent, yet superficial critic of Mitterrand has put it:

> Anti-communism seems to constitute an axis from which he does not distance himself....For the rest, François Mitterrand is pragmatic.[136]

Certainly, years of combatting the French Communists at home, in the struggle for leadership of the French Left, along with the dislike of totalitarianism characteristic of the humanist Left made Mitterrand an ardent critic of Communism, and therefore more likely than his presidential predecessors to ascribe possible violent designs to Moscow. To this extent, Robin is correct. Where his account deviates from the truth, however, is in its claim that anti-communism was as far as Mitterrand went in terms of any doctrine or strategy of foreign policy. As we have seen above, Mitterrand felt a great attachment for the United States. As Cheysson points out, although he is a typical inhabitant of central France, having no great experience of foreigners, 'some foreigners are almost sacred for him', and these are the British and the Americans, without whom, France would not have emerged intact from the Second World War.[137] This idea of America contrasts strongly with those that were held by de Gaulle, and indeed the lessons they drew about the 'Anglo-Saxons' from World War Two were diametrically opposed. Mitterrand's distrust of the United States was largely based on ideological grounds, and concerned the question of American economic hegemony; in this regard, independence from the Americans was necessary in as many fields as possible, but without, if possible, this involving bitter disputes about an abstract concept of independence.

Socialism and Patriotism The other prominent theme that dominated the period prior to the election, and one which, as we have seen, can be traced back to the immediate post-war period, was that of Socialist patriotism, and the emphasis on giving France a world role. As we have seen, the theme of *grandeur* had permeated Socialist thought throughout the entire period. The French Socialist movement had a long tradition of harbouring nationalist ambitions, which it tended to clothe in the universalistic rhetoric which referred to the 'unique role' France could and should play in international affairs. It has been pointed out that the *Projet Socialiste* contrasted Socialist patriotism with Giscard d'Estaing's capitalist internationalism. The accusation that the incumbent President had allowed France to lose some of its 'standing' or 'rank' in international affairs was one that permeated Socialist writings and declarations, and was obviously intended as much for

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[136] G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 19.

[137] Interview, Paris, 1991.

consumption by the electorate as anything else. In January 1979, Mitterrand had spoken of the fact that France no longer had a voice in international affairs, a fact which he regretted as 'France is a great country who indeed has something to say'[138] The same theme was taken up in the text of the '*Charte Socialiste*' prepared at the end of 1979: Giscard d'Estaing was accused of reducing France to the level of a second rate power, whilst:

> The Socialist Party avoids falling into "nationalism" but feels it necessary to prepare a grand design for France. The Socialists of 1980 cannot bear seeing France treated as a negligible power in international relations.[139]

Immediately prior to the 1981 elections, Jean-Pierre Chevènement joined in the attacks on Giscard d'Estaing, accusing him of pursuing a policy of '*renoncement national*', and emphasising the aim of the PS to give France a world role.[140] He further attacked Giscard d'Estaing as being a mere pawn of the superpowers, and having betrayed the legacy of his predecessors in the realm of defence policy. The fact that 'French military policy no longer has anything to do with the principles underpinning it before the arrival of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in office' was illustrated by the fact both superpowers were in favour of his reelection. Open support for the incumbent President from the United States and the Soviet Union was based on a rejection by Giscard d'Estaing's France of the global role and 'third way' position that the previous President's of the Republic had clung to.[141]

The Parti Socialiste and the Elections of 1981 It has been pointed out earlier that the PS was far from unified on the question of the correct attitude for France with regard to forward defence and the defence of Central Europe. As the Presidential elections approached, the Party made an obvious attempt to appear united on policies, including defence questions. Although views differed with regard to the correct attitude to be taken towards the Neutron bomb,[142] the *Bureau exécutif* managed to reach a decision on continued study of it, without authorising manufacture, with no

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[138] F. Mitterrand, *Politique*, op. cit., pg. 245.

[139] Cited in P. Buffotot, op. cit., pg. 119, full text in *Le Poing et la Rose*, 85, November-December 1979.

[140] *Le Monde*, 4 May 1981.

[141] *Le Monde*, 4 May 1981.

[142] For various opinions, see J. Paucot, *Le Monde* 20 June, 1980, A. Sanguinetti, *Le Monde*, 25 June 1980, C. Hernu, *Le Matin*, 6 June, 1980.

votes being cast in opposition.[143] As the decision represented as much a statement to France's allies in Europe about Socialist attitudes in the event of a Central European war as anything else, the lack of argument from resolute opponents (Chevènement) and sceptics (Hernu) underlined the will for unity.

The key components of Socialist proposals on defence during the lead-up to the elections were, therefore, continued reliance on nuclear weapons until some form of disarmament conference could be arranged,[144] the possibility of a rethinking of military strategy in the context of a conflict between this and the idea of solidarity with allies; the idea of a necessary renegotiation of the Alliance[145] and the commitments it entailed, and a pronounced emphasis on the ideas of autonomy and independence.[146] Along with these came a commitment to disarmament, as well as to a '*moralisation*' if not reduction of French arms exports.

The Socialists also put forward criticisms of measures taken by the incumbent President. Jean-Yves Le Drian,[147] pointed to several major weaknesses and flaws with regard to the formulation and content of French security policy, notably, the lack of information on major decisions supplied to Parliament, the confusion over French strategic and tactical nuclear doctrines, as well as over the definition of France's vital interests, and its relationship with its neighbours. The failure accurately to define the threat (Soviet expansionism *and* American imperialism) facing France, and finally a necessity to raise defence spending to 4 per cent of GNP. These were all considerations which Le Drian clearly hoped would be directly addressed by a Socialist President.[148]

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[143] The CERES abstained.

[144] Hernu, soon to be appointed as Defence Minister, in a press conference on 15 April 1981, indicated that the Socialists would modernise French atomic weapons and proposed the construction of two new nuclear submarines.

[145] Mitterrand, in the 106th of his '*110 Propositions pour la France*', spoke of the need for a clear definition of the 'limits and contents of the Atlantic Alliance'. The full *110 propositions* can be found in P. Manceron and B. Pingaud, op. cit.

[146] Mitterrand declared on 22 April 1981 that 'France must develop a policy of independence as far as its thought, her, action, and its diplomacy are concerned, in the interests of the world.' See *Le Monde*, 8 May 1981.

[147] One of the defence experts in the PS, who was to become *rapporteur* of the National Assembly Defense Commission.

[148] See *DAN*, 1er trim., 1981, special edition 'Quels engagements vous parait-il nécessaire d'exiger, en matière de défense, des candidats la Présidence de la République?', pp. 29-32.

Conclusions

The PS programme, as expounded by its leadership immediately prior to Mitterrand's accession to power, consisted of many often incoherent, if not overtly contradictory ideas concerning national defence and the Atlantic Alliance. Varying degrees of acceptance of the French atomic force, along with disputes over the correct attitude to take with regard to the superpowers were cobbled together within a divided party. Mitterrand meanwhile, held himself slightly aloof from the mainstream of the Party, and expounded an independent line, based around a few key ideas: independence from the blocs, underpinned by his slightly reluctant acceptance of the *force de frappe*, a renegotiation of the Alliance in order to clarify the commitments it contained, a possible rethinking of French strategy which was seen as both contradictory to the needs of solidarity with the allies, and impractical given the form any European conflict would take, and support for the Nato double decision, based on a perception of the Soviet Union as a threat to Western security.

By a curious irony, the Socialist party had arrived at a position that was very close to that of the other major parties on Alliance policy. The French Socialist traditions of anti-capitalism, which found a natural expression in hostility towards the United States, and a nationalism stronger than that which characterised the policies of most other European Socialist parties, had led the PS towards the adoption of a defence policy based on the concept of national independence.

That policy had been shaped not only by the nature of traditional left-wing politics, Equally important were the various *courants* within the party, which represented different spectrums of the defence debate, and which had a profound influence on PS policy statements. Mitterrand, through his tactic of Presidential-style leadership of the Party and his very aloofness, was able to encourage such debate, and to align himself at various times with the faction or factions that were temporarily ascendant. In this way, the divisions and splits that accompanied disagreement over defence in, for example, the British Labour Party, were avoided. Similarly, the necessity, for electoral purposes, of the alliance with the Communists constrained Mitterrand to follow a path that ensured at least some consensus on defence issues between the two parties. Temporary CERES domination within the PS, along with the need to negotiate with the PCF resulted in the adoption by the PS of radical policy positions during the course of the 1970s. Whilst unable to impose views onto the Party as a whole, however, Mitterrand succeeded in propounding his own line on foreign policy matters through speeches and articles, and particularly through the publication of his own private manifesto for the 1981 Presidential elections, the *110 Propositions*.

On 10 May 1981, François Mitterrand became the first Socialist President of the French Fifth Republic. In a time of increasing international tension, especially within the context of East-West relations, given the obvious break-down of detente and the aggressive tone of the new American administration, foreign and defence matters were to be an important cornerstone of Socialist policies. In the light of the various tensions between the different strands of thought espoused by the Socialist movement, choices would have to be made.

CONCLUSIONS TO PART ONE

Part One has examined two issues, the Alliance policies of General de Gaulle and his two successors, and those propounded by the *Parti Socialiste* up to the time of Mitterrand's accession to the Presidency in May 1981.

The findings are of a striking continuity in France's Alliance policy between 1958 and 1981, a policy characterised by an insistence on 'national independence' as the basis of the quest for *grandeur*, by a concomitant refusal of military integration, and by periodic attempts to move in the direction of an increased 'Europeanisation' of existing security structures. Also notable was the gap that came to exist between the rhetoric of complete independence used by Presidents and other officials, and the reality of fairly tight, if rather secretive military cooperation with Nato. As Chapter One illustrated, these policies, and the manner in which they were presented provided France with a degree of prestige and influence that would probably have been unattainable by means of a more conventional role within Nato. Paris reaped the benefits of a relative freedom of at least declaratory manoeuvre in a world frozen by the rigidities of Cold War bipolarity.

As for the Socialists, the 'Long March' from the pro-Atlantic anti-nuclear stance of the old SFIO took them eventually to a position in favour of both the *force de frappe* and a policy of Alliance without integration. Yet the *Parti Socialiste*, and in particular its General Secretary clearly did not share all the views of successive French policy makers in this sphere. It was shown how Mitterrand expressed reservations concerning the tension in French strategy between affirmations military independence and the need to participate in the common defence of Central Europe.[1] Moreover he repeatedly questioned both the need and the morality of French weapons exportation programmes, as well as the influence of the large arms producers in the policy making process, whilst arguing in favour of increased European cooperation in the sphere of defence, and the need for some form of renegotiation of the Atlantic Alliance.[2]

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[1] Jolyon Howorth points out that three reasons pointed to the probability of a Socialist administration concentrating more on the conventional side of French armed forces than had previous Presidents, who had placed the emphasis in their defence doctrines on the nuclear - hence purely national - element of French forces. These were: the fact that the Socialists had for so long opposed the *force de frappe*, and large elements of it continued to do so even after 1979; the traditional Socialist preoccupation with a 'citizens' defence; and finally the fact that the 'vast majority' of Socialists were relatively 'Atlanticist'. See his 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices: Defense Policy under François Mitterrand', in G. Ross, S. Hoffmann, and S. Malzacher (eds.), *The Mitterrand Experiment*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987, pg. 307.

[2] This contrasts with the view of some analysts who have claimed that overall consensus existed over foreign and defence policy in France in 1981, see for instance P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol. 1., pp. 223-224. Prior to May, the statements by Mitterrand on the subject were marked by a degree of divergence from prevailing policy

Thus, despite outward similarity between prevailing French policy options and the declarations of leading Socialists - the stress on national independence, acceptance of the French nuclear deterrent force and the emphasis on the need for non-integration - there remained the strong possibility that the Presidency of Mitterrand would witness a noticeable shift in the nature of Alliance policy, towards a greater reliance on conventional forces, and increased interest in cooperation in the Central Front, along with efforts to change the nature and workings of the Atlantic Alliance itself.

We shall now turn to an examination of the policies pursued during the first ten years of Mitterrand's Presidency to see how ambiguities and confrontations were to be resolved - if at all - when choices had to be made.

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orthodoxy.

PART TWO
THE AMBIVALENT ALLY:
FRANCE AND NATO 1981-1992

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

Having examined the historical legacy bequeathed to the new Socialist President of the Republic, both in terms of existing French Alliance policy, and the situation within his own party, it is now time to turn to an examination of the Alliance policies pursued under the Presidency of Mitterrand himself.

Part Two of this thesis will perform two inter-related functions. First it will provide an account of French Alliance policy during the period, and thus enable the analyst to understand what forms that policy took. Based on this, it will analyse that policy in the context of a shifting international environment, examining the degree to which it managed to achieve the goals set for it by policy makers.

This section of the thesis is organised into four Chapters. Chapter Three describe the Alliance policies pursued by France under the Presidency of Mitterrand in order to give a broad overview of the Alliance policy of the period. The succeeding three chapters will examine each of the strands of that policy. Chapter Four examines French relations with the superpowers, and the notion of national independence that acted as a foundation stone for French foreign policy. Chapter Five analyses French defence policy, in particular with regard to a possible French role in the defence of Western Europe. Finally, French policy with regard to the possibility of the creation of some form of autonomous West European defence organisation is investigated in Chapter Six. Chapters Four, Five and Six are thematic in approach, seeking to analyse the fundamental rationales behind the constituent strands of Alliance policy, and to evaluate these elements in the light of profoundly changing international and domestic economic circumstances. In so doing, they will illustrate the way in which the traditional themes of French Alliance policy, adhered to faithfully under Mitterrand, became increasingly out of touch with prevailing international reality. By the end of the period under examination, they were somewhat dysfunctional, in that, rather than contributing to French influence in international politics, they tended, rather, to marginalise Paris, placing it in an impotent situation.

Thus, it will be seen that policy continuity occurred despite the fact that the various strands of Alliance policy neither responded to the international imperatives of the time, nor accorded completely with the declared intentions of the Socialist Party prior to 1981.

The concluding section of Part Two will examine in some detail the tensions that arose between the various strands of policy, in particular between the emphasis on independence in both relations with the superpowers and defence policy, and the increasing stress placed on the idea of the necessity of increased European cooperation and integration in the defence and foreign policy spheres.

Such tensions between strands of policy could be tolerated during earlier periods when French Alliance policy, reinforced by a rhetorical commitment to more European autonomy in the defence sphere, served in many ways to increase French international prestige, whilst in no way detracting from its security. However, the increasing pressures on the traditional elements of Alliance policy imposed by changing geostrategic and domestic economic forces both served to render those policy options increasingly counterproductive, and a European alternative more appealing. The question will then be posed - to be addressed in the concluding part of the thesis - as to why it is that French policy was allowed, through a marked continuity with the policies of the past, to become dysfunctional.

CHAPTER THREE
LA FIN DES SOUPÇONS?[1]
FRANCE, NATO AND THE ALLIANCE, 1981-1992

This chapter outlines French policy towards the Alliance and Nato between the election of Mitterrand in May 1981 and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty of February 1992. It examines the major stages in the development of French relations with Nato under Mitterrand and highlights the most prominent themes and issues. It aims to provide an overview of the topic, and a prelude to the following chapters which will tease out the major constituent elements of Alliance policy.

First Steps. May 1981-December 1982

The Politics of Non-Integration The new administration lost no time in underlining its opposition to military integration. The policy of alliance without integration had been generally accepted by all parties in France for many years, and no political grouping openly questioned it. It was the notion of military integration, and not the Alliance itself, that was eschewed by the governing Socialists. With regard to both, they attempted to stress continuity with past policies: Cheysson, during his Washington trip of early June, declared that a change of majority did not represent a change in the desire to be a 'sure partner' of Washington'.[2] Mitterrand stressed the fact that his Alliance policy was a continuation of those of his predecessors.[3]

The new President clearly spelled out the parameters of French policy:

> France has not left the Atlantic Alliance....It has left Nato's integrated command, and....there is no question of returning under the orders of the integrated command....
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> ....Nato is an expression that is used loosely. The Atlantic Alliance is a defensive military alliance, independent of the rest.[4]

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[1] Taken from an article in *L'Express*, 10 June 1983.

[2] Quoted in *Le Figaro*, 6-7 June 1981.

[3] See his interview on Spanish television, 20 June, 1982, cited in Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *La Politique Étrangère de la France: Textes et documents,* Paris, La Documentation Française, April-June 1982, pg. 166. (Henceforth *PEF*)

[4] F. Mitterrand, press conference at the Élysée, 9 June, 1982, in *PEF* April-June 1982, pg. 139.

The previous month, he had explained to a German audience the distinction between the Nato integrated command, and the Alliance itself:

> It is only natural that an alliance can exist .... without there necessarily being an integrated command. Consultation, solidarity, what does on Alliance mean if not the help provided for each other, ... the common, protection of common interests? This does not necessarily imply a command [structure] which in fact is controlled by one [state] alone, and is not ours.[5]

Yet France was a loyal member of the Alliance. Indeed, the Alliance represented for France more than a defensive grouping of nations - it was promoted to the point of being the centrepiece of French foreign policy: Cheysson in June 1981 stated that French 'foreign policy is founded first of all on the Atlantic Alliance.'[6] Paris also underlined its fidelity to its commitments under the Washington Treaty. Statements to the effect that France was not only an ally, but the most loyal ally of the United States[7] marked a break with the cultivated ambivalence of the past, and led the Nato Secretary-General to state, at a dinner of Alliance leaders in Bonn that:

> ....this President of France is more positive towards the Alliance and more friendly to the U.S. than his predecessor ever was. This is confirmed by what he is doing here.[8]

Indeed, Mitterrand had marked a certain evolution in French policy by the open manner in which he represented France at the Bonn dinner - a far cry from the almost furtive attendance at such events that had been the norm under his predecessor (who in turn had brought about something of a revolution by turning up at all).[9] His invitation to Alliance foreign ministers to hold their annual Spring meeting in Paris (for the first time since 1966) represented a similar *rapprochement*.

Loyalty to the Alliance, did not, however, entail a desire to see its prerogatives extended. French leaders were willing to criticise anything they perceived as an attempt by the United States to

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[5] Speech to the Übersee Club, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, 14 May, 1982. In *PEF* April-June 1982, pg. 50.

[6] Interview on *TF1*, 26 June 1981, reproduced in *PEF*, May-June 1981, pg. 49.

[7] Cheysson declared to the Association of the Anglo-American press on July 3 1981 that 'We are the best ally the United States has'. Cited in *PEF*, July-August 1981, pg. 7.

[8] Cited in the *Herald Tribune*, 12 June 1982.

[9] Ibid.

increase the competence of the Alliance over other issue areas. American attempts to bulldoze its allies on economic questions were greeted with resistance in Paris. At the end of the Versailles summit, Cheysson remarked pointedly in an article for the *Los Angeles Times* that the 'Treaty of Washington is not the Warsaw Pact',[10] whilst Mitterrand has been cited as saying, of the summit and later American attempts to impose consultation and coordination with regard to trade and credit policies towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that:

> it is inadmissible, unacceptable....Here is another step towards American leadership. There is no question of us accepting this American conception which dictates that everything that is economic is strategic, therefore military, therefore under the provenance of the Alliance. To argue in this way is to admit that France is no longer independent....we will repeat that there is no question of including French trade within the military obligations it has contracted.[11]

Even within its recognised sphere of activity, the Alliance failed to satisfy French aspirations. The socialist idea of some form of 'renegotiation' of the Alliance survived the period of opposition. Jeannou Lacaze, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff (CEMA), declared that France would probably move in the direction of a 'deepening of the Atlantic Alliance in order to achieve a better definition of the contractual obligations that it implies, and towards a greater reserve with regard to Alliance initiatives aimed at influencing our own decisions'[12] Prime Minister Mauroy expressed the French wish for a revision of the content of the North Atlantic Treaty, adapting it to the 'new historical context',[13] a sentiment he reaffirmed the following year.[14]

The area in which Paris was most adamant as to the need for structural change was decision making. Mitterrand, at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, remarked that 'I would like it if the Alliance were more often to be understood as the decision of the allies, and not merely as the communication by one ally to the others of the decision it has taken'.[15] The need for an autonomous capacity for evaluation and decision-making was emphasised by Cheysson, who

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[10] Cited in G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 93.

[11] Cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 262-263.

[12] J. Lacaze, 'La Politique Militaire', exposé au Centre des Hautes Études de l'Armament, 29 September 1981. Cited in *Défense Nationale*, 37, November 1981, pg. 10.

[13] P. Mauroy, 'La cohérence d'une politique de défense', *Défense Nationale*, 37, October 1981, pg. 19.

[14] See P. Mauroy, 'Vers un nouveau modèle d'armée', *Défense Nationale*, 38 November 1982, pg. 17.

[15] *PEF*, April-June 1982, pg. 50.

reserved the right for the French to 'affirm our identity at the heart of the Atlantic Alliance, to define ourselves our vital interests, to proceed with our own analysis of the threats'.[16] French officials were quick to point out the need for reciprocity. This implied consultation, and so, 'before taking a decision, outside the Alliance, a decision which affects the Alliance partners, we must discuss it together.'[17]

Military Cooperation Independence, both political and military, was acknowledged by all French leaders to be a primary aim of French foreign and defence policy. Yet statements also indicated that another, if somewhat secondary, principle of French defence policy was to fulfil treaty engagements.[18]

The new leadership was quick, however, to set down guidelines for, and limits to, cooperation with the Alliance. These were outlined by Lacaze in September 1981. Cooperation would be limited to *conventional forces only*, and there would be no joint planning of the use of nuclear weapons. French forces would *never be automatically engaged*, which excluded French responsibility for the defence of certain zones, or participation in the forward battle. Finally, in the event of participation in a conflict alongside its allies, French forces would remain *grouped under national command, and in the zones or directions covering the national territory*.[19]

An increased declaratory commitment to the Alliance as a defensive grouping of nations and as a primary political element of French foreign policy was, during the early period of Mitterrand's Presidency, then, matched by the imposition of self-imposed restraints on the scope of actual military solidarity.

Choices. 1983-1986

Nato and the Alliance In one important sense, the *Loi de Programmation Militaire* (LPM) of 1983 marked a break with tradition. The Soviet Union was explicitly mentioned as a cause of instability

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[16] C. Cheysson, speech before the French Senate, 3 December 1981. Cited in *PEF*, November-December 1981, pg. 48.

[17] C. Cheysson, interview with the *Nouvel Observateur*, 4 July, 1981.

[18] See P. Mauroy, 'La cohérence d'une politique de défense', op. cit., pg. 25.

[19] J. Lacaze, 'La Politique Militaire', op. cit., pg. 10.

in the world. French concern over the INF question, as well as over the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Soviet Union, and the invasion of Afghanistan were all made clear.[20]

The law also stressed French attachment to the Alliance, whilst rejecting any automaticity; that is to say, whilst preserving autonomy of decision with regard to the actual commitment of French forces to the common defence

> In effect France, a founding member of the Atlantic Alliance, remains a loyal partner of this *defensive grouping of sovereign nations*. It assumes all its responsibilities with regard to the North Atlantic Treaty. It keeps its full freedom of appreciation and of decision with respect to the use of its forces in case of a crisis or conflict; while cooperating tightly with its allies, France refuses any automatic commitments which would imply its presence at the heart of the integrated military forces of Nato from which it withdrew in 1966.[21]

Thus, tied to the notion of fulfilment of Treaty commitments was the idea that, concomitant with this under the Terms of Article Five of the Washington Treaty, Paris reserved the right to decide on the means of the assistance offered to an ally which found itself the victim of aggression.

French opposition to the ideas of extending either the geographical area covered by, or the sphere of competence of, the Alliance remained a prominent feature of Alliance policy.[22] This was translated, in particular, into a staunch refusal to allow the final communique of the Williamsburg summit to include a phrase extending Alliance solidarity on security issues to Japan.[23] Another enduring feature of policy was the notion that the decision making structures and processes of the Alliance were in need of renovation and reform. Cheysson, talking about the disagreements which had occurred between France and the United Sates, stated bluntly that:

> ....I do not think it is satisfactory that the United States reveal their conclusions without adequately taking account of the preoccupations of their allies. The greatest

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[20] *Loi n° 83-606 du 8 juillet 1983 portant approbation de la programmation militaire pour les années 1984-1988*, *Journal Officiel, Lois et Décrets*, 9 July 1983, pg. 2114.

[21] Ibid, pg. 2216.

[22] See, for example, Mauroy's detailed criticism of the ideas of either a geographical spread, or extension of the competencies of, the Alliance in his address of 20 September, 1983, to the IHEDN. Reproduced as P. Mauroy, 'La stratégie de la France', *Défense Nationale*, 39, October 1983, pp. 7-9.

[23] See P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 273-279.

failing of our alliance is, without a doubt, the lack of true concertation.[24]

The two major examples of American failure to consult allies he cited were firstly the 1981 American declaration on the possibility of a nuclear war limited to Europe; and the so-called Star Wars initiative launched, without prior consultation of any sort, by President Reagan in March 1983.[25] The latter was a particularly striking example of American insensitivity, coming, as it did, at a time when various West European governments were desperately trying to overcome opposition from their populations to the INF deployment scheduled for late 1983.

With respect to practical measures, the creation of the FAR and the decision to regroup all tactical nuclear weapons - previously attached to the Army Corps - under a single unified command directly under the Chief of Staff were open to various interpretations, which will be considered in Chapters Five and Six. Certainly, allied observers expressed satisfaction with the FAR in particular. General Bernard Rogers, who had caused not a little embarrassment in Paris earlier in the year by his reference to the 'extremely close cooperation and coordination' which existed between France and the Alliance, was later to praise the FAR as a positive development, whilst western journalists tended to see the Land Army reorganisation of 1983 as a positive move.[26] Soviet analysts also tended to viewed the reforms as a move away from the earlier stress on national independence in defence matters.[27]

French officials underlined the fact that French relations with the Alliance had entered a qualitatively new phase. In a speech at Lille, on 11 February 1982, General Hérvé Zwingelstein, Head of the *Études Générales* section of the Chiefs of Staff, stressed that the Army reforms were intended to dissipate any ambiguity surrounding the French ability to fight very early on in any conflict, by the side of its allies, and that the French represented the only Nato reserve force until American reinforcements arrived on the continent.[28]

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[24] C. Cheysson, 'Diplomatic: l'Empreinte Française', *Politique Internationale*, no. 20, summer 1983, pg. 11.

[25] Ibid, pp. 13-14

[26] *Financial Times*, 3 May, 1983. For the comments of Rogers, see *Le Monde*, 24 February 1986.

[27] *The Times*, of 2 June 1983 reported *Pravda* of 1 June attacking Mitterrand for making 'quite substantial amendments' to French nuclear policy, and stressing the close cooperation between France and its allies.

[28] *Le Monde*, 14 February 1984.

Whilst the Alliance was becoming a subject of open importance in French policy, the question of the European's role in their own defence and in particular in the provision of materials for that defence was increasingly coming to play a part in French policy. The concluding months of 1982 had already witnessed the reactivation of the security clauses of the Élysée Treaty of 1963, and the period between 1983 and 1986 saw increased references to more multilateral cooperation within European emanating from Paris. France was central in the reactivation of the West European Union, and officials increasingly spoke of the need to increase European cooperation at least in the field of armaments production.[29] The centrality of the Alliance was unquestioned, however and French officials spoke only in terms of a more equitable distribution of influence within it.

Military Cooperation On a more practical level, cooperation between France and its allies was extended to areas previously unaffected. Minister of Defence Hernu had, at the *École Supérieure de Guerre*, told his audience that 'we are loyal partners....in the Alliance', and pointed out that cooperation between France and its allies was continually being reinforced.[30] During the 1984 Alliance manoeuvres *Central Enterprise*, France for the first time authorised the overflight of its territory by allied planes.[31] The following year, Hernu authorised the secret formulation of coordination agreements on both conventional and nuclear targeting between the *FATAC* and the relevant allied commands.[32] More significantly, in early 1986, the decision was taken to purchase AWACS airplanes from the United States. The AWACS system was not simply a means of target acquisition, but was also a highly sophisticated tool for directing battlefield operations. As such, the decision laid the government open to accusations of a *de facto*, reintegration into the military organisation, as it demonstrated - to some observers at least - the Socialist willingness to abandon national independence in favour of battlefield solidarity.[33]

Whilst certainly improving relations with allies, the Socialist administration had made clear both its dissatisfaction with existing Alliance structures, and its intention to maintain the policy of Alliance without integration.

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[29] See Chapter Six, below.

[30] Speech of 22 July 1983, cited in *Le Monde*, 23 July 1983.

[31] *L'Express*, 11 May 1990.

[32] Interview with General Michel Forget, former Commander of the *FATAC*, Paris, 1991.

[33] See *L'Humanité*, 8, February 1986. Giscard d'Estaing had refused French participation in the AWACS system lest this should compromise the independent decision making capacity of France. See *Le Monde*, 9 December 1978.

The Meaning of *Cohabitation* The appointment of Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République* to the post of Prime Minister was to have implications for the nature of French Alliance policy. The desire of the new Prime Minister to assert his independence as far as possible from the Presidency did extend to the realms of defence and foreign policy, though rather less so than in other spheres. Whilst policy was marked by an overall continuity, which politicians and military alike were fond of ascribing to the much-praised internal 'consensus' on defence policy, statements by the new Prime Minster and the Defence Minister, André Giraud, marked a certain inflexion in policy. Divisions between the Matignon and the *Chateau* merely served to shroud French policy with greater ambiguity than was habitually the case, and relations with the Alliance were not to escape from the effects of the division of power under *cohabitation*.

Nato, the Alliance, and the Role of Europe With respect to Alliance policy, neither the Prime Minister nor the President questioned in any way the policy of non-integration, and both were firmly committed to a French independent defence capability. Both men attended the Nato summit of Heads of States and Government in Brussels, in early March 1988, and in a televised interview, Mitterrand made clear that had the meeting been one of the leaders of the integrated military organisation, he would not have gone. He went on to spell out clearly that French policy was not about to change: 'I attach great importance to France remaining outside the integrated command.'[34]

However, Paris also remained faithful to its Treaty engagements - more so that ever in fact[35] - and was thus keen to take part in any 'discussions on the overall orientation of the Alliance'.[36] The emphasis on the Alliance as something more than simply a defensive arrangement between self-interested states was also retained:

> The foundation of any defence is the feeling of solidarity of a group of men (sic) who share the same love, the same passion for a society based on the values of

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[34] Interview with *TF1*, 2 March 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 2, March-April 1988, pg. 6.

[35] F. Mitterrand, press conference, Brussels, 3 March 1988, *PEF*, March-April 1988, pg. 11.

[36] F. Mitterrand, declaration at the opening session of the Atlantic Alliance, Brussels, 2 March 1988. Full text in *PEF*, March-April 1988, pp. 5-6.

> liberty, of democracy, and of respect for the rights of man. It is these values which are the cement of the Atlantic Alliance .... What we are defending is not only peace, but peace with liberty.

This position was formalised in the *Loi de Programmation Militaire* of May 1987, prepared by the government, but approved by the President in the *Cancel de Défense*.[37] The law itself was extraordinarily brief - a mere three sides. Its motivation, however, was clearly spelled out in the *Projet de loi de Programmation* which was submitted to Parliament.[38] The vital axes of French policy were maintained unchanged. French defence policy was stated to rest on strategic nuclear deterrence. The text continued:

> A member of the Atlantic Alliance, France will honour its engagements in ways it intends, as in the past, to decide on freely. France's position of independence does not allow it to integrate its forces in advance in a force over which it could not, when the time arrived, exercise its sovereign decision.[39]

The denial of any possibility of reintegration was blunt. Yet the text went on to attempt to portray the French position as in no way altering French solidarity with respect to its allies. Indeed, it seemed to equate French *security* if not *survival* with that of its neighbours, whilst attempting to reconcile this with freedom of decision and evaluation.

> This preoccupation in no way affects France's determination to intervene in Europe beside its allies. If the nation's survival comes into play at its frontiers, its security can come into play at those of its neighbours, the President of the Republic judging if the vital interests of the country are threatened.[40]

Broad agreement between the President and the governing majority existed over the necessity of an increased European role in security matters. Certain differences became apparent, however, over the modalities of achieving this end. For the government, a greater European role in defence matters was to be registered *within* the Alliance, necessitating changes in Alliance structures, rather

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[37] *Loi de Programmation n°. 87-342 du 22 mai 1987 relative à l'équipement militaire pour les années 1987-1991 JO, Lois et Décrets*, 23 May 1987, pp. 5648-5650.

[38] *Projet de loi de Programme relatif à l'équipement militaire pour les années 1987-1991, Assemblée Nationale* n° 432. *Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 6 novembre 1986.* A *projet de loi* is a bill submitted to the Parliament by the Government; a *proposition de loi* is one submitted by a parliamentarian.

[39] Ibid, pg. 9.

[40] Ibid, pg. 10.

than representing a parallel process, separate from the Alliance structure.[41] Mitterrand, however, remained committed to more bilateral forms of cooperation, involving no change in the French position with respect to the Alliance and Nato, as evinced by the signing in January 1988 of a protocol with the Federal Republic creating a joint Defence and Security Council.[42] Whilst the President was keen to point out the relative flaws of flexible response as a strategy, thus by implication distancing France from its allies,[43] the Prime Minister declared that there is no point 'coming back to a theoretical debate on the respective of our independent strategy and of the allied strategy which none of our partners intend to call into question: each must respect the options of the other.'[44]

Different perceptions and sensibilities with regard to American leadership and participation in American dominated organisations were also apparent on the question of the SDI programme. Prior to the 1986 elections, Chirac had voiced support not only for the research programme associated with the Strategic Defence Initiative, but also for the project itself. After his appointment to the Matignon, he altered his position somewhat on the advantages of the strategic project itself, but remained firmly in favour of French participation in the research project.[45] The President of the Republic refused even French participation in the project, as this would compromise French autonomy of decision.[46]

INF and Nato Force Modernisation Mitterrand's interest in tightening security links with the Federal Republic was at last partly due to apparent German trends towards a form of denuclearised status over the INF question. At the heart of this lay the issue of reactions towards Michail Gorbachev. On 3 March 1987, Gorbachev's proposals on the 'single zero' option were officially presented to the Geneva conference. French reaction was divided on the subject, with members of the government - in particular the Defence Minister - referring to it as a 'second Munich', while

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[41] See J. Chirac, press conference of 8 March 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 2, 1988, pg. 22, 27. See also the text of the speech by André Giraud at Chatham House, 22 March 1988. In ibid., no. 2, 1988, pp. 47-48.

[42] This leaning of Mitterrand was apparent in an interview with Irish television on 24 February 1988, in which the President spelled out the fact that a Europe dominated by superpowers was a merely transitory phenomenon. In *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 1, 1988, pg. 63-6. On the Council, see Chapter Six.

[43] Interview with Mitterrand on *Europe 1*, 25 March 1988, cited in *Propos Sur la Défense*, no. 2 1988, pg. 54.

[44] J. Chirac, press conference on defence policy, 8 March 1988, in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 2, 1988, pg. 18.

[45] See P. Boniface, 'France', in *L'Année Stratégique*, Paris, FEDN, 1987, pp. 42-44.

[46] *Le Monde*, 29 May 1986.

Mitterrand, along with the Prime Minister, seemed largely favourable to the development.[47] Such divergent opinions were based on differing perceptions on the motivation of the Soviet President. Whilst Mitterrand declared that he did not believe '... in the bellicose intentions of the Soviet Union' and that he was 'convinced that M Gorbachev wants peace for the sake of peace and what comes from it',[48] Chirac was less optimistic, urging vigilance with respect to the Soviet Union,[49] and declaring that the 'lesson of the Euromissiles' should not be forgotten.[50] His opposition to the zero option was made clear during trips to London and Bonn aimed at staving off Anglo-German support for it.[51] Meanwhile, the report on the *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, written by Gaullist Deputy François Fillon, stressed the hostility of the right to the zero option in the face of persistent Soviet military power and militant activism.[52]

Mitterrand's attitude was particularly interesting with respect to Alliance policy. He repeatedly expressed amazement at the opposition to the INF Treaty, declaring to the assembled joint session of the Irish Parliament that he was astonished by the reservations of certain Europeans on the subject, which 'will end up making me think it requires as much courage to approve the elimination of medium range nuclear missiles as it did ... to support the Nato decision to deploy them'.[53] His rationale, however, was not that this would prevent any danger of decoupling, but rather that such a risk had always existed:

> It was because the immediate intervention of the United States of America in Western Europe remained uncertain that General de Gaulle wanted to pull out of the integrated command of Nato and equip France with an autonomous deterrent force depending on its own decisions only. Since then nothing has changed .... Security rests on the balance of forces between East and West. And on the certainty of both blocs that any

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[47] See *Le Monde*, 6 March 1987.

[48] Interview with Jean Daniel, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18-24 December, 1987.

[49] *Le Monde*, 2 March 1988. Jean-Bernard Raimond the Foreign Minister, in an address to the IHEDN on 8 March 1988 nicely illustrated the doubts of the government regarding Gorbachev, when he stated that '...a.... causal connection between Perestroika and the quest for a 'new detente' is more postulated than proven'. Cited in *PEF*, March-April 1988, pg. 24.

[50] *Le Monde*, 3 March 1988.

[51] See J. Howorth, 'Defence Policy Under Mitterrand Mark 2: Toward the collapse of "consensus"?',*International Perspectives on Europe*, No. 1, 1989.

[52] F. Fillon, *Rapport n° 622 fait au nom de la Commission de la Défense Nationale et des forces Armées sur le projet de loi de Programmation relative à l'équipement militaire pour les années 1987-1991*, pp. 10-13.

[53] Speech of 26 February 1988, in *Le Monde*, 29 February 1988.

> shift in this balance would threaten peace. The absence of automaticity in Western solidarity diminishes this certainty, but the Washington accord has no effect on it.[54]

As such, the Washington Treaty was to be welcomed as a move in the right direction.

Along with the issue of INF reductions, the major arms-related question of the day was that of the proposed modernisation of Nato short-range nuclear weapons. Chirac, again based on his attitude of distrust towards the Soviet Union, remained in favour of the modernisation of the short range Nato missiles.[55] Mitterrand, however, declared himself hostile to the modernisation of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe, called for by several prominent European leaders, including Margaret Thatcher.[56] During the March 1988 Nato summit he pointed out that the decision not to modernise the missiles immediately could be made dependent on the success of conventional arms reduction negotiations, and that if these latter failed, modernisation could proceed.[57]

The INF question once again revealed the willingness of Mitterrand to become directly involved in Nato military affairs, and he stressed the importance he attached to his participation at the March 1988 Nato summit, at which the allied stance on disarmament would be discussed.

Cooperation with the Alliance Whilst the politicians sent out confused signals regarding French policy towards the Alliance, on the military level, cooperation continued as normal. From 14 to 24 September 1987, a crack clandestine operations French unit - the 13e *regiment de dragons parachutistes* (RDP) - participated in the Nato manoeuvre *Certain Strike* under the Commander in Chief of the British Army of the Rhine.[58] More controversially still, a Reuters report of 21 October 1987 claimed that the French engaged in coordination of submarine manoeuvres, which included its nuclear missile launching submarines (SNLE).[59] 1987 also witnessed a path-breaking exercise involving the *Force d'Action Rapide*, the significance of which will be discussed in later chapters.

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[54] Interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18-24 December, 1987.

[55] *Le Monde*, 2 March 1988.

[56] See *Le Monde*, 27 February 1988, and ibid, 29 February 1988.

[57] Mitterrand, interview with TF1, Brussels, 2 March 1988, *PEF*, March-April 1988, pp. 4-5.

[58] *Le Monde*, 14 September, 1987.

[59] Reuters, 21 October 1987.

A Revolutionary era 1988-1990

International Upheaval and its Consequences The period between Mitterrand's reelection in 1988, and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in February 1992 witnessed the effective crumbling of the system for so long criticised by successive French leaders as being the product of Yalta. It saw the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, symbolised by the breaching of the Berlin Wall on 10 November 1989; the outbreak of the first major European war since 1945; the unification of Germany, and the crumbling of the Soviet Union. Along with the shifting diplomatic framework within the continent, the security debate was further influenced by a series of far-reaching arms control and disarmament measures put forward by the two superpowers and their respective alliances.

France, Nato and the Alliance 1988-1989 Following the Socialist victory in the legislative elections of 1988, the new Defence Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement introduced into French rhetoric a harsher tone with regard to integration and the influence of the United States within the Alliance than had been previously apparent. The necessity for national independence was repeatedly underlined by him in his statements on French defence policy choices.[60] Staunch defence of French independence was closely related, in his eyes, to the unique and prestigious role and destiny of France. These he spoke of in terms paralleled only by the rhetoric of General de Gaulle.[61]

Whilst less aggressive in his terminology, Mitterrand continued to emphasise France's unique position with regard to Nato. Certainly, France's allies 'have a right to expect our support in case of danger, of aggression, as we have a right to expect theirs', but the decision was one for France alone to take.[62] Military relations within the Alliance were all well and good, and indeed would be developed if necessary,[63] but French autonomy of decision remained a sacred principle vis a

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[60] See, amongst other examples, his interview in *Armées 2000* of October 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense* 4, 1988, pg. 43, and his speech during the budgetary debates, National Assembly, in ibid, pg. 15.

[61] See, for example, Chevènement's comments to a press meeting on 30 May 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense* no. 3, 1988, pg. 14. The notion of French *grandeur* and its relation to the concept of national independence will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

[62] Allocution de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, devant les auditeurs de l'Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale le 11 octobre 1988, *Défense Nationale*, 44, November 1988, pg. 14

[63] This point was reinforced by Chevènement on 2 November 1988, in a reply to a parliamentary question by H. de Charette, when he stressed his desire to make progress in the field of interoperability of information and communication systems of France and its allies. Cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 6, 1988, pg. 25.

vis Nato and its integrated military structures.[64]

The obvious disdain for any prospect of reintegration into, or rapprochement with Nato was balanced by claims that France was playing a major role in the preservation of the security of Western Europe, and that its unique position with regard to the Alliance was a positive one for all its partners.[65] The French nuclear force, moreover, as well as enhancing West European security through its independent command and unique strategy, was also portrayed as representing a centrepiece around which an eventual European defence organisation could be formed.[66]

Despite the continued emphasis on national independence, and the calls for increased European responsibility for European defence, French leaders were careful not to criticise the Atlantic Alliance itself. The Defence Minister, for all his aggressive rhetoric, refused to posit a fundamental battle between two alternatives: French strategy or Nato strategy. Chevènement made it clear that French and US strategy could both coexist in Western Europe.[67] Relative unwillingness to alter the security environment in Europe was a feature of the statements of the Defence Minister in particular, as he was still wary of the Soviet Union despite the reforms of Gorbachev.[68] Moreover, a professed faith in the Alliance - though an Alliance reorganised in such a way as to alow an increased European voice[69] - provided an ingenious escape-clause for the French from the perennial question of a possible French role in the defence of Western Europe. As both Mitterrand and Chevènement made clear in their respective addresses to the IHEDN in 1988, the question of the protection of West Germany was one for the Alliance, and not France,

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[64] F. Mitterrand, speech to the IHEDN, op. cit., pg. 14.

[65] See Chevènement's speech in the National Assembly of 2 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 6, 1988, pg. 14. See also his address in front of the IHEDN, 22 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 6, 1988, pg. 72.

[66] J-P Chevènement, speech to the National Assembly of 2 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 14.

[67] See his interview with *Le Monde*, of 14 July 1988, and with the Spanish news agency *EFE*, of 21 July 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 24.

[68] See his press conference of 21 September 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 26, and also his speech before the Senate of 7 December 1988, in ibid, pg. 101.

[69] Chevènement at the IHEDN, 22 November 1988, in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 74. See also, for a slightly more detailed exposé of Chevènement's views on the necessity of some form of reorganisation of the Alliance, his speech at the opening session of the conference organised by the review *Passages*, 16 February 1989, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 7, 1989, pg. 65.

to handle.[70]

The New Security Debate As the geopolitical situation in Europe shifted, so the debate concerning French relations with the Alliance and Nato changed in tone. The fundamentally new set of strategic imperatives created as the Berlin Wall came down, and Eastern Europe gained its independence from Soviet-dominated Communism, created the need for security structures to evolve. Almost inevitably, the uncertainty surrounding developments in Europe led to much speculation surrounding a possible new role for France in Europe, and even a French reintegration into the integrated military organisation.[71]

Within France, the debate on relations with the Alliance was rekindled, after almost 35 years of continuity since the withdrawal of 1966.[72] Indications from the Élysée were ambiguous. Whilst Mitterrand's principal adviser on strategic questions, Hubert Vedrine, stated that the idea of a French return to the integrated structure was '*pas d'actualité*', an anonymous source within the Palace was reported as saying that the current evolution of the strategic situation in Europe 'is inevitably proceeding in the direction of a rebalancing' in the Alliance. The source continued:

> If serious reflections were to get under way, on a genuinely more European defence within the Alliance, that is to say with the maintenance of the Washington Treaty, but with serious modifications in the existing organisations, [the Élysée] would be willing to participate in such reflections if they led to change....[73]

Certainly, France could be perceived to be playing a more central role in discussions associated with the integrated command structure. In particular, the Nato debate on the proposed modernisation of short-range missiles based in Europe was one in which Mitterrand played a prominent role. Unlike the case of the 1983 INF debate, the French position seemed to be one of acting as a moderating force within the Alliance, rather than putting forward the specific position of Paris. Indeed, that position was far from clear, and seemed to be tailored to achieving a

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[70] For Chevènement, see *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pp. 68-76. For Mitterrand his October 1988 speech, op. cit., pg. 26.

[71] In particular, comments made by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd seemed to encourage French steps in this direction. See *Libération*, 6 April 1990.

[72] See for example F. de Rose, 'L'Heure de la France', *Le Monde*, 5 July 1990, and the report on Giscard d'Estaing's speech to the Senate in ibid, 21 June 1990.

[73] Cited in *L'Humanité*, 7 April 1990.

convergence of views between the Federal Republic on the one hand, and the British and Americans on the other.[74] The United States in particular came increasingly to see Paris as the '*avocat du juste milieu*', and as a trusted partner, which could be relied upon to help solve disputes within the Alliance. As one prominent French journalist put it, summing up the new relationship between France and the leading member of the Alliance:

> How paradoxical: François Mitterrand, who has never succeeded in obtaining the wholesale renegotiation of the Atlantic Alliance of which he has long dreamt, today appears, in the eyes of the new American President, as the staunchest defender of a fragile status quo.[75]

At the Key Largo summit with the new American President George Bush, Mitterrand had also earned the praise of American officials for his positive commitment to helping to find a new role for Nato within the rapidly shifting geostrategic environment, and his declaration that France would support a 'common exercise of reflection' about the future of the Alliance.[76] Such relative flexibility was characterised by the French decision of March 1991 to participate in discussing the new principles on which the future of the Alliance should be based in a rapidly changing world - and in particular the new risks confronting the allies[77] - although this did not represent, as some commentators suggested, a return to Nato's Defence Planning Committee.[78]

Some analysts have suggested that France did indeed enjoy an opportunity to alter traditional policy in the wake of the crumbling of the Warsaw Pact, and to move closer to its allies as a response to the fundamentally altered strategic environment:

> The period between the collapse of the Berlin Wall....and the end of the Persian Gulf

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[74] Thus, from a position of initially seeming to support the German demands that the Lance missiles should not be modernised, or at least the modernisation should be delayed, Mitterrand shifted his ground slightly in the aftermath of a summit with Mrs Thatcher on 27 February. For details of the former position, see speech by Prime Minister Rocard to the first European session of the IHEDN, *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 65. For the latter stance, see *Le Point*, 6-12 March 1989.

[75] *L'Express*, 26 May-1 June 1989.

[76] See *The Herald Tribune*, 21 April 1990, and *The Times*, 4 May 1990.

[77] *Le Monde*, 23 March 1991.

[78] This mistaken opinion was carried in *Le Monde*, 19 March 1991. The notion that France *should* participate in at least some of the discussions of the DPC, or that, preferably, some of the work of the latter be transferred to the North Atlantic Council to enable French participation was put forward by F. de Rose in *Défendre la Défense*, Paris, Juillard, 1989, pp. 165-166.

> War....offered a window of opportunity during which France might have reduced its opposition to Nato integration and sought better military relations with the United States. French leaders could plausibly have argued that the European security situation had changed dramatically since the 1960's, that Gaullist reticence toward a "hegemonic" United States was no longer necessary in the wake of the announced U.S. troop reductions, and that a new French attitude toward Nato had become both possible and necessary. With the dominant American role in Europe greatly reduced and as a means to balance the new German power, France could have cast its lot with the proponents of a "New Atlanticism" and sought to join its allies in a new transatlantic consensus.[79]

Indeed, speaking on the occasion of his departure from his post as Permanent Representative of the United States to Nato, Ambassador Taft made a very similar point, characterising as sad the fact that 'an opportunity to adjust France's anomalous position towards the Alliance....is....slipping away'.[80]

Speculation as to an imminent return of France within the integrated organisation was, however, quickly quashed at the London Nato summit of July 1990. Mitterrand pointed to the underlying differences that divided France from its allies on questions of strategy: 'France does not share the strategic conceptions of the alliance, neither those of yesterday, nor those of today: those of yesterday concerning flexible defence, the forward battle; those of today on nuclear weapons as a last resort....We do not share any of that'.[81] The logic of Taft, that the end of the Cold War made rapprochement between France and Nato more necessary than ever, due to the increased intermeshing of military and political issues clearly separable under the conditions of intense Cold War confrontation was rejected. French officials maintained that the end of the Cold War actually decreased the necessity for integration,[82] whilst repeating the arguments that had been utilised since the time of de Gaulle to justify non-integration.[83]

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[79] P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War: Continuity, Change, and Implications for the United States,* paper prepared for the United States Army, RAND, R-4229-A, pg. 9.

[80] Farewell remarks by Ambassador Taft, 24 June, 1992, text provided by Canadian Delegation to Nato, pg. 2.

[81] F. Mitterrand, press conference at the end of the London Nato summit, *Le Monde*, 8-9 July 1990. For Chevènement's views on the irreconcilability of France to Nato doctrine, see his interview in *Le Monde*, 13 July 1990.

[82] In the words of one French diplomat, 'We are no longer in the perspective of the third world war, where we had to prepare for a massive response to a relatively clearly identified massive attack....A permanent integrated structure could only be justified in this perspective'. Cited in *Le Monde*, 4 May 1991.

[83] Joxe, for instance, referred to the French position as allowing France the freedom not to participate in a conflict in which it did not feel directly implicated. See his speech before the National Assembly, 6 June 1991, cited in *Propos sur La Défense*, no. 21, May-June 1991, pg. 115.

Nor did the end of the Cold War signal any lessening of French opposition to attempts to increase the spheres of competence of the Alliance. In terms of issue areas, French officials repeatedly stressed their opposition to the idea of Nato becoming involved in anything other than strictly military matters. Although Mitterrand himself was somewhat more flexible in this regard than either Chevènement or Dumas, anxious as he was to avoid the disappearance of Nato before anything else could appear in its place,[84] he, too, warned against excessive interference by Nato in wider issues. Thus, at the conclusion of the Rome Nato summit, Mitterrand remarked rather acidly that the Atlantic Alliance 'is not the Holy Alliance', and thus should not try to dictate the internal or external policies of any of its members.[85] France objected to Nato playing a role in fostering economic and political reform in the Soviet Union, with Mitterrand refusing to sign the declaration on the Soviet Union produced by the November 1991 Rome Nato summit, criticising the 'preaching' of Nato.[86]

Geographically, Paris maintained its resistance to Nato extending its competence outside the sphere laid down in the Washington Treaty. Dumas expressed his opposition to Nato becoming 'a grand directorate for world affairs'.[87] The hostile French reaction to the proposals forwarded by the Nato Defence Planning Committee concerning the creation of a Nato Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) owed much to unease regarding its possible out of area role.[88] Initiatives continued to emerge especially from London and Washington attempting to extend the political competence of the Alliance, culminating in the November 1991 summit with the Rome declaration creating the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). This, too, met with a lukewarm reception from French officials.[89]

In the face of such Nato initiatives, France responded with more 'European' ideas of its own. Mitterrand, in his New Year's address of 1990, had floated the rather vague idea of a European 'confederation', details on which were slow to emerge. Indeed they never did. In December 1990, Paris produced, along with its neighbour across the Rhine, a letter to the Community Presidency,

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[84] See P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War*, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

[85] Cited in *Propos Sur la Défense*, no. 24, November-December 1991, pg. 26.

[86] See *Le Monde*, 10-11 November 1991.

[87] *Le Monde*, 6-7 October 1991.

[88] See *The Washington Post*, 12 June 1991, *Le Monde*, 6 June 1991, *International Herald Tribune*, 5 June 1991.

[89] See *Le Monde*, 20 December 1991.

calling for an enhanced European voice on security matters. Further alienated by the creation of the RRF in May, Paris continued to press for a more European solution to the security problems of the continent. The second Franco-German initiative, of October 1991, called for a common European defence policy, leading ultimately to a common defence, with the West European Union acting as the defence arm of the Political Union, thus effectively sidelining Nato.[90]

The initiative of October also formally announced the creation of a Franco-German corps, membership of which was to be open to other WEU member states. In creating this force, Paris was reacting to the announcement of the creation of the Nato Rapid Reaction Force, and providing a practical alternative which could be used for military missions. The creation of the corps, despite repeated assurances from Paris that it in no way detracted from Nato, and was, if anything, complementary, represented the concrete expression of frustration with the Alliance and its efforts to adapt to the changing security situation in Europe. Capitalising on German resentment at British leadership of the RRF, Paris was only too happy to set up an alternative instrument for the implementation of a European security policy. Increasingly, the end of the Cold War witnessed a growing antagonism between Washington and Paris, as each sought to impose its own vision on European security structures. Hence, for instance, Roland Dumas, referred explicitly to 'American hegemony' within the Alliance.[91]

During the remainder of the intergovernmental conference, policy remained preoccupied with the question of ensuring an increased Europeanisation of security. Rejection of the NACC, and of the declaration concerning the Soviet Union were representative of Mitterrand's annoyance with the tendency of his European allies to follow the 'Anglo-Saxon' line. Although the post Cold War period had marked a certain rapprochement between the strategic concepts of France and the Alliance, exemplified by the latter's burial of flexible response at Rome in November 1991, Mitterrand clung to the idea of independence from integration. The period after 1989 was characterised by a growing antagonism between France and Nato, as each tried to influence the emerging security architecture of the 'Old Continent' along lines most suitable to itself.

This being said, however, it should also be borne in mind that, French officials were far from united in their stances with regard to the Alliance and Nato. Alongside French initiatives for an

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[90] See Chapter Six.

[91] See his interview with *Libération*, 6 December 1991. See also *The Washington Post*, 12 June 1991.

increased Europeanisation of European defence, and a limiting of Nato compentences, Mitterrand continued to preach the necessity of maintaining the Alliance in its present form:

> ....the Atlantic Alliance will continue to play to the full its vital role in the maintenance of peace....The defence of Western Europe cannot, in the present, and for many years to come, can only be conceived of in the context of respect for the Atlantic Alliance.[92]

Other sections of the political elite, notably Defence Minister Pierre Joxe, stressed the fact that France should move closer. Referring to the profoundly altered geostrategic situation in Europe, Joxe stated that the accords linking France and Nato allies 'should be revised'. Going on to speak of the new Nato initiatives towards the former communist states of Eastern and Central Europe, he remarked, apparently rather ruefully, that 'If we are not careful, I will soon be, the only Defence Minister in Europe - all Europe - not to participate in Alliance meetings.'[93] Conversely, Roland Dumas affirmed that France had no intention of changing the nature of its relations with Nato,[94] a point he confirmed the day after Joxe had made his case for closer links with allies.[95]

Military Cooperation As usual, military cooperation between France and its allies continued regardless of the prevailing political situation. At the start of the Spring of 1990, 412 pilots of the FATAC, with eight planes, participated for seven weeks in the Red Flag exercises organised from the US base at Nellis, Nevada. Following this, American pilots were invited to take part in French air defence manoeuvres such as Datex 90; 3 Nato radar aircraft were associated with these latter, along with Tornados of the RAF. Moreover, and more symbolically important, former American bases in France (closed since the allied withdrawal which followed de Gaulle's 1966 decision) were reactivated, such as the USAF aerodrome at Chambley.[96] Naval manoeuvres continued as well, with repeated manoeuvres, the French having discreetly supplied facilities for the American Sixth fleet since 1987,[97] while logistical training, within the framework of the Vega and Forte exercises

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[92] F. Mitterrand, *Allocution lors de la Clôture du Forum de l'École Supérieure de Guerre*, 11 April 1991, in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 20, March-April 1991, pp. 84-85.

[93] P. Joxe, *Allocution à la Cérémonie de Clôture de la Session Plenière du Cours Supérieur Intérarmées*, in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 24, November-December 1991, pg. 121.

[94] *Le Monde*, March 23, 1991.

[95] See the interview with Dumas in *Libération*, 6 December 1991.

[96] *L'Express*, 11 May 1990.

[97] *L'Express*, 13 February 1989.

continued, as they had since 1986, providing regular testing of the transport of American munitions from French ports and airfields to Central Europe.[98]

In some cases, decisions regarding military cooperation were highly political in nature, and resulted in much debate among high policy-making circles. Such a decision was taken in principle by Mitterrand himself in January 1989, to participate in the new Nato Air Command and Control System (ACCS). Predictably enough, the decision was not accompanied by either fanfares or any publicity, representing as it did a move that could easily be seen as a softening of the French position towards Nato. It was only in February that *Libération* leaked details of the French agreement to participate in discussions of the project.[99]

The new air-defence system marked a qualitative shift from the existing Nato Air Defence Ground Environment (NADGE) system which had been created between 1960 and 1972. Whilst the latter constituted merely a means of detection of hostile airborne forces, the ACCS was intended as a means of fully integrated detection and combat management. The system was capable of the management of all Nato airborne forces - offensive as well as defensive - as well as anti aircraft forces.[100] French participation in the NADGE system had been founded on the principle of reciprocal operational interest (in accordance with the 1970 Fourquet-Goodpaster accord), and was limited to the receiving and transmission of information; integration into the system did not, therefore, include Nato control over French reprisal forces.[101]

Planning French participation in the new system was obviously more problematic due to the plans to make of the ACCS 'the system for the overall management of the Alliance's air war through the integration of national or allied detection systems ....'.[102] During the discussions of the project the French had already taken care to emphasise their 'unique position' within the Alliance, obtaining a reform of Nato internal structures, with the Nato Air Defence Committee (NADC)

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[98] *L'Express*, 11 May 1990.

[99] *Libération*, of 8 February 1989. See also *Defense News*, 13 February 1989.

[100] For a discussion of the ACCS system and its implications see G. Fuchs, *Avis présenté au nom de la Commission de la Défense Nationale et des forces Armées sur le projet de loi de finances pour 1988 (n° 941)*, Assemblée Nationale N° 963, 8 October 1987, pp. 42-44.

[101] Two French air-defence stations - Drachenbronn and Contrexeville received radars financed by Nato, and were part of the NADGE network; France therefore was a copropriator of these radars with Nato.

[102] G. Fuchs, *Avis*, op. cit., pg. 43.

being created at the insistence of Paris, in 1980. Previous discussions of Air Defence questions had not been attended by France, since they were carried out under the auspices of a group of experts created by the SACEUR, and thus constituted an element of the integrated military structure. The NADC was subordinate to the North Atlantic Council, in which France participated fully, and thus represented a political rather than military body, so allowing full French participation.

Having obtained concessions as to the nature of the body discussing the project, the modalities of French cooperation and participation had to be outlined. That Paris decided in favour of participation at all was evidence of French recognition of the necessity of pragmatic cooperation with allies. The ACCS issue also, however, illustrated the fine dividing line between necessary cooperation and diminished independence, which obliged France to lay down strict conditions regulating its involvement in the project. The contradictions which could occur between military requirements and the principle of strict national independence will be discussed in later chapters.[103]

Conclusion: France and 'Integration'

Throughout the period under consideration, French policy was marked by continuity. Despite party considerations, despite *alternance*, despite the sudden and massive changes in the European security landscape resulting from the tumultuous events of 1989-1992, Paris maintained a stance of Alliance without integration, reinforced by ever-closer military cooperation. In this respect, the legacy of de Gaulle was preserved. Whilst European initiatives were undertaken, none came to fruition, and the Alliance remained the central focus of Western European security.

The continuity of policy was as marked as regards the dichotomy between reality and rhetoric, as it was in terms of the policies and the rhetoric themselves. Paris continued to claim independence for itself, and to exaggerate the separation that existed between France and its Nato allies. Whilst formal participation in integrated military structures remained off the agenda, on the ground, cooperation extended into areas such as the ACCS and AWACS systems which cast serious doubt

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[103] For a discussion of the French position on the ACCS system, and the emphasis on guarding France's special position in the Alliance, see the answer by J-P Chevènement to a parliamentary question from G-M Chauveau on 2 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 54. For additional information on France and the ACCS system, see *The Washington Post*, 9 February 1989, *International Herald Tribune*, 9 February 1989, *The Times*, 10 February 1989, and *Le Monde*, 21 June 1989.

on France's ability or even desire to maintain compete independence.

Perhaps the other striking feature, along with overall continuity, was the ambivalence which characterised Alliance policy. Tensions between the Alliance as a focal point of foreign policy, and a certain aloofness from the constraints that the Alliance implied, between loud declarations of independence and tight military cooperation, between annoyance at American attempts to reform the Alliance in the light of shifting international circumstances and affirmations concerning the continued indispensability of the transatlantic link, all contributed to giving this impression.

Alliance policy was intended to fulfil certain purposes in both foreign and defence policy, and in order to fully comprehend it, it is necessary to understand the different strands of which Alliance policy was comprised. It is now necessary to turn to a consideration of its three constituent elements, notably the notion of independence, French defence policy, and French initiatives aimed at the creation of a more autonomous European defence entity. In this way, it will be possible to examine whether overriding imperatives in any of these fields encouraged a continuation of the policies of the past, and the incoherence that characterised much of the policy pursued towards Nato.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE POLITICS OF INDEPENDENCE: RELATIONS WITH THE SUPERPOWERS

Part One illustrated the importance of the concept of national independence both to successive Presidents of the Republic, and to the *Parti Socialiste* in opposition. National independence had been the clarion call rallying opponents of integration in Nato, and had provided a conceptual justification for the policy pursued, since 1966, of Alliance without integration. De Gaulle, Pompidou, Giscard d'Estaing and the *Parti Socialiste* had shared an opposition to French 'alignment' in the western camp; all possessed a common distrust of American political, military, and economic leadership; finally, all had appreciated the benefits accruing from a policy that stressed non-alignment and comprised a vocal condemnation of the 'Yalta system' of superpower domination. Under Mitterrand, as we have seen, appeals to national independence, and the necessity of preserving it, lay behind French opposition to the notion of integration within Nato.

This Chapter will investigate the notions of national independence that characterised the Presidency of François Mitterrand between 1981 and 1992, and the policies pursued under his Presidency in the sphere of relations with the two superpower blocs. In so doing it has a threefold aim: to examine the meaning and illustrate the centrality of the notion of national independence in French political discourse during the period; to investigate the rationale behind the quest for independence; and to examine the reality of French policy towards the superpowers. As will become clear, a disjuncture often existed between conflicting political rhetoric and the reality of foreign policy. This chapter will illustrate the increasingly counterproductive nature of a policy of international independence, based to a large extent on the quest for *grandeur* or the achievement and maintenance of a certain standing in international politics.

The Rhetoric of Independence

The Centrality of the Concept No theme is repeated more consistently in the rhetoric of French policy than that of the need to maintain national independence. The concept has become a *leitmotif* characterising almost every statement concerned with external affairs. From professions of a refusal of absolute alignment, to declarations concerning the autonomy of Paris to pursue only those policies it wished to follow, from the aggressively nationalist Jean- Pierre Chevènement to the more conciliatory and pro-European André Giraud, one sees the same themes repeated constantly.

The theme is of especial significance with regard to French relations with Nato and the Alliance. The policy of Alliance without integration, so faithfully adhered to in the first decade of Socialist rule, was predicated on the need for national independence. The essence of Alliance policy would be impossible to understand without first getting to grips with the elusive notion of independence. The catch-phrases of national independence had a far larger purpose, however, than merely to act as the cornerstone of Alliance policy. The concept was used to underpin a whole vision of the nature of international politics, which in turn conditioned specific relationships, notably those with the superpowers.

In particular, between 1981 and 1989 Paris expounded on and developed the theme of hostility to the prevailing international order, which had been present in so much of the rhetoric of previous Presidents. Declaratory opposition to the bipolar order was a feature of French political discourse until that same order came to an abrupt end. Moreover, in the wake of the 'velvet revolutions' in Eastern Europe and the crumbling of the bipolar international system, Paris was quick to insist that French opposition to that system not only helped contribute to its downfall,[1] but meant that France, because of its belief that 'the division of Europe into two blocs was a temporary phenomenon which should be overcome, and that European security could not be thought of in simple East-West terms' was more able to reflect on the shape of any new European order.[2]

The Nature of National Independence The principle of national independence has become a cornerstone of French foreign and defence policy. Yet it had never been clearly defined, nor carefully stated as an objective.[3] Under Mitterrand, French leaders displayed a similar vagueness as to its exact content and nature. Indeed, during the period under consideration, French conceptions of the nature of national independence were not only vague, but often contradictory.

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[1] Mitterrand stated that the CSCE 'has enabled *us* to put an end to Europe's division into two military blocs'. Cited in B. Heuser, 'Mitterrand's Gaullism: Cold War Policies for the Post Cold War World?', in A. Varsori (ed.), *1945-1989: The End of an Era?,* (forthcoming), emphasis not in original.

[2] J.P. Chevènement, 'La France et la Sécurité de l'Europe', *Politique Étrangère*, 3, 1990, pg. 526.

[3] It is interesting to note that even analysts have not been able to agree on a satisfactory definition of the term as applied to French foreign policy. See on this the excellent discussion by N. Waites, 'French Foreign Policy: External Influences on the Quest for Independence', *Review of International Studies*, 9, 1983, pp. 260-262.

The dominant rationale behind the refusal of military integration was political. It was based on a conception of international politics very similar to that of Pompidou and de Gaulle, focusing on the self-help nature of an anarchical international system.[4] As a result of this, national independence and autonomy of decision were vital, in order that 'whatever happens, decisions concerning the use of French troops and weapons will remain in the hands of the President....and the Government'.[5]

Successive administrations after 1981 were apt to refer to the concept of independence in the same sweeping manner as had previous Presidents. Thus, independence was not intended solely to mean that France was free to make its own choices in foreign policy matters, but also implied that France somehow distinct from, and in opposition to, the stagnant cold war order around it - indeed, rhetorical insistence on the French 'third way'[6] formed a major element of declaratory policy, and this was held to be possible through the achievement of independence.[7]

The implication of such rhetoric was that France was independent of the two main political groupings, and represented, for the Third World in particular, an alternative 'model', refusing to play by the rules set by the superpowers. Preference was made especially to its proud history which endowed it with something special to offer, as Mitterrand made clear in a rhetorical question to those whom he accused of wanting to destroy the legacy of this unique heritage:

> Should France limit itself to basing its choices on those of a master, or a model, and renounce being what it has become over centuries?[8]

Such notions dated back to the time of de Gaulle, who had incessantly stressed the fact that France was a free agent in a Europe otherwise bound by the rigours of Cold War bloc politics. The international constellation commonly referred to as the 'Yalta system' was held to be iniquitous

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[4] '....a large country always finds itself, at the time of decisive choices, alone with itself'. F. Mitterrand, press conference, 24 September, 1981, *PEF*, September-October 1981, esp. pg. 28.

[5] P. Mauroy, 'Vers un Nouveau Modèle d'Armée', *Défense Nationale*, November 1982, pg. 17.

[6] The phrase is one of Hernu's used in a speech to the National Assembly. See JO, débats, AN, 6 July 1982, pg. 4227.

[7] P. Boniface and F. Heisbourg, *La Puce, les hommes et la bombe. L'Europe Face aux nouveau défis technologiques et militaires*, Paris, Hachette, 1986, pg. 225.

[8] F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions sur la politique extérieure de la France: Introduction à vingt-cinq discours (1981-1985)*, Paris, Fayard, 1986, pg. 10.

with its adverse effects on third powers. In his first address to the IHEDN, Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy declared that:

> [we] reject a bipolar conception of the world. It is only by increasing the number of decision - making centres that the necessary evolutions can take place.[9]

whilst in the President's end of year address to the nation on 31 December 1981, the theme of opposition to the bloc system appeared again when he declared that 'anything which allowed us to break out of the Yalta system would be good'.[10]

Moreover, French independence was defined in such as a way as to imply that it had successfully managed to overcome the constraints imposed by the bipolar world order. Unencumbered by the burdens of superpower status, it was able to retain its own individuality,[11] and to fight a lone struggle to retain such independence.[12]

The success of France's struggle was reflected, it was claimed, in an ability to act as a spokesmen of those states which could become more objects of superpower domination. Thus Michel Vauzelle, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, and former close adviser to the President, observed, with regard to the war in the Gulf, that:

> One of the essential reasons for France's participation in the coalition is precisely to avoid a regional Yalta. The peace conference must not be a meeting of the United States with itself to organise a new regional order....France must find a place for itself at this conference....It must be able to make its individual perspective understood. This is what the countries of the South, the non-aligned countries, the Arab states....expect of it. These countries are afraid of....the imposition by Anglo-Saxons of a new international order that would only be a disguised hegemony[13]

The President of the Republic was only too willing to underline France's continued commitment to national independence, and maintained that this remained an unchanging principle, claiming the

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[9] P. Mauroy, 'La cohérence d'une politique de défense', op. cit., pg. 19

[10] *PEF*, November-December 1981, pg. 84.

[11] See 'Diplomatie: l'Empreinte Française', op. cit., pg. 9.

[12] See F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op cit. pg. 12.

[13] Cited in *Le Monde*, 10-11 February 1991.

country was as jealous of independence as it had ever been, if not more so.[14] Claims that he had, during his first months in office, been simply supporting American policy positions were emphatically rejected.[15]

Yet behind such affirmations of independence lay the tension between a desire to preserve the Gaullist legacy of national independence, and a perceived need clearly to state loyalty to the western bloc. Mitterrand characterised the French position, rather ambiguously, as neither 'alignment nor isolation'[16] Claude Cheysson, during a visit to India, came as close as any Minister since 1958 to declaring French 'alignment':

> We happen to be on the way where the two elephants might meet. That is why we have to choose our elephant. And we have done so, because we stand against totalitarian regimes and feel very much at home with the values that the Americans and the Atlantic Alliance defend.[17]

Indeed, not only were assertions regarding a community of democratic and libertarian values with the United States made a central feature of declaratory policy, Cheysson at one stage - and in marked contrast to the rhetoric of the PS prior to 1981 - implied that Socialism was particularly close to the United States on this score.[18] Such statements appeared to give the lie to the assertions of Charles Hernu, who, far more the orthodox Gaullist, declared that although France remained a loyal member of the Alliance, it could still credibly use a language aimed at bringing about an end to the bloc system.[19]

A feature of French rhetoric on the subject of independence under Mitterrand was the propensity of officials to use both toned-down notions of the term, as well as the maximalist notions

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[14] Interview with *El Pais*, 20 June 1982.

[15] '....my logic was that of my country, was that of France, which does not have to follow anyone'. Press conference at the Élysée, 24 September, 1981, in *PEF*, September-October 1981, op. cit., pg. 31.

[16] Press conference at the Élysée, 9 June 1982, in *PEF*, April-June 1982, pg. 135.

[17] Interview for Indian radio and television, 24 August 1981, in *PEF*, July-August 1981, pg. 48.

[18] Interview with *Time*, 29 June 1981.

[19] C. Hernu, 'Répondre aux défis d'un monde dangereux', *Défense Nationale*, 37, December 1981, pg. 11.

propounded at other times. The language of independence was often noticeably tempered and restrained in comparison with both earlier Socialist rhetoric and the pronouncements of previous administrations. Hence, Mitterrand's response to a question regarding the meaning of the French catch-phrase concerning the necessity of going beyond the 'Yalta system':

> This simply means that after the World War, the two largest victorious countries shared the spheres of influence in Europe. Europe ceased to be itself. It is a situation.... [we] are not going to get rid of .... as it has lasted for 38 years. Europe must become independent again....This does not mean that I am hostile to the Atlantic Alliance, since I am in it, because I am staying there. Since there exist military blocs - which I regret - it is necessary to assure one's security and be loyal to one's allies. For the moment, I am speaking of the Europe in which I am, that is to say Western Europe, but my thoughts should also apply to all the European people....that is a political objective, which will be achieved in time...a long time.[20]

The timidity with which traditional themes were repeated, and the care taken to stress loyalty to the Alliance, arose from an attachment to the western camp as it stood. As early as May 1981 Cheysson had gone out of his way to stress that France was a reliable partner, and his trip to the United States in early June seemed intended to reinforce the point.[21] The theme of a western community in which France was a full and faithful member was to become another *leitmotif* of Socialist pronouncements.

Behind such relative timidity lay a feeing, never before expressed publicly, that perhaps France was not capable of pursuing the ambitious goals her leaders her traditionally set for it. Such doubts were most clearly expressed by Cheysson, in an interview with the scholarly journal *Politique Internationale* in which he stated that 'one sometimes gets the impression that there exists a disproportion between the ... global character of what we want to say, and the real influence of France in the world'.[22]

The desire sometimes displayed to down play maximalist notions of independence gave rise to minimalist definitions, conceived of in more negative terms as the ability to say no, combining what Neville Waites has termed 'exemption' and 'dissent', as opposed to the attitudes of 'commitment'

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[20] Interview with Japanese Television, cited in *PEF* April-June 1982, pg. 11.

[21] See *The New York Times*, 7 June 1981, *Le Figaro*, 8 June 1981.

[22] 'Diplomatie: l'empreinte française', op cit., pg. 11.

or 'association' of more maximalist rhetoric.[23] In this version of the concept, emphasis was placed simply on the question of national autonomy of decision, as Lacaze indicated at the IHEDN in 1984;[24] Prime Minister Mauroy had two years earlier stated that the idea of national independence is 'based on total freedom of decision'.[25] Although certainly more easily reconcilable with the idea of membership of the western bloc, this particular conception of independence was as unbending with regard to relations with Nato. This was made clear by the President of the Republic himself:

> Certainly .... we are part of an Alliance and loyal to our allies. They have the right to expect our support in time of danger, of aggression, as we have the right to expect theirs. But the decision is up to us and us alone .... our autonomy of decision is defined in particular with regard to Nato's integrated military bodies .... nothing can be allowed to hinder the power of decision which is France's.[26]

Attempts were made to allay the apparent contradiction between allied solidarity and national independence. Most notably, this was done by means of the argument that independence itself guaranteed more effectively than excessive dependence on the Americans fidelity to the western cause:

> to ask for alignment with Washington is to facilitate Moscow's task. The most extreme Atlanticism is often the proof of an excessive docility with regard to the Soviet Union, as witnessed by several northern European states.[27]

Stubborn refusal to compromise independence of decision was not matched by such a firm adherence to more maximalist conceptions of independence, which continued to be expressed periodically, in tandem with assertions concerning the French role in world politics. Evidently, differing appreciations of the nature of independence gave rise to different conceptions of the role of independence.

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[23] N. Waites, op. cit., pg. 261.

[24] J. Lacaze, 'Concept de Défense et Sécurité en Europe', *Défense Nationale*, 40, July 1984, pg. 13.

[25] P. Mauroy 'Vers un Nouveau Modèle de l'Armée', op. cit., pg. 17.

[26] Speech to the IHEDN, 11 October 1988, op. cit., pg.14.

[27] P. Boniface and F. Heisbourg, op. cit., pg. 226. The authors were obviously forgetting - as Margaret Thatcher had a propensity to forget - that Britain formed part of Northern Europe.

The Purpose of National Independence By the time of the *alternance* of May 1981, the rhetoric of independence had become so commonplace in French political discourse that its achievement was often viewed as an end in itself. Objections to bipolarity were frequently based on a feeling that it restricted the independence of third states, and that this was a high price to pay for the relative stability which characterised international relations during the Cold War:

> *stability is not necessarily a good thing in itself.* In effect, the simplicity of the international relations of the 1950s had as a corollary a reduction in the freedom which peoples claim.[28]

Bipolarity presented the possibility of two related, yet opposing, trends that would be harmful to the interests of third powers in general: superpower conflict and collaboration.

Rhetorical opposition to the global competition between the superpowers was clearly illustrated during Mitterrand's first *septennat*, especially as regarded the Third World. The new administration rejected the logic of the Cold War involving attempts to divide the world between capitalist and communist camps. Mitterrand expressed these sentiments clearly in an interview with *Time* in September 1981:

> Why do you want the French logic concerning international relations to be the same as the American logic? ...to interpret...the evolution of the peoples of Latin America and especially Central America by means of a simple East-West analysis and especially of communism and anti-communism is absurd.[29]

With regard to collusion, the French maintained their suspicion of attempts by the two giants to regulate affairs over European heads. Thus Defence Minister Chevènement complained about the 'two superpowers who, in many ways, conduct a dialogue above our head, deciding on our destiny, on that of all our children and the future generation.[30] In an article the following year, he pointed to the continued tendency of the superpowers to maintain a relationship of 'opposition/negotiation, or competition/connivance'.[31]

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[28] C. Hernu, 'Répondre aux défis d'un monde dangereux', op. cit., pg 6.

[29] Interview with *Time*, cited in *Le Monde*, 11 September 1981.

[30] *Grand Jury RTL Le Monde*, 15 January 1989, Paris, RTL, Service de Presse, pg. 29.

[31] 'Etre sage selon le temps', Entretien avec Monsieur Jean-Pierre Chevènement, ministre de la Défense, *Cosmopolitiques*, no. 14-15, February 1990, pg. 32.

Crucially, independence was perceived as serving as the springboard from which to achieve *grandeur*, and a prominent role on the international stage for France. The fact that France retained control over its destiny by maintaining an independent defence posture was viewed as a crucial element of its special standing in the world, in turn a consequence of the universalisation of French values. Thus, Chevènement proclaimed that the'.... world, in order to develop, needs more than ever a France which is free, standing proudly, and able to speak clearly'.[32] That the idea of *grandeur*, continued to be of importance to was underlined by Mitterrand in his press conference of 18 May 1989:

> The role of France, in my opinion, is to maintain its international standing [*tenir son rang*]..... We are one of the five permanent members of the security Council of the United Nations. This means we have the right to reflect on,to think about, and to act in any area within our reach....France must maintain its international standing, and its standing is high amongst the nations of the world....I categorically reject the argument that France is in decline....France, despite everything, is maintaining its standing[33]

This notion was closely coupled with the perceived need to maintain a degree of superiority over the Federal Republic.[34] Both minimalist and maximalist conceptions of independence stressed the ability of Paris to act as it saw fit when it saw fit, in marked contrast to its partners which endured integration within Nato.

The Reality of Policy

A confused and confusing declaratory stance with regard to national independence was mirrored by policies which oscillated between professions of loyalty to the Atlantic community and policy stances which claimed a refusal of alignment. One of the most striking features of the period is that French policy was characterised more by a series of symbolic statements and gestures than by

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[32] Speech at the 44th anniversary of the Liberation of Paris, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, July-August 1988, pg. 30.

[33] Conférence de Presse du Président de la République, 18 May 1989, in *PEF*, May-June 1989, pp. 26-27.

[34] Former President Giscard d'Estaing explicitly linked France's quest for a dialogue with both superpowers as partly stemming from a desire to 'avoid the affirmation of the supremacy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Europe'.
V. Giscard d'Estaing, 'Où va la France? Le Recul', *Le Figaro*, 21 June 1982.

any policy initiatives which yielded real fruit.[35] Overall, French policy was undoubtedly more pro-Atlantic in tone than any that had preceded it. Yet repeated insistence on independence and the fact that France remained apart from either of the two blocs served to add a sense of confusion to policy.

Neither superpower welcomed the election of a Socialist President.[36] The American leadership was disturbed by the fact of an allied nation under Socialist leadership, and in particular a Socialist Party whose earlier rhetoric had ceaselessly stressed its opposition to the bloc system.[37] At a time of increasing ideological tension between East and West,[38] a President of the Right - in particular Giscard d'Estaing - would have been Washington's preferred outcome. American fears were heightened by the announcement of 22 June 1981 that, following the second round of the legislative elections, four Communist Ministers were to be included in the second Mauroy government. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, opposed Mitterrand's candidacy on the grounds that his previous statements indicated a frosty attitude towards Moscow and a belief in a new strategic disequilibrium brought about by the SS-20 deployment.

In the event, it turned out to be Moscow whose fears were the better founded. The clearest evidence of a public and barely concealed interest in the affairs of Nato was Mitterrand's intervention in the debate on the Euromissiles. By means of his intervention in the German Bundestag in particular,[39] the French President marked a willingness, striking by its absence under his predecessors, to involve himself directly in affairs directly concerning the integrated military

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[35] See especially on this F. Gorand, 'La France et les relations Est-Ouest de 1981 à 1986 et après', *Commentaire*, vol. 9, no. 34, pp. 250-255. A more extreme version of the superficial symbolism argument is to be found in G. Robin, op. cit.

[36] As Mitterrand rather ironically put it: '....when I was a candidate, the Americans were not in favour of me, but were rather anxious, the Russians were not favourable to me, rather anxious, the German government was not favourable either. Fortunately the French thought otherwise.' Interview with *The New York Times*, 4 June 1981.

[37] General Bernard Rogers, then SACEUR, voiced a fear immediately after the election of Mitterrand (that is to say, before the decision to include Communists in the second Mauroy government) that he feared lest the new French President decide to take France out of the Atlantic Alliance altogether. Interview with General Fricaud-Chagnaud, Paris, 1991.

[38] On 27 May, Reagan, in a speech at West Point, attacked the Soviet Union as an 'evil force', aimed at destroying the United States; TASS replied on 17 June with a bitter attack on Reagan's 'militarist ideology'.

[39] For the full text of the speech, see F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op. cit., pp. 183-208.

organisation. Political solidarity with the western bloc extended further than poetic references to a community of values. As Mitterrand had presaged during his time in opposition, the new regime was quick publicly to support the Nato double decision of 1979, Cheysson stated firmly that:

> The problem of the "SS-20s" does not, of course, concern us directly, as it is not in our country that American missiles are going to be deployed...but, equally obviously, it interests us directly, because the "SS-20s" represent a modification of the global balance and we are a part of the global balance.....to stay on one side saying "we are watching" is ridiculous.[40]

France was directly concerned by the actions of its allies. The ideas of the previous *septennats* - that France could look on serenely at developments in Europe, happy in the knowledge of its 'independence' as regards security - was obviously amended by the sudden overt and public interest in the Euromissiles debate. Nor did policy reflect the trend within the PS that denounced the Nato deployment decision as a means of furthering western (American) imperialist designs. The message from Paris was clear. France, if not concerned directly with the taking and implication of the Nato double decision, was necessarily, and overtly concerned with the outcome of the Euromissiles crisis. Paris thus revealed that a primary concern, on a par with that for independence, was with the importance of keeping Germany firmly tied to the Western bloc. Independence, having as one of its primary objectives (as seen above) the maintenance of a certain French advantage with regard to the Federal Republic, could be momentarily suspended as an immediate requisite of policy, should its wider aims be threatened, through the calling into question of the military balance in Europe which underpinned the stability of the prevailing bloc system.[41]

The period until the deployment of the first American missiles on European soil witnessed Paris clearly voicing its support for the western camp;[42] the closeness of relations with the United States

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[40] *PEF*, May-June 1981, pg. 11.

[41] French insistence on some form of 'balance' between the superpowers was itself predicated on a recognition that France remained dependent on this in order to assure its own much-vaunted independence in the sphere of defence. Allegedly, Mitterrand himself made this point in 1981 saying France: 'needs an equilibrium between the blocs. Only thus can France remain as free as possible of any responsibility in the defence of its neighbours, the Federal Republic [and] concentrate totally on nuclear deterrence for her own territory'. Cited in D. Yost, *France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe. Part Two: Strategic and Arms Control Implications*, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

[42] This attitude was mirrored less publicly by Mitterrand's decision, as from July 1981, to share the information coming from the Soviet agent known as 'Farewell' with the Americans. Extremely important information was gleaned by both the CIA and the DST from this source. French

was witnessed by the fact that Mitterrand met Reagan six terms during the first year of his Presidency alone. French attitudes towards the Soviet Union noticeably hardened in comparison with those exhibited under former Presidents.[43] In particular, dissatisfaction with the continued Soviet presence in Afghanistan remained a serious bone of contention. Cheysson, at a lunch given by the diplomatic press association, made French policy clear

> I would like to be able to have a certain intimacy with the Soviet Union....Unfortunately, everyone has to face up to the consequences of his own actions. At the present time we have an important...problem with regard to the Soviet Union due to the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. We cannot have the same links with the Soviet Union as if its troops were not in Afghanistan.[44]

Disillusion with Soviet policy as encapsulated by the Afghan situation and the Euromissiles crisis crystallised into practical policy. High level contacts between the two countries, previously maintained at a steady rhythm, were curtailed drastically, whilst on 5 April 1983, Paris spectacularly ordered the expulsion of 47 Soviet diplomats, journalists and residents in France. Some months later, the first *Loi de Programmation Militaire* promulgated under Socialist rule broke with traditional Fifth Republic orthodoxy in naming the Soviet Union as the major potential enemy facing France.[45]

Contacts were, however, maintained with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during this period. Despite the perceived necessity staunchly to support the Nato double decision, Paris was anxious to maintain the impression of independence of manoeuvre. The June 1982 Versailles summit had, as we have seen, engendered French annoyance with Washington's attempts to bulldoze its allies,

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willingness to share the information reassured Washington immensely; some years later, Mitterrand even speculated that the whole affair may have been an American 'plant' designed to test the fidelity of Paris to the Western camp. See P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol 1, pp. 94-99.

[43] Cheysson implicitly admitted that the policy of equidistance in terms of declaratory stances between the two blocs had been undermined by the events of the early 1980s. When asked in the United States whether France's traditional policy of balancing her relations with the superpowers meant that he would soon follow his trip to the US with one to Moscow, he explained why this could not be the case. P. Cheysson at a lunch given by l'Association de la Presse Diplomatique, 18 June 1981, cited in *PEF*, May-June 1981, pg. 45.

[44] Ibid, pg. 45.

[45] *Loi No. 83-606 du 8 juillet 1983*, op. cit., pg 2115. For a brief overview of the early stages of Franco-Soviet relations under Mitterrand, see T. Schreiber, 'Les Relations Franco-Soviétiques (May 1981-June 1983), *Notes et Etudes Documentaires*, 4737-4738, October 1983, pp. 39-47.

with Paris refusing to see western economic policies towards the Eastern Europeans and the Soviet Union guided by the United States through the use of multilateral western summits. Immediately after Versailles, Mitterrand travelled to Hungary, as Paris reasserted its claimed autonomy to carry out a diplomatic policy of its own choosing, regardless of American pressure for a united western stance.

With the installation of the first INF weapons in Europe came a willingness on the part of France to undertake a dialogue with the Soviet Union. In this sense, the need to be seen to be achieving a balance between East and West took precedence over other questions of principle. Far from it being the case that, as one American analyst put it, Mitterrand 'apparently believed that going through the motions of sterile conversations with the Russians would not do much to France's stature or influence',[46] the Socialist administration was happy to forget earlier assertions that relations with the Soviet Union could not be normal whilst Soviet troops remained in Afghanistan. In June 1984, Mitterrand travelled to Moscow, and, despite his temerity in mentioning the name of Andrei Sakharov inside the Kremlin, the visit proved first and foremost that a certain warming of relations was underway. In October the following year, the recently appointed General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev, reciprocated, making Paris the destination of his first trip to Western Europe as Secretary-General.

Although many observers were to note that relations between Washington and Paris were for the most part warmer than under any previous President,[47] Paris was quick to underline the fact that France remained as 'independent' as ever, in spite of the need for unity over strategic issues. Policy towards the third world was one obvious area in which Mitterrand lost no time in asserting his freedom to act as he chose, with notable examples being the decision to welcome Daniel Ortega to Paris in 1981, and the ensuing agreement on limited arms sales to Nicaragua.[48] The policy was justified in terms consistent with maximalist definitions of independence, representing French opposition to the prevailing bipolar order, and attempts to represent a middle way. Cheysson stated on 10 January 1981 that 'it is very important....not to extend Yalta'[49]. It was incorrect, as far

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[46] A.W. DePorte, 'France's new Realism', *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1984, pg. 146.

[47] A. Fontaine, in an editorial for *Le Monde* on 23 May 1988, for instance, entitled his piece 'Euphorie Franco-Américaine'.

[48] See *The New York Times*, 13 July 1982.

[49] Before the *Grand Jury RTL-Le Monde*, cited in *PEF*, January-March 1982, pg. 13.

as Paris was concerned, to view all issues through the prism of East-West hostility. Hence the new government's policy of arms sales to the Sandinista regime was intended to woo Nicaragua away from communism through friendship, rather than to exclude it because of a rigid bipolar conception of international affairs. This conception was exemplified by the American tendency to see any country whose Prime Minister 'has a beard and dresses in a funny paratrooper uniform' as inherently hostile.[50] A clearer, and, for the Americans, far more irritating display of this nature was the refusal on the part of Paris in 1987 to allow the overflight of USAF bombers on their way to Tripoli. Likewise, in the case of the Gulf crisis, Paris clung to the idea that its privileged relations with the Arab peoples would enable it to find a solution where others had failed to do so, and French diplomacy attempted to the last to find alternative means of settlement.[51]

A central preoccupation of policy towards the superpowers was to ensure that a degree of 'balance' was achieved. Mitterrand had written that Russia 'has always been in our history and can still represent a useful counterweight, either at the European or the global level'.[52] Although his diplomacy was not marked to the same degree as had been de Gaulle's by a desire to play off one superpower against the other, he was still wary of proclaiming his affection too loudly or for too long towards one camp. Indeed, Mitterrand's diplomacy in the face of German unification and in particular his ill-timed trip to the Ukraine for discussions with Gorbachev were all symptomatic of such a propensity towards balancing the influence of Western allies through the creation of a latter-day *alliance de revers*.

A refusal to ally itself too closely with any superpower was maintained staunchly by France throughout the period. Obviously, in the light of the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the crumbling of the former Soviet Union, attempts to mediate between two blocs were curtailed. Yet Paris was insistent in its refusal to sacrifice independence on the altar of western solidarity. This was evident with regard to the negotiations initiated in order to plan a new security architecture for Europe. Mitterrand stubbornly refused to participate in many of these discussions, a decision highlighted by his refusal to countenance France rejoining the integrated military structures of Nato. In particular, his firm intention of retaining a French ability to formulate and pursue its own

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[50] P. Cheysson, interview with *Time*, 29 June 1981.

[51] For an extremely detailed account of Mitterrand's handling both of the war and the diplomatic crisis preceding it, see J. Alia and C. Clerc, *La Guerre de Mitterrand: La Dernière Grande Illusion*, Paris, Olivier Orban, 1991.

[52] F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op. cit., pg. 47.

policies towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union entailed a refusal to allow France to be involved in joint policy formulation. Hence he refused to sign the November 1991 declaration on the Soviet Union at Rome, and maintained a wary distance between Paris and the new structure of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. The policy stance with regard to the NACC reflected a persistent theme of the politics of independence, notably a refusal to allow France to be press ganged by the United States, under the guise of western solidarity, meekly to acquiesce in policy decisions taken in Washington. At both Williamsburg and Versailles during the early part of his first *septennat*, Mitterrand had resisted American pressure regarding economic ties with the Soviet Union. This was repeated in 1985 with Mitterrand's refusal of the invitation issued by Reagan for the western powers to meet in New York to discuss a concerted stance towards Gorbachev and his initiatives concerning SDI. His reasons for so doing were spelled out before a meeting of the Council of Ministers:

> It is not right that the seven claim to rule the planet. France is part of the Atlantic Alliance, so why should it consent to an unspoken Alliance? The situation as a result of these summits is becoming a little bit dangerous. France is in a minority there. Either it accepts the proposals made, and it bends. Or, it does not accept, and is treated as a bad ally. To go to New York on these terms is in some ways to accept the American *imperium.*[53]

In keeping with this stance, Mitterrand based his opposition to the SDI project on the fact that the Americans merely asked for European participation as sub-contractors, without agreeing to any form of consultation regarding objectives.[54] Here again, it was the notion of independence that was central. Michel Vauzelle insisted on stressing the fact that the French position was based on pressure from neither superpower: 'We have our own position on SDI, and we do not need to ask anybody for their view, neither the Russians, nor the Americans, and nor anybody else'.[55]

Moreover, behind the concept of balance lay a perception that France could act as an intermediary between Moscow and Washington, as a result of her unique position with regard to the blocs. Mitterrand, in an interview with *Antenne 2* immediately following the first INF deployments, made a thinly disguised offer of this nature:

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[53] Cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland op. cit., vol 2, pg. 248.

[54] See *Le Monde*, 1 June 1985.

[55] *The New York Times*, 2 October 1985. See also the comments of F. Mitterrand in *Le Monde*, 29 May 1986.

> France can play a determining role since it has clearly stated to both sides: this is what I do not want. But it is also capable of saying: this is what I want....I really believe that a country like France can be useful in this phase....We are the enemies of no one and I am counting on intervening in what I perceive to be the most useful manner possible and when it appears necessary to me.[56]

The years 1981-1992 witnessed many varied policies pursued by the administration. From defiant rhetoric on the necessity of independence in the face of nascent American hegemony, to the support provided to the western camp over the question of the Euromissiles, from refusal to countenance re-entry into integrated bodies, to a new coldness in relations with the Soviet Union, all such policies were portrayed as maintaining French independence in the international system. We shall now turn to an examination of whether such claims were in any sense justified.

As the above has made clear, French leaders clung with stubbornness to the concept of independence, and to policies which highlighted this theme. In so doing, one of their primary goals was the maintenance of French prestige and rank in the international system, and in particular, the particular prestige that they perceived to reward a stance of apparent non-alignment with the two major power groupings. Certainly, their attempts met with some success. The intervention before the Bundestag of January 1983 endeared France to its allies in a way which had not been seen since the Cuban crisis of 1962.[57] The influence of a state which had the freedom to remain aloof from intra-allied bickering within the integrated military organisation was far from negligible, and this was to be seen again in the closed links that developed between Presidents Bush and Mitterrand at the time of the debate over the zero options in the late 1980's.

France *has* benefitted from its refusal of integration. First, in a world characterised by the relative predictability of Cold War structures, non-involvement in integrated military commands did not entail exclusion from important discussions as to the shape and future of those institutions. France could, however, claim that it had achieved a 'special position' within Nato - a position recognised by the 1974 Ottawa declaration, and by the reactions of allies to French intervention in the INF debates - American officials during the 1980s were apt to refer to France as America's best ally.[58]

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[56] Cited in G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 110.

[57] During Mitterrand's trip to the United States in March 1984, President Reagan spoke to Mitterrand of the 'crucial' role he had played during the debates over the Euromissiles. Cited in P. Favier et M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol 2, pg. 220.

[58] Ibid, pg. 219

Second, France's insistence on a position characterised by 'non-alignment', and its encouragement of opposition to the bipolar order earned it considerable influence and prestige in the Third World, a prestige bolstered by a policy of arms sales to all-comers. Secure in the second line, and benefiting therefore from the security afforded by the Alliance, France could afford the luxury of playing not only at independence, but independence *à bon marché*.

Certainly, many observers during the first decade of Mitterrand's Presidency claimed that France under the Socialists attained a high level both of independence and *grandeur*. Notable amongst these are François Heisbourg and Pascal Boniface, who, in 1983 claimed that 'excepting the United States and the Soviet Union, [France] is the only country of the world which is "well placed" everywhere and which enjoys to a satisfactory degree possession of all the trump cards which make nations strong and provide the requisites for real independence',[59] with the result that more than simply a powerful state, history 'has given France an overall positive track record with regard to prestige', and she is still the moral reference point for others with regard to human rights, which increased her influence in world politics. Other commentators have claimed that Mitterrand's visit to Moscow in 1984, although it may not have fundamentally altered East-West relations, certainly helped open the way for a resumption of East-West dialogue. Still others have implied that Paris increased its independence from the two blocs under Mitterrand, and, although it may not have managed fundamentally to alter the course of international politics, accomplished something by the use of clear talk in diplomatic affairs.[60]

However, stubborn attachment to the notion of national independence which characterised French policy during the 1980s and the early 1990s was not without its drawbacks, and it is difficult to be as positive as those mentioned above when reviewing the practical achievements of the policy choices under consideration. France conspicuously failed to win concessions from either superpower. Moscow was not prepared to be influenced by French arguments or pressure, preferring to deal directly with Washington, as Cheysson rather ruefully conceded after a meeting with Andropov in February 1983:

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[59] Op. cit., pg. 215.

[60] D. Delbourg 'Est-Ouest: contre vents et marées', *Politique Étrangère*, vol. 50, no. 2, summer 1985, pp.321
337.

> What struck me most was that [Andropov] did not seem to be overly interested in my replies on [the question of the Euromissiles]: "at any rate" he said, "we will sort that out with the Americans"[61]

Attempts at mediation between the blocs were, therefore, abortive.

With regard to Washington, Paris notably failed either to achieve greater consultation on issues of major significance - SDI being perhaps the most striking example, though the discussions between Reagan and Gorbachev in Reykjavik in 1987 were another shining example - whilst attempts to gain economic concessions in return for political solidarity came to nothing. Despite protestations concerning the need for economic as well as political solidarity, the United States declined to alter the level of its interest rates, or the value of the dollar. Moreover, Paris meekly acquiesced in the American decision to impose an arms embargo on Nicaragua, and the arms sales of the early period of Socialist rule were never repeated.

The dividends of an Alliance policy based on autonomy of decision were, moreover, sharply reduced as a result of the profoundly altered security environment in Europe after the Cold War. This necessitated a changing institutional structure, and as such , the allies engaged in negotiations to respond to the new situation. Although the French position in this respect was marked by a degree of flexibility - the decision for instance to participate in discussions concerning the new risks against which the Alliance should be capable of standing up in a rapidly changing world - French aloofness from the integrated organisation led to an increasing marginalisation and consequent lack of influence at an extremely important moment.

This was made clear most clearly by two important decisions taken by the allies during 1991. At the meeting of the Defence Planning Committee in May 1991, the German representative - against the wishes of his government - agreed to the creation of the new rapid reaction force, and despite the need for unanimity, the absence of a French representative meant that the idea was passed. France thus found itself isolated from discussions of significance regarding the future security

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[61] Cited in G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 103. Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, placed by Mitterrand in charge of preparations for the July 1982 Ottowa summit, made a similar point concerning French ability to influence superpower policies. Referring to French efforts to alter US economic policies, he stated that it 'would be illusory to imagine that we can manage to shift American policy'. Cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol 1, pg. 243.

architecture of the Old Continent.[62] Conversely, France participated in the work of the North Atlantic Council and was thus able to argue its case and block decisions with which it disagreed. It did so either by the use of diplomatic language in final communiques - the phrase *the interested parties* signifies members of the integrated command and therefore indicates French dissention - or through forcing compromise, as French representatives managed to do, for instance, at the Rome Nato summit of November 1991.[63]

It is debatable, moreover, whether even the *style* of French policy can be said to have aided the cause of Paris. Often characterised by brusque rejections of allied suggestions, the positions adopted by Paris have frequently been unintelligible to others, and even to many officials in France itself. French hesitations and obduracy over what to many people seem mere questions of semantics have harmed relations with allies, and in particular with the United States; thus George Schultz, American Secretary of State, spoke of the French as 'aggravating', highlighting in particular the distinction between what Paris thought in private and what it was willing to say in public as especially infuriating. Such tension in relations have little to do with actual policy - France is far closer to its allies than French political discourse implies - but is rather a result of the continued French tendency noted above to stress extremes of independence in declaratory policy.[64]

Similarly, frequent references to the notion of French standing in international affairs often had a negative effect on France's audience. As Gilles Martinet pointed out: 'Real 'great powers' do not feel the need to proclaim themselves as such at every possible opportunity.....these declarations

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[62] It is worthwhile, in this respect, comparing the stance vis-à-vis Nato with the position France adopted inside other structures aimed at coordination of national policies. As a central actor within the European Communities, France has been able to use its influence to mould their development along lines acceptable and indeed desirable to itself - witness, for instance the Maastricht Treaty, whose stipulations on defence and security come far closer to the French blueprint than to British proposals. In the case of Nato, France suffers from the form of the marginalisation from which Britain suffers in the EC. For details of the negotiations on security structures of 1990-1992, in the context of the 1990-1991 Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union, see A. Menon, A. Forster and W. Wallace, 'A Common European Defence?', *Survival,* vol. 34, no. 3, autumn 1992, pp. 98-118.

[63] The text of the Rome communiqué represented a fairly uneasy compromise between British and French negotiating positions, ibid., pp. 111-112.

[64] Schultz remarked at the end of a Nato meeting in 1983 that 'you are constantly in the process of saying "the allies think such and such", and then the French say "We agree with that, so that's no problem, but that's something the unified command did and we can't touch that." And then you struggle around....to weaken the point, and at the same time, protect the precision of the French view.' Cited in *the New York Times*, 12 June 1983.

merely have the effect abroad of provoking irritation, or, even worse, smiles'[65]

The gap between rhetoric and reality which if anything increased under a President who seemed more willing to sacrifice the absolutes of independence in practice than his predecessors, in this sense undoubtedly had a negative effect. Given the situation of change and uncertainty characterising Europe during the later 1980s and early 1990s such a style of policy making did not make Paris a preferred partner for the task of redrawing the European security framework. The comments of Williams and Harrison about de Gaulle remain as well-founded with reference to his successors, in that the 'characteristic combination of hypersensitivity to French interests with a ruthless disregard of the feelings of others built up such irritation and distrust that minds were closed to any merits [their] views had.'[66]

International Imperatives and the Myth of National Independence The changing nature of international politics made the goal of national independence a far less viable one than in the past. Even in the 1970s, analysts had questioned the viability of the concept in a profoundly altered international system characterised by economic and security interdependence.[67] Such arguments were of equal, if not more force in 1992. It was increasingly difficult to see national independence as capable of definition in purely political and military terms, in a European system characterised by high levels of economic interdependence, and where the notion of security could no longer be defined in exclusively politico-military terms. Indeed, the changing nature of international politics was recognised by the Socialist administration from the outset, as exemplified by the decision taken as early as 23 May 1981 to change the name of the former Foreign Ministry to the Ministry of External Affairs - emphasising the high degree of interconnectedness between the nations of Western Europe.[68]

Moreover, the fundamentally altered strategic landscape in Europe cast further doubt on the French

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[65] *Le Monde*, 14 February 1991.

[66] P. Williams and M. Harrison, *Politics and Society in de Gaulle's Republic*, London, Longman, 1971, pg. 367.

[67] Of particular interest in this regard is the work done by Edward Morse. See his *Modernisation* op. cit., and *Foreign Policy and Interdependence in Gaullist France*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1972. The seminal work on interdependence as a concept is R. Keohane and J. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1977.

[68] See Cheysson's interview of 23 May 1981 on TF1, cited in *PEF*, May-June 1981, pg. 7.

insistence on the need for national independence. Behind attempts to maintain a balance in terms of relations with the superpowers lay the irony that it was the bloc system to which France had for so long owed its pretensions to international influence and a world role. Protected by an organisation from which it retained independence, France was able to profit from this position of safety to pursue policies of its own choosing. If periodic warmings of the Cold War, and fears of German weakness occasionally necessitated a firm statement of support for western allies, it nonetheless remained the case that policies pursued ensured a degree of prestige, and enshrined a certain political superiority over the Federal Republic.

It was perhaps as a result of this that Mitterrand was so slow in reacting to the events in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991. The openness with which Paris clung to Nato as of continued relevance in the new Europe, the initial hesitation displayed by Mitterrand with regard to the concept of German unification, and his underestimation of the pace of events were all symptomatic of an unease felt in Paris with regard to a crumbling of the Yalta system it had for so long castigated. It was a reference to a world that had already ceased to exist - one characterised by a harsh ideological opposition between East and West in which France could oppose superpower tendencies towards collusion - that led to Mitterrand's ill-timed and clumsy press conference in the wake of the Soviet putsch.[69] Paris seemed to cling to the old bipolar order in recognition of the fact that without it, the well-tried combination of independence and *grandeur* would become largely redundant.

In the post-Cold War world, the policies of national independence clung to for so long lost much of their *raison d'être*, in the face of a unified Germany which regained its full sovereignty, and the prospect of 'an economically superpowerful Germany, politically dominant in Central Europe, and a France reduced to a secondary role; an end to Gaullist dreams of a Europe directed politically by a nuclear France'.[70] The politics of independence had no rationale in a world where one's neighbour increasingly appeared to hold many of the trump cards, and where stubborn attachment to national autonomy seemed increasingly prone to international marginalisation.

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[69] See B. Heuser, op. cit.

[70] P. Lellouche, 'Cette grande Allemande qui inquiète', *Le Point*, 5 March 1990.

Conclusions

Conflicting rhetoric and policy oscillations seem to have been the major characteristics of the policies of independence under President Mitterrand. Behind a rhetoric that lost only a little of its provocative nature, there lay a greater willingness than ever on the part of Paris to involve herself in the affairs of her allies, and of Nato. Yet although sentiments of loyalty to the western camp were voiced on occasion, they were often juxtaposed with maximalist conceptions of the independence of France.

French policy accepted the need for a degree of alignment, which the rhetoric attempted to disguise. This, in a sense, allowed France to play a double game - maintain the appearance of independence whilst reaping the benefits of cooperation with allies. Unfortunately, policy proved unable to shift in the changed circumstances of post 1989 which rendered many of the assumptions upon which the quest for independence had been based incorrect.

Indeed, independence increasingly came to be perceived as an end, not a means towards achieving specific ends. In a sense, the legacy of de Gaulle - always pragmatic in his foreign policy choices - has been perverted. Refusal to participate fully in the discussions concerning the future security structure of Europe seemed to be a departure from a heritage that included - witness the 1958 memorandum - a willingness to contribute to attempts to revamp security structures to the benefit of France. Paris increasingly adhered to policies whose ultimate rationale seems to have been a knee-jerk reaction resulting from the 'slavery to independence' so aptly described by François de Rose.[71]

The myth of national independence was maintained despite its increasing inability to achieve the goals required of it in international terms. It is time now to turn to an examination of the cornerstone of that independence, namely the independent defence posture adopted by France.

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[71] *Le Monde*, 6 June 1991. With regard to the General, it is interesting to note the point made by Carl Amme in 1967: 'De Gaulle is above all a realist. If he sees that his policies may result in isolating France and in decreasing French influence in the affairs of Europe, he could well modify his position.' C. Amme, op. cit., pg. 35.

CHAPTER FIVE
SOLIDARITY VERSUS INDEPENDENCE? DEFENCE POLICY UNDER MITTERRAND

Introduction The aim of this chapter is twofold: to examine the rationales propounded by French officials for France pursuing a policy of military independence, entailing non-integration into the integrated military structure of Nato, and to analyse the policies pursued in the light of such rationales.

It will be argued that French leaders proved unable to resolve satisfactorily the tension between independence and solidarity inherent in French defence policy. Further, given the increasing gap between ends and means confronting Paris, along with the changing geo-strategic situation in Europe, French policy was increasingly rendered both unaffordable and anachronistic. Thus, military non-integration, and the emphasis on staunch military independence, centring around a national nuclear deterrent force increasingly failed to achieve the goals set them by policy makers.

Military Independence: Rationales and Goals

Against Integration The need for military non-integration was primarily based on certain ideas concerning the role of the state and the nature of the international system. French officials repeatedly underlined the fact that it was up to each state to guarantee the security of its territory and its citizens to maintain its own legitimacy.[1] As Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement eloquently put it in an interview with *Armées 2000* in October 1988, 'a country which abandons its own defence and leaves it to other countries is *un pays foutu*'.[2] Prime Minister Cresson made the same point when she declared that there 'is no more imperious duty for a state than that of creating the material and political conditions of its security, adding that a 'credible defence remains an intangible element of our sovereignty', a claim also made by Pierre Joxe, the Defence Minister.[3]

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[1] Prime Minister Rocard referred to France's independent defence policy as playing a role in 'cementing' French national identity.'Les Orientations de la Politique de Défense de la France', speech before the IHEDN, 7 September 1989, reproduced in *Défense Nationale*, 45 November 1989, pg. 19. B. Heuser suggests that the *independent* achievement by France of nuclear status was one of the constituent myths or *Staatsräson* of the Fifth Republic, op. cit.

[2] Cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 43.

[3] E. Cresson, 'Défense et Avenir de l'Europe', *Défense Nationale*, 47, November 1991, pg. 11

As Chevènement emphasised in a speech to the National Assembly, the implications of this for relations with the Alliance were profound, since reintegration into Nato, which would be implied by a weakening of the French defence effort, was the sign of a country which had given up the idea of assuring its own defence.[4]

Apart from matters of internal legitimacy, this was also a question, as in the case of national independence, of a certain view of international politics and the nature and reliability of international alliances. Mitterrand in 1980 had put the point across forcefully, with another of the allusions reminiscent of the Hobbesian or realist conception of international politics so common among French officials: 'We left [Nato] and will not return. One does not give others the care of deciding for oneself when life and death are at stake',[5] a point reinforced by Prime Minister Fabius, in September 1984: 'With regard to our own territory, and our vital interests, we must count on ourselves'.[6]

The state, therefore, had to keep control over decisions in the vital sphere of defence to ensure not only its continued legitimacy, but also its very survival in an anarchical international system. The minimal requirements of military independence were spelled out in 1981, as we saw in Chapter Three, by General Lacaze before the IHEDN: cooperation concerned only conventional forces, which would be grouped near national territory, and which would not be allocated the defence of specific zones in advance. Thus, the guiding principle of defence policy was:

> ....to safeguard in all circumstances our complete freedom of decision and appreciation, in order that our country is not automatically engaged in a conflict within which it does not feel involved. It is also a question of being able to oppose, thanks to appropriate military capabilities, any threat, any pressure or any aggression that would be aimed at limiting our independence of decision.[7]

Integration, according to French analyses would entail the risk of France being dragged into conflicts against its will, and would compromise French freedom of decision and appreciation by entailing an automaticity of commitment; the posting of troops on the Eastern border of West

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[4] Speech during the budgetary debates, National Assembly, 2 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 15.

[5] *Ici et Maintenant*, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

[6] L. Fabius, 'La Politique de Défense: Rassembler et Moderniser', *Défense Nationale*, 40, November 1984.

[7] J. Lacaze, 'La Politique Militaire', op. cit., pg. 9.

Germany, for instance, occupying a *créneaux* of the forward battle, would necessarily have undermined attempts to maintain independence of appreciation and ultimate French authority over questions of war and peace. Thus, military integration was unacceptable, and 'it is a question of maintaining our national independence whatever the nature of the alliance framework to which we belong'.[8]

Further, the goal of independence in the defence sphere necessitated a national capacity to provide for France's military requirements. From the notion of military independence came that of the possession of a strong national armaments industry. As Chevènement stated, 'there is no real national independence without a strong arms industry'.[9] Moreover, the successful and large scale export of weaponry was the only way in which France could remain the world's third military power.[10]

Non-integration and Security Not only was military independence seen as a necessity in terms of avoiding those elements of integration which could compromise France's freedom as a sovereign state. Paris also argued that, through the pursuit of military independence, France was reinforcing not only its own security, but that of Western Europe as a whole.

Firstly, this was presented as the case because of France's possession of an autonomous nuclear capability. The necessity for a nuclear, as opposed to simply an independent defence, was perceived as being crucial for reasons of security. French leaders repeatedly expressed the belief that only nuclear deterrence could keep the peace in Europe, and guarantee French security. From the outset, it became clear that Mitterrand had obviously overcome - at least in public - distrust of the concept of nuclear deterrence and of nuclear weapons themselves. Indeed, he dismissed his earlier opposition to the *force de frappe* as the idealism of someone not faced with the onerous responsibility of real political power:

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[8] Ibid, pg. 9.

[9] Interview with *La Tribune de l'Expansion*, 25 October 1988. In same interview he claimed the ability to produce competitive weapons was the *'clef d'une défense indépendante'*.

[10] M. Jobert, for instance, stated that 'without selling weapons, it [would] not be easy to be a great power, with a modern army.' Cited in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 1983. Some members of the PS, however, did retain if only for a short time - their previously stated opposition to widespread French arms sales. Thus, in June 1981, Mauroy stated the intention of France not to sell as many weapons abroad, whilst PS grandee Lionel Jospin stated that the well-being of the French economy should not rest on the sale of weapons. Cited in ibid.

> I remember the time....when I myself developed the idea that France would be able to ensure its own defence without possession of nuclear weapons ....It is necessary to understand that if I was not [at that time] in charge of the choice of our weapons, I am now accountable for the security of my country. I ensure that my country's weapons remain above the level below which their deterrent capacity would be lessened.[11]

Once the need for nuclear weapons was thus enshrined, fundamental disagreements arose between France and Nato.[12] A central notion of French nuclear doctrine was that command over nuclear forces could not be 'diluted' within an Alliance,[13] and must remain purely national.[14] Thus, not only were nuclear weapons necessary in order to achieve independence by guaranteeing the security of the state, they also necessitated independence.

Moreover, French nuclear strategy differed fundamentally from that of Nato, with its reliance on an anti-cities strategic posture, preceded only by a massive salvo from its tactical weapons. Not only were the strategies different, but the French placed great emphasis on their rejection of the Nato orthodoxies of both flexible response, and its later variant, introduced at the July 1990 London summit, of 'no first use'.[15] Mauroy indicated that France viewed independence as a means of preserving its own unique deterrent strategy, as military integration would entail its subordination to Nato orthodoxy.[16]

If an independent nuclear deterrent force and national doctrine were seen as essential for French security, this was also the case because Paris was publicly dubious about the protection offered by

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[11] Speech to the Danish Parliament, 29 April, 1982, reproduced in *PEF*, April-June 1982, pg. 34.

[12] It is interesting in this respect to note that de Gaulle, in his March 1966 letter to the allies, had stated that the 'very nature' of French strategic nuclear forces entailed a necessary withdrawal from the military structures of Nato.

[13] 'by its irreversible and....terrifying character, [a] deterrent strategy cannot be diluted within any kind of international alliance system' L. Fabius, op. cit., pg. 9.

[14] 'The nuclear decision, and control over nuclear weapons cannot be shared with anyone'. 'La stratégie par François Mitterrand', interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18-24 December 1987.

[15] For an orthodox French criticism of flexible response, see L. Fabius, op. cit., pp. 8-9. For French criticism of the 'Rogers doctrine', which entailed a greater reliance on sophisticated conventional weaponry, see C. Hernu, interview in *Témoignage Chrétien*, 6-12 December, 1982. See also his article 'Face à la logique des blocs, une France indépendante et solidaire', *Défense Nationale*, 38, December 1982, pp. 11-14. At the London summit of July 1990, Mitterrand made his feelings regarding Nato strategy clear: '.....I intervened [during the discussions at the summit] to indicate that France did not share the strategic conceptions of the Alliance, neither that of yesterday, nor that of today. That of yesterday centred around flexible defence and the forward battle, that of today, with nuclear weapons as a last resort.' *Questions Politico-Militaires*, op. cit., 1990, pg. 310.

[16] P. Mauroy, 'Vers un Nouveau Modèle d'Armée', op. cit., pg. 17.

the Atlantic Alliance. The will to military independence was reinforced by a growing belief in the unreliability of the American security guarantee to Western Europe. Hernu, in a speech to the Assembly of the Western European Union in November 1982, explicitly stated his doubts as to the nature and extent of American commitment to Europe.[17] Whilst French officials repeatedly stressed the necessity of the defence of Europe being coupled to that of the United States,[18] they also underlined their fears regarding often differing European and American interests. This was especially true at a time when the French perceived the American guarantee to be weakening - a notion based partly on vacillation in Washington,[19] and partly on developments towards the end of the decade. The INF Treaty also had similar sort of effect,[20] as did fears emanating from a belief that socio-cultural factors amongst others entailed American attention turning increasingly westward.[21]

There also existed heightened French fears regarding a possible reduction of the American conventional force presence in Europe. The period following the destruction of the Berlin Wall witnessed much uncertainty concerning this presence, and radical reductions in the numbers of troops stationed in Western Europe. Despite the progress of détente, French leaders continually stressed the need for a continued stationing of American troops in Europe.[22]

French officials argued that France's position with regard to Nato in no way detracted from the security of the Alliance. On the contrary, it was argued, on the one hand, that the independent posture of Paris contributed to the overall security of western Europe. On the other hand, French officials claimed that non integration in no way diminished French ability to react as quickly as any

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[17] See *Libération*, December 12, 1982.

[18] See Cheysson's speech the National Assembly, 18 November, 1981, cited in *PEF*, November-December 1981, pp. 20-21.

[19] For example, the comments made by Reagan on the issue of nuclear war fighting, notably when asked if he thought a nuclear exchange could be limited: 'I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical [nuclear] weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button'. Cited in *The Economist*, 24 October 1981.

[20] For a survey of some French views, see notably J. Isnard, 'L'Europe et sa Défense', *Études*, no. 368, January 1988, esp pp. 27-28, and *Le Monde*, 6 and 7 March 1987. Whilst Mitterrand himself seemed generally favourable towards the INF Treaty, many members of his governments expressed horror; André Giraud, the Defence Minister, allegedly referred to the Treaty as a nuclear Munich, see *Le Monde*, 6 March 1987.

[21] See, for example, J. Grappin, *Pacific America*, Paris, Plon, 1988. See also Galilée (pseudonym for several prominent figures including hauts fonctionnaires), *Oser le Dire*, Paris, Seuil, 1986, pg. 195.

[22] See, for example, J-P Chevènement, *Discours Devant l'Assemblée de l'UEO*, Paris, December 1990, text provided by the French Embassy in London, pg. 4.

of its allies in times of crisis.[23]

The Goals of Non-Integration Apart from ensuring the legitimacy and survival of the state, as well as the provision of enhanced security, military non-integration was perceived as facilitating the achievement of the broader goals of French foreign policy. The foreign policy aim priority of national independence depended on an ability for national self defence. The freedom to pursue an autonomous line in foreign affairs was largely perceived to result from possession of an independent defence capability, and in particular from the fact that France was a nuclear power, as Prime Minister Rocard made clear:

> In order to guarantee its independence.... our country has chosen an independent defence, based on an autonomous nuclear deterrent strategy. This strategy .... has allowed our country to play a vital role in the global balance, and today constitutes a guarantee of preserved influence.[24]

The equally central objective of *grandeur*, or international standing was also seen to be achievable only through means of nuclear status, as Hernu remarked: 'it is.... because of the credibility and the autonomy of its deterrent that France can make its voice heard in the world'.[25]

The Problematic Given the emphasis placed on the necessity for military independence, the question was raised as to how non participation in the integrated military organs of Nato could be reconciled with the declarations of solidarity with, and fidelity to, the Western cause that characterised the period. French officials were quick to underline the fact that an independent military posture in no way affected French solidarity with allies. Thus, Mauroy, whilst rejecting completely the notion that France accepted any automaticity of commitment, emphasised the fact that France did not intend to 'transform the refusal of automaticity into a refusal of our duties.'[26]

However, stressing national independence in military matters, and a national conception of defence and deterrence could easily have compromised French ability to fulfil its existing Treaty

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[23] In support of this claim, General Fricaud-Chagnaud told me that when, in response to the Polish crisis of 1980, Nato stepped up its alert standing, Paris was the first capital to respond to this decision. Interview, Paris, 1990.

[24] M. Rocard, op. cit., pg. 19. See also, for a similar opinion from the other side of the political spectrum, F. Fillon, 'François Mitterrand a dégagé en touche', *Le Monde*, 26 May 1989.

[25] *Le Figaro*, 1 January 1982.

[26] Mauroy, 'La Stratégie de la France', op, cit., pp. 6-7.

obligations, through an undue emphasis on purely national security. The central problem facing decision-makers in Paris was summarised nicely by Mitterrand himself immediately prior to his ascendance to the Presidency, as we saw in Chapter Two.

The dichotomy between military independence and military solidarity was one pointed out by several officials. General Lacaze was willing to admit that resolving 'the dilemma between participation in the Alliance and defence of the [national] territory is a difficult exercise'.[27] Some months later, he explained to the *Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale* the problems involved in reconciling these two concepts:

> ...to emphasise our intervention strategy to help our allies could reduce the credibility of the actions of our forces in covering our own territory, and thus reduce the effectiveness of our national deterrent. On the other hand, to minimise our initial engagement could lead the adversary to doubt our determination.[28]

The decisions taken in this regard were a vital feature of relations with the Alliance. We shall now, therefore, turn to an examination of the development of defence policy under Mitterrand.

Defence Strategy: The Policies

Nuclear Weapons Acceptance of the necessity of nuclear deterrence was to take the form of an increased emphasis on the strategic nuclear force. Socialist references to the strategic deterrent were unequivocal. Thus Hernu declared bluntly that 'our own nuclear deterrent strategy is, and will remain, the best guarantee of our defence and our national independence....priority is given to nuclear forces [as] it is on these that France rests its security',[29] adding that anyone 'who says to me that he prefers an extra division of soldiers to a nuclear submarine is living in the past'.[30]

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[27] Lacaze speech before the IHEDN of 3 May 1983, reproduced as 'Politique de Défense et Stratégie Militaire de la France', *Défense Nationale*, 39, June 1983, pg. 21.

[28] Ibid., pg. 21

[29] C. Hernu, 'Face à la Logique des Blocs', op. cit., pg. 14.

[30] See *L'Express*, 15 October 1982. More proof of the central importance accorded to the strategic nuclear force was furnished by Mitterrand, who, during the course of a visit to the operational base of the *Force Océanique Stratégique* (FOST) stated with regard to the SNLE force that it 'is perhaps the principal element of [Franc's] military deterrent strategy'. Cited in *Le Monde*, 2 June 1981.

Statements to the effect that nuclear deterrence[31] - and particularly the strategic component of that deterrent[32] - remained central to French defence planning remained common currency throughout the decade. Even given the lessons learnt in the Gulf war, in which nuclear weapons played no role (explicitly so, as Mitterrand expressly ruled out their use)[33] the centrality of nuclear weapons, and the immutability of French strategy were underlined.[34]

Continuity meant an emphasis on the security of the national territory at the expense of considerations of the necessity of Alliance solidarity in case of conflict. French nuclear weapons retained a purely national purpose in so far as it was only French territory which automatically and unambiguously benefitted from their deterrent effect. Mitterrand, for instance, speaking during a televised interview on *TF1* in 1982, stated that France needed only enough nuclear potential to destroy any aggressor '*once our territory is directly threatened*'.[35]

More frequently, however, a balancing act was carried out between a refusal of extended deterrence and a purely national deterrent concept by means of the notion of 'vital interests'.[36] Whilst not covering the whole of Western Europe, these were clearly meant to include more than just French territory.[37] On the one hand, high-ranking officials repeatedly underlined - and in so doing

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[31] '....nuclear deterrence....remains the basis of our policy', P. Joxe, Defence Minister, speech to the National Assembly during the discussions on the military budget for 1992, 13 November 1991, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 24, November-December 1991, pg. 34.

[32] Joxe stated that the *Force Océanique Stratégique* represented the '*pivot de notre dissuasion*'. Speech during the debate on the military budget for 1992, 26 November 1991, cited in ibid, pg. 95.

[33] For Mitterrand's comments, and Chirac's criticism of the President's undermining of the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, see *Libération*, 9-10 February 1991.

[34] See F. Mitterrand's televised speech of 3 March 1991, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 20, March-April 1991, pg. 13.

[35] Interview of 15 May 1982, cited in P. Lellouche, *L'Avenir de la Guerre*, Paris, Mazarine, 1985, pg. 257. Emphasis added.

[36] See, for instance the interview with Hernu in *L'Express*, 2-8 March 1984.

[37] Ibid. Clearly too, the notion was in no way allied to the 'third circle' of French interests, notably those external to Europe, as Pierre Joxe made clear in eschewing the use of conscript soldiers during the Gulf War. See Pierre Joxe, Speech to the Conseil Supérieur de la Fondation Militaire, cited in F. Heisbourg, 'France and the Gulf Crisis', in N. Gnesotto and J. Roper (eds.), *Western Europe and the Gulf*, Paris, West European Union Institute for Security Studies, 1992, pg. 21, fn. 7.

marked a break from the orthodoxies of some of France's earlier strategists[38] - the fact that French security interests were called into play from before the moment that the adversary directly threatened French soil. French speeches during the period were peppered with affirmations of French determination to fulfil its Alliance commitments, and statements to the effect that France could not afford to sit back and watch whilst its neighbours were overrun.[39]

On the other hand, the French were loath to attempt any sort of definition of the notion of vital interests, and indeed were prone deliberately to heighten its ambiguity, insisting that in so doing, they were reinforcing deterrence through complication of the calculations of an eventual foe.[40] The fact that national security took precedence over considerations of Western European security as a whole, however, was exemplified in French tactical nuclear weapons doctrine.

Under Mitterrand, Paris came increasingly to distance the French doctrine from that of Nato, stressing the links between strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces, and denying the possibility of the use of the latter for anything but a single massive 'warning shot'. Mitterrand expressed a preference for the term *prestrategic* to refer to such arms, as it implied a greater connection with deterrent strategy as a whole - though this designation was not greeted by unanimous approval within France.[41] For him, these weapons '....do not represent an autonomous force. They are

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[38] Pierre Gallois had written that 'The security of Europe is desirable, necessary, important, even essential [*capitale*] but it is not absolutely vital for [France]'; in P-M Gallois, *Le Renoncement: de la France Défendue à l'Europe Protégée*, Paris, Plon , 1977, pg. 146. More recently, another of the founding fathers of French deterrent doctrine, Lucien Poirier, implied that France could survive even should its neighbours be overrun: 'it was preferable to be under siege than conquered'. Statement to the Defence Commission of the National Assembly, 14 April 1983, cited in L. Darinot, *Rapport d'Information n°. 1440, Eléments préalables de Réflexion sur la Stratégie de la France, Annexe au Procès-verbal de la Séance du 20 avril 1983*, pg. 118.

[39] See, for instance, Chirac's denial of any possibility of a 'two battles' scenario in 1987. 'La France et les Enjeux de la Sécurité Européenne', *Défense Nationale*, 44, February 1988, pg. 16.

[40] See C. Hernu, 'La Politique et la Volonté de Défense', *Politique Internationale*, 16, summer 1982, pg. 13.

[41] Mitterrand first coined the phrase *prestrategic* in 1982, see *Le Monde*, 24 October, 1982. This did not, however, meet with unanimous approval. Indeed, Mitterrand himself contributed to the uncertainty; in his press conference following the London Nato summit of July 1991, he commented that he felt it was incorrect to term the Hadès a 'prestrategic' weapon: 'Prestrategic weapons form part of strategy as a whole. They are not isolated from the nuclear context. They are not the last echelon of the artillery. They are the first stage of nuclear war. They are not prestrategic [sic]. They are a component of strategic weapons [*C'est déjà dedans*].' Conférence de presse du Président de la République à l'issu du Sommet de l'Atlantique Nord, Londres, le 6 juillet 1990, *Bulletin d'Information du 10 juillet 1990 (127/90)*, pg. 9. A few years earlier, Defence Minister Giraud had broken with established orthodoxy by referring to these weapons as theatre weapons, a practice ended under Chevènement, his socialist successor, who reverted to the prestrategic label employed by Mitterrand. See D. Yost, 'Franco German Defence Cooperation', in S. Szabo (ed.), *The Bundeswehr and Western Security*, London, Macmillan, 1990, pg. 249, fn. 28.

part of deterrence, whose aim is not a win a war but to prevent war.'[42]

During the period of *cohabitation* from 1986 to 1988, doctrine appeared to shift closer to that employed by Nato. Perhaps the best example of this were Chirac's remarks concerning the eventual use of tactical nuclear weapons, in particular his assertion that the use of these weapons could be '*diversifié et échelonné dans la profondeur*' carried overtones of flexible response.[43] Mitterrand, however, was quick to respond; questioned about the Prime Minister's remarks, he commented that 'There is no graduated response for France. That is also the opinion of the Prime Minister'.[44] In response to the Prime Minister's remarks, Mitterrand gave a clear indication of the role he foresaw for non-strategic weapons. It was misleading to discuss separate strategies for different nuclear weapons, as all such weapons formed part of the same deterrent strategy, and *strategic*, not tactical, doctrine:

> Prestrategic weapons are not meant to be an extension of conventional weapons. They are situated by definition at the start of the nuclear process. They are not meant to be theatre or battlefield weapons, and let there be no ambiguity on this point. From this comes the notion of final warning [*ultime avertissement*].There can be warnings of all kinds, diplomatic and political, but there can only be one nuclear warning.[45]

Mitterrand was thus affirming the continued predominance of an earlier orthodoxy which emphasised French refusal of a prolonged nuclear exchange, and insisted instead on the notion of a single massive nuclear salvo to act as a warning to the aggressor of French intention to raise the stakes still higher - to the strategic level - if necessary. Such a decision would be taken on the basis of French interests alone, as there was 'no question of associating the FRG with France's nuclear strategy'.[46] All joint planning or targeting was officially rejected by French leaders, thus again heightening the impression of a French deterrent force aimed not at enhancing allied security, but merely at 'sanctuarising' France'. Such a stance inevitably aroused fears amongst allies

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[42] See *Le Monde*, 24 October, 1982.

[43] J. Chirac, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

[44] Interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18-24 December 1987. See also the very orthodox account of the role of tactical weapons presented to the IHEDN by L. Fabius in September 1985, 'Patriotisme, Indépendance, Solidarité' *Défense Nationale*, 41, November 1985, pg. 10.

[45] Speech to the IHEDN, October 1988, op. cit., pg. 18.

[46] F. Mitterrand, cited in *Le Monde*, 24-25 October 1982.

concerning the possible effects of precipitous French escalation.[47]

This becomes even clearer if one considers the question of non-strategic nuclear targeting. The *Pluton* had a range of only 150 k.ms.[48] Therefore, in order to be able to reach Warsaw Pact territory, the *Pluton* regiments needed to be placed near the eastern frontier of West Germany. This would be counterproductive in terms of the overall aims of military independence, in that France would lose the liberty of decision and appreciation on which it placed so much emphasis. As one analyst has pointed out:

> ....*Pluton* is not a weapon which is compatible with French policy towards Nato and France's neighbours....Fired from the area of the French frontier, the missiles will attack targets in these countries....A government could not accept such damage caused by a neighbour unless the latter's action aids the common defence, according to a plan established and determined by means of a common strategy on which all the allies are agreed. This condition cannot be fulfilled by France outside Nato, or without a military arrangement with Nato.[49]

Ambiguity regarding French intentions with regard to tactical weapons were heightened by the President himself. During a trip to the Federal Republic, in October 1987, Mitterrand declared that 'there is no reason to believe that France's final warning shot against an aggressor would be delivered on German territory....France's nuclear strategy is addressed to the aggressor and to him alone.'[50] The following day, he made further comments to the same effect.[51] Given the limited range of even the *Hadès* system - though even this was not at the time operational - these remarks led the defence correspondent of *Le Monde* to infer that Mitterrand intended to deploy tactical

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[47] Such fears were perhaps best summed up by Senator Sam Nunn: 'France by its policies reduces the possibility of a conventional defense, and significantly lowers the nuclear threshold....French tactical nuclear weapons, if used in the midst of a conventional engagement between Nato....and Warsaw Pact forces, could force the US into a nuclear war'. *Report to the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, 1974, cited in D. Yost, 'French Nuclear Targeting', in D. Ball and J. Richardson (eds.), *Strategic Nuclear Targeting*, London, Cornell University Press, 1986, pg. 147. See also F. de Rose, *Défendre la Défense*, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

[48] The *Pluton* was the first French non-strategic nuclear weapon. In October 1981, the administration had taken the decision to construct a non-strategic weapon with an increased range - the *Hadès*, with a range of around 350 k.m. This was to come into service in 1992.

[49] L. Ruehl, *La Politique Militaire de la V^e^ République*, op. cit., pg. 418.

[50] *Le Monde*, 21 October 1987.

[51] '....who dreamed up the idea that the destination of france's nuclear weapons would be German soil?...Since the aim of French deterrence is to prevent an aggression, it is towards the aggressor, if he exists, that the threat must be addressed'. *Le Monde*, 21 October 1987.

missiles towards the Eastern frontier of the Federal Republic, clearly marking a huge break with the past, given the implications this would have regarding automaticity, and French participation in the 'forward battle'. [52] Yet nothing came of this dramatic initiative. Once again, the requirement of military independence outweighed those of allied solidarity. Even the *Hadès* did little to resolve the dilemma since, as West Germans pointed out, the East Germans who could now be targeted from French soil, 'are also Germans'.[53]

The decision to construct the Hadès was quickly followed by that to regroup all French tactical nuclear forces under a single command directly under the *Chef des États Major des Armées*, therefore separating them from the First Army. This was the outcome of a new emphasis in French declaratory policy on the overtly *political* nature of deterrence, implying that the various components of that deterrent needed to be under political, and not military, control. This decision was of significance for two reasons. Firstly, it marked a slight reduction in the risk of precipitate French escalation, by removing tactical weapons from those French forces which would be the first to come into contact with a potential enemy.

Secondly, the removal of the tactical weapons from the First Army implied a greater flexibility in the use of those same conventional forces. Its possession of tactical weapons, in fact, had been one of the major French objections to assigning a clear role in the defence of Europe to units of the First Army. Since these were equipped with tactical nuclear weapons, any direct involvement in conflict of these units raised the fear of such weapons being used in a battlefield role distinct from the overall framework of French nuclear deterrence.[54] Separation of conventional and tactical nuclear forces involved a significant shift in thinking, as it enabled the former to be used more flexibly, whilst the latter were grouped on national territory.[55]

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[52] *Le Monde,* 24 October 1987

[53] Mitterrand had stressed the importance in geographic terms of the increased range of the new missile. See his press conference of 22 October 1982, cited in *Le Monde*, 24 October, 1982. See *Le Monde*, 30 November 1982.

[54] Interestingly, this had been one of the criticisms levelled at the doctrinal inflexions brought about by Giscard d'Estaing in 1976. On 11 June 1976, *Le Monde* published a letter from a high-ranking official entitled 'Qui conduira la bataille'. The author stressed that de Gaulle himself, at the IHEDN on 1 June 1967, had stressed the necessity of Presidential control over tactical nuclear weapons. Presidential control was a prerequisite to avoid the decision on escalation being taken on the battlefield. Giscard, however, had stated that such weapons were not only a means of deterrence, but also instruments of battle. Thus, the question was posed, if 'the President of the Republic is not an artillery officer,....who will carry out the battle?'

[55] Political directives concerning operational planning of a possible French engagement in Central Europe using conventional and possibly nuclear forces, stated that such an engagement should 'take place under a threat of nuclear use, without a decision to use nuclear weapons (time and space) being necessarily linked to the manoeuvre of the forces'.

Thus, whilst deterrent strategy itself remained centred on a largely *national* conception of deterrence, a vital element of the changes that did occur was their implication for *conventional* force doctrines. It is to these that we now turn.

Conventional Forces During the initial years of the Socialist administration, the idea of a conventional war being fought in Western Europe belonged firmly to the sphere of fanciful conjecture, as a result of the faith of leading officials in the efficacy of nuclear deterrence. Hernu in particular was a zealot on this score, proclaiming that:

> One cannot simultaneously believe in deterrence and not believe in it, found one's defence on nuclear weapons, and prepare for a conventional war. The exercise has no interest except for that which might be called archaic war, that is to say a war which would have the adversary behaving as if nothing had happened since the time when Hitler's tanks breached the Northern Front. Today we are capable of rendering such a war unthinkable.[56]

Thus, those conventional forces which *were* required were so for distinctly limited purposes:

> When I say it is necessary for us to have a minimum of conventional forces, this is in order to avoid the adversary being attracted....by seeing complete emptiness. It is also in order to cut short any interpretation of weakness which would surely be the result of our lowering our guard in this area. It is also obvious that one should not err on the side either of caution nor of over-zealousness. To reduce our conventional forces too much would be to invite accusations of neutralism; to develop them excessively would be to act as if nuclear weapons did not exist, that is to say, it would be to cast doubt on our will to use [nuclear weapons]'.[57]

For all this, however, the field of conventional forces was that in which the new administration was to introduce the most sweeping reforms during the decade.

During the early stages of the first *septennat*, the use of these forces was spoken of in traditional Gaullist terms. The rationale for the maintenance of ground forces was linked to the possession of the *force de frappe*, and the role of the former was simply that of ensuring that the latter not be

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Cited in F. Bozo, *La France et l'Otan*, op. cit., pg. 142. See also Hernu's speech before the *Conseil Supérieure de l'Armée de Terre* on 24 November 1982, cited in *Le Monde*, 7 December 1982, and Jacque Chirac's address before the IHEDN of 12 December 1987, 'La France et les Enjeux de la Sécurité Européenne', op. cit., pg. 16.

[56] C. Hernu, 'La Politique et la volonté de Défense', op. cit., pg 14.

[57] Ibid., pg 14.

used unless absolutely necessary - the 'test' function referred to in earlier statements of military doctrine.[58]

By the end of 1982, the emphasis of the official discourse shifted towards the role of French conventional forces in displaying French solidarity with its Alliance partners.[59] The creation of the *Force d'Action Rapide*, carried out under the auspices of the 1983 *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, was the most striking development in this regard. The FAR was presented by French officials as representing a means of reconciling the requirements of national independence, and a continued staunch refusal of military integration[60] with those of solidarity with France's allies, concretising French determination to support its allies, while allowing Paris to retain sole control over the decision as to whether to intervene.[61]

Statements from leading military officials tended to emphasise the fact that the FAR could, if necessary, and in fact almost certainly would, be deployed far ahead of any previously conceivable French intervention in the event of hostilities in Europe. In the past, as Lacaze indicated, although French conventional forces, placed at the approaches to French national territory, could be called on to act as a second echelon force for the Alliance, their relative lack of mobility prevented them from fighting deep into West German territory from the start of a conflict.[62]

The new force, consisting of approximately 47,000 highly mobile troops, was intended to increase the speed of a possible French intervention alongside the other allies, whilst also permitting a far deeper penetration of French forces into allied lines. Certainly, under the path-breaking exercises *Moineau Hardi* of September 1987, which involved large FAR units crossing into Germany, it was significant both that these forces received support from the Second Corps, and that they travelled

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[58] See the statement by General Jacques de Barry, cited in *Le Monde*, 24 March 1982.

[59] Hernu, for instance, declared that the First Army 'is an element of our strategy in Europe. Its action is essential. It marks our engagement towards our allies. It must not become fixed in its old structures and tactical concept.' 'Face à la logique des blocs' op. cit., pg. 17. French exercises also seemed to mark a determination to contribute more to allied security. On the *Sully* exercises of 1982, see D. Ruiz Palmer, 'Between the Rhine and the Elbe: France and the Conventional Defence of Central Europe', *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1987, pp. 477-8, 484-5.

[60] Hernu,'Discours à des diplomates français', 6 March 1984, cited in C. Hernu, *Défendre la Paix*, Paris, Lattès, 1985, pp. 75-76.

[61] Ibid, pg. 72.

[62] J. Lacaze, 'Politique de Défense et stratégie Militaire de la France', op. cit., pg 14.

further into German soil than was usual for French forces.[63] Moreover, as Hernu pointed out, although dissociated from nuclear weapons in a way the First Army had not been, the fact that the FAR was a force belonging to a nuclear state was significant in itself.[64]

Whilst in some ways equipping conventional forces to intervene more effectively in Central Europe, the reforms of the 1980's did nothing to remove the ambiguities surrounding the question of whether France would participate in any conflict.[65] French officials tended increasingly to stress the positive role that French forces could play in at least the conventional defence of Western Europe. Mitterrand, along with other leading officials - was keen to underline the fact that France, although 'independent' knew on which side it stood, and understood its responsibilities towards the community of values of which it formed a part. Thus the President pointed out that French forces in the Federal Republic could hardly turn tail and flee in the event of a Central European conflict.[66]

However, France reserved the right to take a 'non-belligerency' option. Any form of automaticity of commitment was studiously avoided, as was the prospect of French moves closer to the Nato integrated structures.

> Independence comes from the fact that our engagement still results solely from our own decision: we are in charge of the place, the moment, and the speed of our action. The potential adversary must not know where, when and how the FAR will intervene. This consequently excludes the possibility of France being assigned any créneau in any 'forward battle' as well as any concession linked to a French return to the integrated command of Nato.[67]

Whilst the question of *how* France might intervene was addressed through conventional force

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[63] On the significance of these exercises, see D. Ruiz Palmer 'France', Paper prepared for presentation before the conference on *Force mobilisation, the revolutions of 1989, and the future of European security*, National Defence University, Washington D.C., June 19-21, 1990.

[64] '....the FAR is a conventional force which can intervene with force [*en coup de poing*], and its engagement is not linked to that of our nuclear forces. A potential aggressor in Europe, however, could not but hesitate to physically confront the forces of the nuclear, independent, and continental power which is France'. C. Hernu, *Discours à des Diplomates français*, 6 March 1984, op. cit., pg. 72.

[65] This was despite the claims of Lacaze, who, in an address to the IHEDN in May 1984, stated that the FAR 'lifts all ambiguity surrounding our ability to intervene beside our allies very quickly', J. Lacaze, 'Concept de Défense et Sécurité en Europe', op. cit., pg. 20.

[66] F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op. cit., pg. 99.

[67] C. Hernu, *Discours à des Diplomates Français*, 6 March 1984, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

reorganisations, therefore, that of *whether* it would do so was not. This in itself had serious implications for the Alliance, as we shall see; combined with severe French military weakness, it cast severe doubt on French claims regarding France's ability to intervene in a Central European conflict.

French Defence Policy 1981-1991: A critique

Having outlined the nature of French defence policy during the decade, it is now time to turn to a detailed examination of that policy and its implications both for France and for the Alliance. In particular, the following section will investigate the reality of the military independence so often claimed by French officials, the contribution made by France to western security, the ability of French officials to reconcile their ambitious goals with the resources available to them, and also the effects on the credibility of French defence doctrine of the events in Eastern and Central Europe of the latter years of the 1980s.

Military 'Independence'? As in the sphere of foreign policy, French leaders were quick to maintain that France enjoyed independence in terms of defence policy. Independence entailed not only that Paris enjoyed full autonomy concerning defence policy decisions, but also that French military forces were sufficient of themselves to guarantee the security of the *Héxagone*.

On both counts, however, reality differed from political rhetoric. The principle of national control over French troops was sacrificed somewhat during the course of the Gulf war. Despite Defence Minister Chevènement's insistence that French forces be allowed to act autonomously , the French President accepted that they come under US operational control during the conflict, whilst also agreeing temporarily to waive the principles which had traditionally accompanied that of military independence, notably those of refusing the basing or overflight of aircraft from other states in France; such initiatives during the Middle East conflict were derided by Chevènement, effectively unmuzzled following his resignation from the Ministry of Defence, as representing the 'mental, if not official, reintegration of France into Nato'.[68] Similarly, in the case of the Central European region itself, the agreements noted above - probable or actual - between France and its allies regarding nuclear targeting and deployment of the FAR marked inflexions in the declared national control over forces, as such operational planning put the deployment of such forces partly at least at the disposal of the integrated command - though not, of course, the initial decision concerning

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[68] *Le Monde*, 23 April 1991.

their eventual use.[69]

Such concessions were not merely based on a feeling that France should be in a position to cooperate closely with allies. More fundamentally, their rationale lay in an acceptance of the fact that France was not capable of carrying out such military missions independently. At the time of the creation of the FAR, senior French military officials intimated that certain technical agreements had to be reached with allies in order that the new force be provided with support and refuelling facilities.[70] Similarly, the effectiveness of interventions by the FATAC necessitated close cooperation with allies,[71] whilst France found itself, during the Gulf war, almost completely reliant on American information-gathering systems, as Joxe pointed out in a speech before French parliamentarians in June 1991.[72]

Moreover, it is probable that even with respect to the defence of the national territory, even minimalist French claims as to the deterrent capabilities of the French nuclear force, such as that made by Mitterrand at the United Nations, exaggerated its ability to guarantee French security. David Yost, in a detailed study of the French deterrent posture, has enumerated the possible situations facing a French President entrusted with the decision as to eventual nuclear employment. This conclusion which was one shared by the French analyst Pierre Lellouche, claimed notably that the French strategy of a an immediate anti-cities response to aggression perceived as threatening French vital interests 'only deters a strike against our cities; a strike that the adversary has no reason to undertake, given his objectives and the means at his disposal'.[73]

The deterrent value of the French nuclear deterrent force seems, as Yost pointed out, to have been highest with regard to the remotest threats, and lowest with regard to those scenarios whose likelihood was the greatest; in particular the latter was the case regarding the possibility of Soviet

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[69] In a critique of the FAR, General Georges Valentin stated that, in order to intervene effectively in Central Europe, the FAR had to entail a virtual reintegration into Nato. See his 'L'arête étroite', *Défense Nationale*, May 1983, pp. 53-56.

[70] See in particular the statements by F. Cailleteau on 28 November 1983, cited in *Le Monde*, 30 November 1983, and H. Zwingelstein on 11 February 1984, cited in *Le Monde*, 14 November 1984.

[71] Interview with General Forget, Paris, 1991. As was seen in Chapter Three, Air Force and Navy cooperation was more willingly entered into because of its relatively lower visibility.

[72] Discours du Ministre de la Défense devant la Commission Paritaire Ouvrière reproduced in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 21, May-June 1991, esp. pg. 105.

[73] P. Lellouche, *L'Avenir de la Guerre*, op.cit., pg. 260.

military intervention in the Federal Republic of Germany, for, as French officials were fond of pointing out, the French nuclear deterrent could not be used to cover all West German territory.

Calculated diffidence with regard to West German defence resulted in a tension between the idea of national self sufficiency in defence questions and of the idea, necessarily only hinted at by leading officials, that the ties binding France and the Federal Republic were strong, and necessarily so, as the former could not afford to see the latter occupied by hostile forces. This tension was revealed neatly by Cheysson in an interview in 1983:

> For humanitarian and political reasons we could not accept to see Germany....placed under a threat which could deprive it of its freedom of judgement. The Franco-German relationship....is fundamental for us, ...We are more than married to Germany, since divorce is henceforth unimaginable. I have already said that we do not want Germany to be placed under a threat. For all that, however, we do not claim that our nuclear instrument is capable of deterring on behalf of both France and the whole of Europe.[74]

France could afford to take such a stance precisely because the Federal Republic stood between it and any possible aggression, and as such, French territory effectively benefited from the protection of the Alliance. As such, the principles of independence could be stressed more forcibly than the practicalities of a credible independent capability and the nature of independence, given the close ties - both strategic and political- that linked France with its neighbours. Thus, declarations of solidarity could be as superficial with regard to detail - circumscribed by the slippery notion of vital interests - as those regarding independence.

The Defence of Central Europe The staunch declaratory emphasis on the principle of national military independence served to cloud somewhat a potential French contribution to a Central European conflict, especially as these were often juxtaposed with affirmations of loyalty to Alliance commitments. As we saw in Chapter One, scholars have differed in their interpretations of the implications of France's independent military posture, from those who insisted that the French contribution to Western security was, and therefore the military implications of 1966 were, negligible, to others who stressed the importance of France to western security.

Certainly, in terms of a conventional commitment to western security, it can reasonably be stated that France increased its contribution to the western defence effort in the period FROM 1966 as

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[74] 'Diplomatie: L'empreinte Française', op. cit., pp. 15-16

a whole, including the decade after 1981. As one prominent American analyst put it in 1989, 'a review of French force levels today reveals that France might contribute *more* conventional ground forces....to the common defence in Central Europe than at any other time in Nato's 39 year history'.[75] Not only did the creation of the FAR and the rhetoric emanating from Paris indicate the likelihood of an increased certainty and size of conventional commitment but the relative mobility of the new force also implied a French contribution far further from its own frontiers than had previously been conceivable, and well beyond the notional line linking Rotterdam, Dortmund, and Munich which had traditionally (under the terms of the Valentin-Feber accords) marked the western geographical limit of any French military intervention.[76]

However, even the conventional reorganisations of the 1980s left many questions unanswered. There remained a fundamental ambiguity, despite the optimism of some senior Nato officials on this score, regarding the probability of French intervention in the event of hostilities breaking out. And, of course, the French nuclear force presented problems of unpredictability regarding, firstly, whether or not it would be used at all, and, secondly, if it were to be used, what the effects of French tactical weapons fire over West Germany might be in terms of both the possibilities of escalation of the overall conflict, and the allied forces in Germany themselves.[77]

Moreover, even given a French conventional intervention in a Central European conflict, without the complications of precipitous escalation decided on by Paris, doubts remained as to the value of any French conventional capability. From the point of view of the troops themselves, doubts existed as to their ability to intervene effectively in any Central European conflict; as one analyst has noted, unlike

> the armies of Belgium, Canada , West Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, which routinely train together during numerous field training exercises up to the corps level, French ground forces seldom participate in large-scale, multinational manoeuvres with the Allies. Their participation until 1986 had never exceeded a battalion in size, lest more frequent attendance or a larger

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[75] D. Ruiz Palmer, 'France', in J. Simon (ed.), *Nato-Warsaw Pact Force Mobilisation*, Washington D.C., National Defence University Press, 1989, pg. 270. Emphasis in original.

[76] See F. Bozo, op. cit., pg. 118, 127, 133, 134.

[77] Former President Giscard d'Estaing has written that one of the problems with the *ultime avertissemnt* theory is the difficulty this creates with regard to the decision to actually fire tactical weapons. He recalled army manoeuvres of spring 1980, within which the Commander in Chief of the Armed forces only requested permission to fire these missiles once, and the President himself felt unable to authorise such an act. See his preface to UDF, *Redresser la Défense de la France,* Paris, UDF, 1986, pg. 10.

contingent be seen as implying greater French military involvement in Nato.[78]

It should also be noted that when French ground forces *did* participate in larger-scale bilateral manoeuvres with the Germans, notably in the form of the *Moineau Hardi* exercises, their performance was 'far from perfect'.[79] It would seem that the principles governing Alliance relations in this way again hampered operational efficiency in terms of France's ability to cooperate on the battlefield with allies, in that the need to maintain a posture of perceived 'independence' precluded France participating in large numbers of joint exercises. This was particularly true with respect to French ground forces whose exercises were always very visible. The Air Force and Navy, being more removed from French territory, enjoyed much greater freedom to cooperate with allied forces.[80]

Similarly, a reliance on national arms production capabilities inevitably affected such participation by reducing interoperability of weaponry, though one should not exaggerate the extent to which the French were more guilty of this than others amongst their allies.[81]

Finally, and perhaps most crucially of all, the French role as a possible logistical reserve space for allied forces remained totally ambiguous. France had, when leaving the integrated command structure, demanded the withdrawal of all allied troops and military installations from French soil,[82] Under Mitterrand, the policy of refusing to guarantee to allies the rights to use French territory was continued much as before, despite some signs of apparent inflexions in policy under Chirac.[83] The Gulf War marked a significant departure in some respects, as Mitterrand agreed

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[78] D. Ruiz Palmer, 'Between the Rhine and the Elbe', op. cit., pg. 499.

[79] *The Economist,* 2 September 1987.

[80] Yves Leenhart, former Chief of Staff of the French Navy, made this point to me. As he put it, French political leaders faced a far smaller prospect of a political backlash as a result of cooperation occurring 'over the horizon' than they did by encouraging Land Army cooperation. Interview, Paris, 1991.

[81] See, on this question, E. Goodman, 'France and Arms for the Atlantic Alliance: the Standardisation-Interoperability Problem', *Orbis,* Fall 1980, pp. 541-571.

[82] The *aide-mémoire* addressed by the French government to the fourteen allies on 11 March 1966 stated, with regard to the logistic agreements that had been concluded between France and individual allied powers that it 'feels that these agreements....are no longer consistent with present conditions, which impel it to recover the full exercise of its sovereignty on French territory, that is to say, to no longer accept the presence of foreign units, installations, and bases, under the control of any but the french authorities, on French soil.' Cited in L. Radoux, op. cit., pg. 49.

[83] In his first address before the IHEDN in September 1986, the Prime Minister, speaking of the possibility of a Central European conflict, spoke of a '....battle of mutual delays and reinforcements in which France, the Alliance's only reserve in depth....can play a key role.' J. Chirac, 'La Politique de Défense de la France', *Défense Nationale,*

both to the overflight of French territory by American bombers (check) and to the basing for refuelling of American bombers on French soil. Such moves, however, were rather limited instances of cooperation, marking the exception rather than the rule.[84] Indeed, even those privileges generally granted to allies during peacetime, such as the monthly-renewable allied overflight rights, could not be guaranteed in the event of a conflict from which France decided to remain aloof. This was made painfully clear to the United States when such rights were suspended for the bombing of Tripoli in 1987.

Two particular issues arose with regard to logistical questions, notably those of the depth of Nato defence, and the use of French territory as a logistical supply reserve for Nato forces and equipment.[85] With regard to depth, the lack of guaranteed access to French territory represented a serious weakness in terms of the military efficacy of the Alliance; without the strategic depth provided by French territory, allied forces would be unable to fall back, and trade space for time, as Carl Amme pointed out:

> Preoccupied as we have been with the central sector....we nevertheless have recognised the possibility of being outflanked through the north German plain where the much weaker British Army of the Rhine is on guard. Theoretically, we could always have fallen back to a defence line along the Rhine and Weser - perhaps comforted by the thought that we still had some strategic depth in France and our logistic lines behind us. If the scenario just described had any relevance to reality, it has all been changed with de Gaulle's unilateral action.[86]

Apart from effectively denying to the Allies the possibility of defence in depth, the French position with regard to Nato, by its refusal of anything that could entail an automaticity of commitment, also deprived the Alliance members of an assured link between the Central and Southern regions, as Paris could at any time refuse overflight rights to its partners.[87] Moreover, the absence of any guarantee concerning the placing of supplies on French soil,[or the ability to use French soil for the landing of reserves of either troops or equipment] presented another major obstacle to allied contingency planning; not only did it result in the concentration of command posts and military

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November 1986, pg. 13.

[84] It should be noted that the Gulf War was a UN operation, and therefore not strictly comparable with hypotheses concerning a possible conflict in Central Europe.

[85] For a fuller discussion of these issues, see D. Yost, *France and Conventional Defense in Central Europe*, op. cit., pp. 53-76, and T. Posner, *Current French Security Policy: the Gaullist Legacy*, London, Greenwood Press, 1991, pp. 43-48.

[86] C. Amme Jr., op. cit., pg. 70.

[87] See K. Hunt, op. cit., pg. 1.

equipment within a very tight - and therefore vulnerable - geographic region. It also made Nato lines of communication more vulnerable,[88] and raised the spectre of even those supplies which had been discreetly stored in France being rendered unavailable in the event of Paris choosing a non-belligerency option in the event of hostilities.[89]

It would seem, from the above, that the implications in the field of logistics of the French position with regard to its allies significantly reduced the defensive capability of the Western Alliance. As Diego Ruiz Palmer has pointed out, France's traditional role in the defence of Western Europe was that of a logistical 'heartland', but came increasingly to be one of a conventional reserve, yet 'these two functions have virtually never coexisted'.[90] Considering the uncertain nature of any French conventional contribution to the allied defence effort, it would seem that, through the sacrifice of guaranteed access to France as a logistical asset, the Alliance may well have lost more than it gained despite the increasing intervention capability of French conventional forces. Given the huge force reductions agreed on towards the end of the 1980s in the fields of both nuclear - notably the INF Treaty - and conventional - in particular the CFE agreements - weapons, the lower force levels that would be involved in any conflict made proportionally more important any potential French contribution.

France was incapable of deterring the kind of menace that was most likely to threaten it - namely Soviet aggression in West Germany, leading, at the least, to the fall of its neighbours, and at worst to a Soviet conventional invasion which a French strategic nuclear riposte could do nothing to prevent. It would seem, then, that French defence policy was incapable of fulfilling its missions in Europe.

One could even claim that military integration was the only way that the security of Western Europe could be achieved, given the nature of the threat that faced it:

> ....no European country *can* have an independent defence policy if the potential adversary is the Soviet Union; for fighting the Argentines in the South Atlantic, perhaps, or the Libyans in Chad, but not for keeping out the Russians. The independence of any European country is contingent on the independence of its neighbours. Therefore the starting point for any European defence policy is the

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[88] See T. Posner, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

[89] See D. Yost, *France and Conventional defence in Central Europe,* op. cit., pg. 60.

[90] D. Ruiz Palmer, 'France', in J. Simon (ed.), op. cit., pp. 269-270.

> concept of alliance. Not just a purely declaratory alliance either; nor an alliance whose practical arrangements are maintained *sub rosa* by the military while denied by the political elite; nor an alliance where total loyalty is somehow combinable with total independence of national decision-making; nor, because of the speed with which danger could erupt, can it be an improvisatory alliance. A real alliance means integration in advance.[91]

France had managed to disguise this fact for over twenty years, benefitting from the security offered by the Alliance. However, as the following section will illustrate, the incongruity of the French position was to become increasingly acute towards the end of the period under consideration.

Defence Policy: Towards Obsolescence?

As we have seen above, French defence policy failed in significant ways to meet the objectives set for it by policy makers. The national nuclear deterrent doctrine embraced by Paris did not assure even French security, whilst the weakness of conventional forces, and the ambiguity of the doctrine surrounding their use undermined their ability to intervene beside allies. Adherence to the notion of military independence, moreover, effectively deprived allies of the luxury of planning for the use of France either as an operational reserve or as a supply base.

Not only were specific features of French military doctrine unsuccessful in achieving their aims, but longer-term trends increasingly came to erode the possibility of France arriving independently at ever achieving them. Notable amongst such trends were severe financial constraints on defence spending, and the changing geostrategic situation in Western Europe.

Ends and Means Throughout the Presidency of Mitterrand, one issue that consistently reappeared to haunt successive governments was that of the necessary level of funding for the armed forces, and the ambitious missions assigned them.[92] French military planners have been faced with the

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[91] I. Davidson, 'A New Step in Franco-British Cooperation', in Y. Boyer, P. Lellouche and J. Roper (eds.), *Franco-British Defence Cooperation: A New Entente Cordiale?*, London, Routledge, 1988, pg. 151.

[92] It should be borne in mind that, although this thesis focuses only on the first two circles of French military policy - France and Europe - Paris also felt it necessary to maintain a force projection capacity; as Mitterrand emphasised in a speech to the École de Guerre on 11 April 1991, when he stated that French military needs included: 'modern conventional forces capable of intervening quickly and strongly near our frontiers as well as far away. We must be capable of acting at the side of our allies in Europe, if the situation requires it; of defending our interests overseas; of assuming our obligations where we have signed defence agreements; and of participating - the Gulf war illustrated the

task of employing limited means to satisfy the twin imperatives of assuring the effective sanctuarisation of the national territory, and ensuring that France was in a position to intervene effectively - should it decide to do so - in a Central European conflict.[93] Financial constraints implied the necessity of considerable 'juggling' in the attempt to reconcile these priorities.

In the 1983 *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, policy makers attempted to give the impression that they had increased French ability to intervene in a European conflict, whilst maintaining the French deterrent force above the credibility threshold, and actually decreasing by some 22,000 men the manpower of the Land Army. The 1987 *Loi de Programmation Militaire* - branded by one Socialist defence spokesman as a *tous azimuts* modernisation of French defence capabilities[94] - actually avoided having to make any real cuts at all by simply planning to buy everything that was necessary, and failing to make any real choices. The 1990 Law, although in a limited sense representing awareness of the perceived diminution of any potential military menace from the East, again failed to make any real choices with regard to military priorities. Behind the ambitious goals propounded in the various programme laws lay the stark reality that their implementation had never matched the good intentions.[95]

The financial burdens imposed by the perceived necessity to cater for both nuclear independence and conventional solidarity were severe. Given the clear funding priority accorded to nuclear weapons during the period, many observers have expressed doubts as to the capabilities of especially French conventional forces, which have been systematically placed second in the list of

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need - in any international action deemed necessary by the Security Council or by a future European defence organisation'. Text of speech supplied by the Service de Presse, Présidence de la République, pg. 7

[93] For discussions of the financial constraints facing French policy makers, see notably M. Faivre, 'Trente ans de Programmation Militaire', *Le Casoar*, July 1991; F. Heisbourg, 'Défense Française: La Quadrature du Cercle', *Politique Internationale*, no. 53, winter 1991, pp. 257-274, and 'Défense Française: l'Impossible Status Quo', *Politique Internationale*, no. 36, 1987, pp. 137-153; J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices', op. cit.

[94] J-M Boucheron, *Rapport Fait au nom de la commission de la Défense Nationale et des Forces armées sur le projet de loi de programmation (no. 733) relatif à l'equipement Militaire 1990-1993*, no 897, *annèxe au procès-verbal de la séance du 2 Octobre* 1989, pg. 165.

[95] For the laws prior to 1990, see J-M Boucheron, op. cit., pg. 158. For the failure to match the intentions of the 1990-1993 law during its first year - an overall shortfall of 6.884 million (1991) francs, or 6.3% resulted - see François Hollande, *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission des Finances, de l'Économie Générale et du Plan sur le Projet de Loi de Fiances pour 1991 Annexe N° 39, Défense*, Paris, National Assembly n°. 1635, *Annèxe au Procès-Verbal de la Séance du 10 octobre 1990*, pg. 58.

priorities to nuclear forces.[96] Both the standard of equipment and the reduction in operating costs effected under Mitterrand came in for criticism as a result. In 1985, General Philippe Arnold, the Commander of the First Tank Division in West Germany was sacked for having the audacity to claim to visiting journalists that French tanks simply did not come up to the standards of those used by other armies.[97] Efficiency was also reduced as a result of the decreased training permitted by lessening resources. Thus the training hours of French pilots was reduced from the already low 15 hours for reservists, because of resource shortages.[98]

The insistence on producing as large a proportion as possible of French military hardware domestically also had an impact on strategy. Choices sometimes directly contradicted the declared aims of enhancing France's ability to intervene in a central European conflict, in order to preserve the notion of an independent arms industry. This was the case with the Rafale:

> France....sometimes speaks of fighting on the Elbe, or even further from its territory [in Europe], but its planes are constructed to operate either above the national territory or at its frontiers. The Rafale continues this tradition.... Whether one likes it or not, the plane that France is perhaps going to build will remain the expression of a national strategy more focused on the sanctuary than on the defence of Europe[99]

The desire to manufacture French weapons systems domestically, moreover, led to an increased conventional weakness as indigenous industries proved incapable of replacing obsolete weaponry quickly enough.[100] This was especially true in the light of the development of increasingly sophisticated and expensive 'emerging technology' conventional weaponry, which had raised the

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[96] "....France's conventional forces....remain too large for the minimal requirements of the national deterrent manoeuvre, too small for the conventional defence of France, and not developed or deployed for optimally effective cooperation with allies....' D. Yost, *France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe* op. cit., Part Two, pg. 29. '....France simply cannot afford both a credible nuclear strategy and a meaningful conventional role in Europe and throughout the world.' J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices', op. cit., pg. 107.

[97] See also the complaints of two French pilots during the Gulf War, *Le Monde,* 16 February 1991.

[98] J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices', op. cit., pp. 109-110.

[99] F. Schlosser, 'Quand les Industriels Dictent leur Loi', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 September 1988. See also the interview with Hubert de Beaufort and General Jacques de Zélicourt in *L'Évènement du jeudi*, 1-7 November 1990. The latter, a former head of the military *cabinet* of Mauroy then Fabius, also claimed that the Rafale was, militarily, unsuited to the needs of the time.

[100] E. Faudon (pseudonym), 'La Guerre avec l'Irak et la Programmation Militaire Française', *Libération,* 27 February 1991.

possibility in the minds of some of an increasing reliance on conventional forces in Nato strategy.[101] In the words of one expert on arms production, the only way for indigenous French industries to remain abreast of ever-changing technologies was for France to turn towards a purely nuclear defence stance, which would clearly contradict the apparent desire amongst political leaders to cooperate closely with Nato.[102] Despite this, however, the official line from Paris remained much as it always had. The 'French arms industry....ensures the credibility of French defence doctrine'.[103] Increasing pressure on defence budgets towards the end of the period meant that many of the programmes already included in the statute books became less and less certain of completion. As the next section will show, such uncertainty was increased, and the apparent dysfunctionality of defence policy exacerbated by the changes in the European geostrategic situation, and indeed in the nature of international politics as a whole, that characterised the final years of the 1980s.

The New Strategic Landscape The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the subsequent disintegration the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, and then the Soviet Union itself were not without profound consequences for the credibility and efficacy of French defence doctrine.

Firstly, the demise of the massive threat emanating from the East effectively rendered redundant the *Hadès* - one of the high-profile, high cost nuclear systems that had been maintained throughout the decade. From the moment when the former Soviet satellites began to liberate themselves from Soviet rule, the rationale for a weapon whose maximum range enabled it only to reach Czechoslovakia from French soil became less than clear. The President of the Republic had intimated in July 1990 that the role of the Hadès was placed into some doubt by recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe, when he stated that 'It must be said that the Czech, East German, and Polish targets do not necessarily correspond to what one may have thought a few years, or even months, ago.[104] Yet the programme was continued, though in increasingly reduced form, until the final decision was taken, in 1991, to refrain from deployment.

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[101] For an assessment of this new technology and its potential repercussions, see P. Boniface and F. Heisbourg, op. cit., and P. Lellouche, *L'Avenir de la Guerre*, op. cit., esp. pp. 200-213.

[102] See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 1983.

[103] DGA, *L'Industrie Française de Défense*, Paris, DGA, 1990, pg. 48.

[104] Conférence de presse du Président de la République à l'issu du Sommet de l'Atlantique Nord, Londres, le 6 juillet 1990, *Bulletin d'Information du 10 juillet 1990 (127/90)*, pg. 8.

More generally, the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent shift in the nature of threats confronting European or wider international stability meant that differing forms of military capabilities were increasingly required to preserve security. This was recognised by Defence Minister Joxe in a speech in September 1991:

> During the last decades, our defence was conceived of in order to respond to a clearly identified threat: the simple, brutal and direct threat has become blurred. It has been replaced by innumerable, diverse, and geographically dispersed threats which, because of this, are more difficult to grasp and to evaluate. ...in such a fluid geopolitical situation....how is one to elaborate stable concepts on which to base a defence policy, how is one to decide on the launching of equipment programmes whose conception and termination take many years?....For a start, our defence will have to be adapted to crises of a more and more varied kind.[105]

Increasingly, as both the Gulf War and the Yugoslavian crisis illustrated, military action by Western European states, if undertaken, involved force projection to out-of-area regions. Moreover, given the demise of the Cold War bipolar order and the appearance of non-nuclear threats to international stability, the question was posed as to the reasons for the maintenance of a strong nuclear deterrent capability. As we have seen, French leaders insisted that France's deterrent strategy would remain unchanged. Yet despite continued reliance in official rhetoric on the continued need for a nuclear deterrent capability, there is some evidence to suggest that these forces will in future be assigned a less privileged position. An obvious example of this was the decision not to deploy the *Hadès*; moreover, signals from top military officials in Paris seem to indicate that in other ways too the preeminence of nuclear weapons would in some cases be slightly eroded.[106]

The decreased direct threat from the East in Europe, along with the consequent devaluation of the utility of nuclear forces, posed the problem for French leaders that the military tool, often portrayed, as we have seen, as the *atout* of France's rank in international politics, was becoming increasingly redundant.[107] Indeed, given the absence of any directly identifiable threat to territorial security in Western Europe, military capability alone no longer seemed able to assure

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[105] Discours du Ministre de la Défense devant la 28ème Session du CHEAR, cited in *Propos Sur La Défense*, No. 22/23, July-October 1991, pp. 40-41.

[106] The number of new Triomphant-class nuclear submarines has been reduced from six to four; also cut has been the number of Mirage 200 Ns, many of which will now be assigned conventional rather than nuclear missions. See the interview with Admiral Jacques Lanxade, Mitterrand's *Chef d'État-Major particulier*, 'Quelle Armeé pour Demain?', *Politique Internationale*, no. 52, summer 1991, pg. 124.

[107] See, for example, Jacques Amalric, 'Dissuader qui?', *Le Monde*, 14 April 1992.

any standing amongst European powers.[108] This posed acute problems for the French leaders, for whom military strength had always represented an advantage over their German neighbour, a neighbour which now, having achieved the goal of unification, no longer fears the imminence of Soviet aggression. A posture of defiant independence in military matters appeared redundant in an age where symmetrical superpower hostility had faded.

Conclusion

Like the 'independence' that characterised relations with the superpowers, French defence policy had, for many years, served a useful purpose. In particular, France's situation as the world's third military power laid the foundations for both political independence and the quest for *grandeur*. Also, as in the case of foreign policy, defence policy exhibited a large degree of continuity with past practices. French defence policy remained largely unchanged throughout the period, and even the profound changes in the European security environment of the later 1980s merely resulted in affirmation that policy was no about to be altered.[109]

Yet, as this Chapter has illustrated, the persistence displayed by French leaders in sustaining the orthodoxies of the Gaullist model became, as the period progressed, increasingly counterproductive. Specific equipment choices, notably the *Hadès*, revealed a striking divergence between French policy and the reality of a fundamentally transformed European continent. Shrinking resources implied an increasing inability efficiently to fulfil defence missions, whilst the rhetoric of solidarity, along with that of military self-sufficiency both turned out to be somewhat misleading given the nature of French forces. Defence policy increasingly proved unable to fulfil any of the ambitious goals assigned it. Indeed, perhaps 'the greatest irony....[was] the fact that men like François Mitterrand and Charles Hernu finally donned the Gaullist cap at precisely the moment in history when defence on the cheap (with *grandeur*) was no longer a viable option, either financially or strategically'.[110]

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[108] Witness, for instance, the words of one widely respected American analyst: 'Without a military threat to speak of, and with the Germans no longer preoccupied with defense, what good is a big army, and what is the purpose of the *force de frappe*? A strategic nuclear arsenal may have been a source of pride, prestige, and security when Europe was divided and threatened by a hostile Warsaw Pact, but what good is it in a world in which security threats are more likely to be ethnic and border disputes than massive invasions of the homeland?'. P. Gordon, *French Security Policy after the Cold War*, op. cit., pg. 5.

[109] See the words of Mitterrand in *The Times,* 25 February 1990.

[110] J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices', op. cit., pg. 306.

As was the case with foreign policy and in particular relations with the superpowers, shifting international conditions rendered existing policy options increasingly counterproductive in international terms, marginalising Paris, and failing to provide French leaders with the influence over international and particularly European affairs which they desired. The alternative to strict national self sufficiency and independence had long been perceived in France as lying with Europe. It is to this strand of policy that we now turn.

CHAPTER SIX
BEYOND INDEPENDENCE? FRANCE AND EUROPE 1981-1991

As under previous Presidents, with the notable exception of Giscard d'Estaing, French Alliance policy under Mitterrand combined a posture of hostility with regard to the integrated military command with periodic attempts to bring about a reform of alliance structures. As we have seen in Chapter Three, some kind of 'renegotiation' of the Alliance was a fairly constant theme of Socialist rhetoric both prior to and after 1981. The form in which a restructuring of the security architecture in Europe was most often conceptualised was that of the formation of some form of European defence entity.

This chapter will first investigate the rhetoric which lay behind the apparently increased interest Paris exhibited in the question of an enhanced European role in West European defence. In particular, it will examine both the reasons propounded for enhancing Western Europe's role in its own defence, and notions of the form such a role should take. It will go on to examine any practical progress which was achieved in this sphere, contrasting this with the rhetorical claims made. It will be argued that a gulf existed between the more maximalist ideas of Europe increasingly espoused in French rhetoric towards the end of the 1980's and the reality of policy, practical progress being somewhat elusive. This was the case despite the fact that, as the decade wore on, increasingly powerful reasons came to be perceived which necessitated moves in the direction that the rhetoric so readily and ardently advocated.

Europe: the Rhetoric

From one Extreme to Another Early Socialist pronouncements on Europe were marked by a certain timidity and caution with regard to the pace at which integration could be expected to develop.[1] Thus Cheysson, speaking to the *Club de la Presse d'Europe 1* on 11 October 1981, referred to the possibility that 'one distant day, among those problems for which something larger than the French dimension is necessary, then would be a common point within our Atlantic Alliance

[1] Against the dearth of initiatives, should be placed the fact that initial appointments to the new government revealed a certain emphasis on European policy. Thus, Cheysson was called back from his post as Commissioner, whilst Delors went to the Finance Ministry from his post as President of the economic and monetary Commission of the European Parliament. Moreover, a post was created within the new government of *Ministre Délégué* for European affairs.

.... It is an idea worth following up over a long period.'[2] Similarly, Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy accepted that Europe might merely represent for the United States a step on the ladder of escalation rather than a '*fin suprême*' of American defence, yet spoke of a European alternative only in the vaguest of terms, stating that such a consideration 'should force Europeans to consider the possibilities of a political entity possessing an autonomous defence.'[3]

Scepticism regarding the prospects for security issues being incorporated within the ambit of European integration, and for France to play a leading role in this process was perhaps most clearly expressed by Mitterrand himself in a speech in the Hague on 7 February 1984:

> The Atlantic Alliance is nowhere near being supplanted by a European Alliance. This follows from the fact that no military force is able to substitute for the American arsenal. France, in any case, will not use its nuclear capability other than for its own strategy of deterrence, and Europe as a whole will not take the risk of finding itself unprotected.[4]

Initial caution with regard to Europe was soon to give way to French initiatives aimed at the promotion of increased European cooperation. Indeed, within a few years, French leaders were already expressing themselves in far greater detail regarding the possibilities offered by European construction. References to the necessity of increased European cooperation were to become a prominent feature of official statements throughout the rest of the period. In all spheres of European construction, France took an active and leading role, championing, amongst other initiatives, the ESPRIT and EUREKA programmes, the notion of a European social space, projects aimed at an enhanced European role in space, and resolution of the budgetary wrangles with Britain.

The defence sphere was no exception. As the prime mover in the reactivation of the West European Union in 1984, Paris came increasingly, towards the end of the decade, to press for a more autonomous Europe in security matters.[5] Indeed, by 1990, it was France which pushed most forcefully for an increased role for the Western European Union as the defence arm of the European

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[2] Cited in Gabriel Robin, op. cit., pg. 77.

[3] P. Mauroy, 'La Cohérence d'une Politique de Défense', *Défense Nationale*, op. cit., pg. 22.

[4] F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op. cit., pg. 276.

[5] A series of keynote speeches by Mitterrand, Rocard, and Chevènement in 1988 all underlined this new commitment. For a summary, see *Defense News*, 2 February 1989.

Union, and for the adoption, as an eventual goal by the Twelve, of the concept of a common defence.[6]

Reasons for Europe Evidently, over a period of ten years, French interest in Europe was conditioned by many varied rationales. As circumstances altered, so, too, did these rationales.

Some of the motivations for pursuing a policy of at least declaratory attachment to further European integration were rather more negative than positive, in that they reflected a perceived lack of alternatives open to policy makers. Although perhaps slightly overstated, it is hard not to agree with Gabriel Robin's assertion that the increasing interest displayed by Paris in Europe after 1981 stemmed - at least in part - from a palpable lack of other options. The disagreements with the Americans over economic policies, and especially the question of trade with, and credits to the Soviet bloc, culminating in the imposition of American sanctions on French firms in 1982, along with the coolness of relations with Moscow, led the administration to look increasingly in the direction of increased European solidarity.[7]

Such tendencies were strengthened by increasing concern over the political future of France's Eastern neighbour. As was the case with regard to both foreign and defence policy in general, unease regarding Germany lay behind much of the pro-European enthusiasm of Paris. Cheysson had intimated this in his 1983 interview with the scholarly journal *Politique Internationale*, when he stated that in order to avoid the prospect of a progressive neutralisation of the Federal Republic, it should be made clear to the Germans that they had a place in an increasingly united Europe.[8] The period of the INF deployment had seen the emergence of an increasingly numerous and vociferous pacifist movement in the Federal Republic, and apparent political wavering over the deployment of the Euromissiles on German soil had led to fears in Paris concerning the prospect of some form of progressive neutralisation of the Federal Republic, which would clearly have had profound effects for the French defence stance.

The 'German problem' was posed in more acute form with the crumbling of the Warsaw Pact, and the resultant prospect of German unification. Behind French assertions of trust in their Eastern

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[6] In a televised interview the following April, Mitterrand was to declare that the 'Maastricht Treaty is a French design [*un projet de la France*]'. See *Le Monde*, 14 April 1992.

[7] See G. Robin, op. cit., pp. 133-138.

[8] 'Diplomatie: l'Empreinte Française', op. cit., pg. 16.

neighbour,[9] and faith that a united Germany would remain a firm ally and trusted partner, lay the fear that a sovereign Germany could become an element of instability in Europe. Such apprehension stemmed initially from the prospect of seeing German neutrality as the price demanded by the Soviet Union for unification,[10] or requested by Germans[11] - a prospect categorically rejected by Paris.[12]

With the apparent risk of such neutralisation seemingly over, French fears turned to centre more on the implications for the European balance of power of the newly enlarged German state, its powerful economic machinery making it the most potent economic force on the continent - with the prospect of this leading to increased political self assertion. Given such perceived dangers, French officials came increasingly to stress the need to tie Germany to the Western bloc in order to curb tendencies towards either neutrality or German tendencies to turn increasingly eastward: '*Plus nous irons vite vers l'union, moins notre voisin pourra faire cavalier seul*'.[13]

European integration provided a means of trading relative French military and political weight - whilst such ideas still had any meaning - for German concessions in other spheres. Thus Jacques Isnard, the respected defence correspondent of *Le Monde* stated that if:

> France is ready to make a decisive contribution to the security of Europe, if need be by modifying its own defensive doctrines and organisation, its West German ally will have to make a comparable effort in showing itself to be more supportive in the political, economic, and monetary spheres.[14]

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[9] See Mitterrand's Copenhagen speech of 10 November 1989, text provided by Press service, Élysée Palace, pp. 2-3.

[10] Gorbachev, for instance, intimated, in an interview with German and Soviet journalists in March 1990 that a new, unified German state should not be a member of Nato. See *Soviet News*, 14 March 1990.

[11] See, for instance, the plan for unification put forward by the Communist Prime Minister of the GDR, Hans Modrow, on 1 February 1990, in *Le Monde*, 3 February 1990.

[12] See, for instance, the interview given by Roland Dumas to *Die Welt*, *Le Figaro*, *El Pais*, and *The Independent* on 9 February 1990, reproduced in *Questions Politicos-Militaires*, 1990, pp. 86-87. Also his address to the West Berlin Press Club of 1 March 1990, in *Le Monde*, 6 March 1990.

[13] The phrase is that of Henri Froment-Meurice, in *L'Express*, 14 February 1992. This article provides a nice summary of the kinds of fears which assailed French elites with regard to German unification. It should be noted, however, that unlike reactions from many if not most officials, this particular analysis stresses the need for concomitant French sacrifices of autonomy and sovereignty in order to arrive at the goal of union. Mitterrand himself had explicitly stated the link between the crumbling of the Cold War order in the East and integration in the West in his press conference of 18 May 1989: 'the more one hopes for....opening towards the East....the more one hopes simultaneously for the consolidation of the European Community', Élysée Press release, pg. 6.

[14] *Le Monde*, 20 October 1987. As we shall see later, however, it was precisely the question of French contributions to European security in the form of modifications to the seemingly purely national orientation of its defence strategy that was a limiting factor in terms of French initiatives.

In addition to such reactive impulses, desire for increased European solidarity with regard to questions of defence and security stemmed from the belief - used also, as we have seen, to help justify the maintenance of non-participation in Nato integrated military organisms - that sheer distance made the security interests of the United States fundamentally different from those of France, or indeed any of her European allies. Thus Prime Minister Mauroy asserted that the 'similarity of the geostrategic problems facing European countries should lead them to taking specific common decisions'.[15]

This was especially true in a post Cold War world, where the ending of global ideological confrontation implied that no longer would all regional or local conflicts be seen as tests of strength for the remaining superpower. As former Prime Minister Michel Rocard pointed out forcefully with regard to the Yugoslav crisis:

> Can Europeans be confronted with crises that do not concern the United States? To some, the very idea was seen as a blow to transatlantic solidarity. The conflict in Yugoslavia has changed all that. Rightly or wrongly, the United States decided that its interests and ideas of international stability were not at stake in this crisis, and it let the EC act independently. This is the type of crisis Europe is likely to face in the years to come, and it illustrates why Europe must have the military means to support its policies.[16]

To a certain extent, Europe was increasingly viewed by French officials as a means of achieving the traditional foreign policy objectives associated with Gaullism in a world in which this was perhaps not feasible for France alone. Thus, a further element of the perceived necessity for extended European cooperation was an increasing recognition that in the foreign policy and defence fields, France would gain more influence through an increased European solidarity. Cheysson had made the point that France's means were somewhat limited, and that European cooperation could be a means to ensure the fulfilment of French international ambitions.[17] The President of the Republic was more explicit in linking the notion of French rank in international affairs with Europe: 'France will be even more influential, prosperous, and will have greater standing in the world if it plays her role in Europe, and this role will, in accordance with its history, be a determining role'.[18] Although

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[15] P. Mauroy, 'La Stratégie de la France', op. cit., pg. 15.

[16] M. Rocard, November 1991 Leffingwell Lecture, cited in P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War*, op. cit., pg. 29.

[17] 'Diplomatie: l'Empreinte Française', op. cit., pg. 11.

[18] See *Le Monde* 23 October 1991. Rocard had made a similar point three years earlier, see *Déclaration de Monsieur le Premier Ministre, M. Michel Rocard à l'Assemblée Nationale*, cited in *PEF*, May-June 1988, pp. 65-66.

the CERES leader would never have used the same language of limited French capacities as some of his colleagues, such was also the thrust of his statement that the 'future belongs *to the grands ensembles*'.[19]

The notion of *grandeur*, then, was not absent from French ideas concerning Europe, and indeed, its achievement and maintenance represented major incentives to press for increased European cooperation. Some commentators have pointed out that a European vehicle for the maintenance of international rank and prestige was also attractive because the institution of the French Presidency is ideally suited to wield considerable influence within the (intergovernmental) organs of any European common defence or security policy,[20] thus increasing French incentives, from the point of view of relative power maximisation, to push for further integration.

Other traditional themes associated with the idea of a certain French standing in international affairs also appeared within the rubric of pro-European enthusiasm. Thus, certain officials pointed out that Europe had a specific role to play in international politics since, unlike the superpowers, it represented no distinct ideology,[21] and in this way could act as an alternative 'model' in world affairs.[22] In this sense, one can observe that elements of the 'third force' argument used to justify non-integration and non-alignment were also employed as a rationale for increased European solidarity. Within the community of values represented by the Atlantic Alliance existed another, even tighter, grouping of states linked by a common heritage and shared cultural values - the European members of the alliance, who shared the traits of 'pluralist democracy and respect for the rights of man, a high level of development, and unparalleled social protection.'[23]

In order to achieve the goals of rank, or *grandeur*, it was not sufficient for Europe simply to exist. Rather, there was, as perceived in Paris, a need to allow integration to spread to the realms of security policy. As one prominent French analyst with close links to the Quai d'Orsay has written,

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[19] *Discours de Monsieur Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Ministre de la Défense devant l'Académie Vorochilov, Moscou*, 5 April 1989, reproduced in *SIRPA Actualité*, No. 14, 7 April 1989, pg. xiv.

[20] See M. Sutton, 'France and the Maastricht design', *The World Today*, vol. 49, no. 1, January 1993, pg. 6.

[21] M. Rocard, Premier Ministre, 'L'Europe et sa Sécurité' Allocution à la Première Session Européenne de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale, 15 November 1988, reproduced in *Défense Nationale*, 45, January 1989, pg. 15.

[22] M. Rocard, *Déclaration de Politique Générale du Premier Ministre*, 29 June, 1988, extracts reproduced in *Propos sur la Défense*, no 3, 1988, pg. 31.

[23] Ibid, pg. 14.

'Europe....cannot be an effective diplomatic actor....if its authority is not backed by serious military power'.[24] Such perceptions were reinforced by what many regarded as the humiliation suffered by the European community when Saddam Hussein, immediately prior to the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf, allowed Tariq Aziz, his Foreign Minister, to meet his American counterpart, but not a delegation from the EC.[25]

The perception of the limited French ability to make her voice heard in international affairs, and a concomitant desire to achieve traditional goals through a European medium, were reinforced by the rapid way in which developments occurred in the sphere of European security at the end of the 1980s - often with little or no active participation from the West European states themselves, or - equally worrying for Paris - at the initiative of the Federal Republic. The arms control and disarmament measures agreed between the superpowers - most noticeably the outcome of the Reykjavik summit - had alerted many French officials to the problems of superpower collaboration tending to marginalise those in many sense most affected - the Europeans themselves. German initiatives, such as Chancellor Kohl's ten point plan for unification, raised the spectre of a politically-active and unfettered German state over which Paris had no control.[26] More ominous still was the prospect of some form of joint German-American 'partnership in leadership' (the phrase is that of President Bush himself) growing up in Europe, and further marginalising Paris.[27]

Further, the process of detente between the superpowers initiated under the Presidencies of Gorbachev and Reagan, also acted as a fillip for French European aspirations, in that one result of the shifting strategic environment in Europe was the fact of a decreased American presence in Europe. Given the marked superpower retreat from confrontation, Prime Minister Rocard pointed out that, without the all-pervading security blanket provided by the two giants, the burdens of maintaining European

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[24] N. Gnesotto, 'France and the new Europe', in D. Calleo and P. Gordon, (eds.), *From the Atlantic to the Urals: National Perspectives on the New Europe*, Virginia, Seven Locks' Press, 1992, pg. 135.

[25] P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War*, op. cit., pp. 34-35. With regard to Europe assuming a prime position as a motor for French ambitions it is interesting to note the parallel between the remarks made by Michel Vauzelle cited in Chapter Four, and those by Chevènement cited by Williams, as an example of how the same concerns of maintaining a certain rank formed a central part both of French officials' view of France and of Europe

[26] See D. Yost, 'France in the new Europe', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 69, winter 1990-1991, pg. 112. For the ten-point plan see *Le Monde*, 30 November 1990.

[27] See, on this, F. Bozo and J. Paolini, 'Trois Allemagnes, deux Europes et la France', *Politique Étrangère*, no 1, January 1990, pg. 25.

security would increasingly fall to the Europeans themselves.[28] Whilst Mitterrand in general remained fairly circumspect with regard to the prospect of American disengagement from Europe, Prime Minister Cresson was far more outspoken , declaring that it '....is evident that the United States is disengaging from Europe....it cannot both leave and ask Europeans not to have a defence of their own'.[29] This was especially the case as a result of the increasing budgetary pressures and an apparently increasingly isolationist public pressure being encountered by the American government for Europe to take more responsibility for its own defence.[30]

Moreover, as French political leaders were wont to point out, the sheer size of the population of Western Europe in contrast with its American protector[31] also militated in favour of Europeans assuming such responsibilities. Conversely, increased cooperation was also perceived to be necessary as a result of economic pressures on the European states themselves. This was especially so in view of the new high technology projects such as SDI undertaken by the superpowers, which made purely national European responses impossible; the 'technological competition is becoming so bitter that we are forced to coordinate our efforts, to overcome our national divisions, or else face being condemned to a rapid decline'.[32] Economic weakness undermined purely national defence policies, as made clear by the experience of the Gulf War, and this led many commentators to turn explicitly towards a European solution to such problems:

> Every year the United States spends the equivalent of the entire French defence budget....to maintain its intelligence capabilities....This is beyond the reach of the budgetary capabilities of countries such as France, Britain, or Germany. Such an achievement can be envisaged only within a European defence Community which technically and financially has the means of acquiring such....capabilities.[33]

Such economic rationales were closely linked to a perception amongst some of the need to compete

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[28] 'Les Orientations de la Politique de Défense de la France', op. cit., pg. 20

[29] See the *Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 1991.

[30] See Chevènement's speech to the Assembly of the West European Union in December 1990, text provided by French Embassy, London, pg. 4.

[31] Chevènement, for instance, stated that 'it is not healthy that 320 million Europeans depend for ever on 250 Americans to take care of their defence'. Interview with the Spanish daily *ABC*, 8 October 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, 4, 1988, pg. 50.

[32] J. Lacaze, 'L'avenir de la Défense Française', *Défense Nationale*, 41, July 1985, pg. 28.

[33] General J-C Coullon, 'Les Leçons de la Guerre du Golfe' *L'Année Stratégique 1992*, Paris, Dunod, 1992, pg. 149.

economically with the United States, especially in the field of armaments production. Many French leaders and analysts had long held a conception that the United States enjoyed not only unfair political, but also economic weight over European affairs[34] An important element of much French thought with regard to the necessity of a European 'relaunch' in the mid-1980's was associated with a desire to enable Europe to compete more effectively with the United States: hence, Chevènement's words to the European session of the IHEDN on 22 November 1988:

> ....it is not acceptable that so many countries which desire to be at the forefront of European construction systematically prefer to look to foreign providers in order to acquire the needs of their defence: planes, radars, missiles, helicopters....It would take a long time to list all those things lacking from a true European solidarity.[35]

Added to all these factors were the personal preferences of France's policy makers. Mitterrand, as we have seen in Part One, had consistently argued in favour of the creation of a European entity with the ability to ensure its own defence, a desire on his part that can be traced back to at least the arguments with the Communists of 1972. Certainly, some leaders during this period - notably Chevènement - were capable of the kind of knee-jerk nationalism that many have traditionally associated with the orthodoxy of Gaullist foreign policy. But others appointed to high office - André Giraud, and Jacques Chirac during his period at the Matignon - were happy to stress the European future that awaited France. Personal opinion certainly played a crucial role in determining the outcome of the furious debate within the Socialist Party concerning the stark economic choices facing France in 1983, which culminated in Mitterrand's dramatic announcement of France's intention of remaining within the European Monetary system and the exchange rate mechanism.

In sum, a host of reasons were used by French officials in favour of European construction. These increased both in number and intensity towards the end of the decade. By the later years of the 1980's, the unease regarding a possibly unified Germany, awareness of a growing technological gap between European states and the United States fostered by the economic inability of the former to match the spending of the latter, apprehension facing the prospect of superpower condominium, coupled with a progressive American disengagement from Europe, combined to add urgency to the cries of those propounding increased European cooperation in the field of defence. It is to the blueprints for such cooperation put forward that we now turn.

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[34] For the classic statement of such ideas, see J-J Servan-Schreiber, *Le Défi Américain*, Paris, Denoël, 1967.

[35] Cited in *Propos sur La Défense*, no. 6, November-December 1988, pg. 76.

Notions of Europe Given the differing rationales that lay behind renewed French interest in the idea of Europe, it is not surprising that notions concerning the nature that Europe could and should take were also enormously varied. Prior to the upheavals of the late 1980s, French officials showed a marked tendency to be cautious in their assessments of the potential of a European defence organisation.

The area most prone to French declaratory initiatives at defence in security cooperation was the bilateral link between Paris and Bonn. As seen in Chapter Three, bilateral relations were given a fillip in the security sphere as early as 1982, with the reactivation of the security clauses of the 1963 Élysée Treaty. Under the terms of this agreement, the two countries agreed to 'strive to reconcile their views in order to arrive at shared [strategic] concepts', to increase the exchange of personnel between armed forces, including the increased provision of language instruction for personnel, and to organise joint projects in the sphere of armaments.[36] Further, the two states also agreed, in 1982, on the creation of a Franco-German Commission on Security and of Defence, under the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, comprising high-level civilian and military officials from each side. [37]

These political initiatives were extended, in 1987, with the announcement of the creation of a joint brigade,[38] and in 1988 with the signing, on the 25th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, of a protocol which created a new Franco-German Council for Defence and Security at the levels of Heads of State and Government. This included Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Defence, and Chiefs of General staffs, and provided for consultations at least twice a year between the two sides at the ministerial level, as well as a committee of the council, composed of only Foreign and Defence Ministers. The Council was charged with not only attempting to harmonise views, but at arriving at common conceptions on security questions, a well as making decisions with regard to mixed military units and joint manoeuvres.[39]

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[36] See the text of the security clauses of the Élysée Treaty in R. Laird (ed.), *Strangers and Friends: the Franco-German Security Relationship*, London, Pinter, 1989, Annexe B, pg. 141.

[37] For more detailed information on the workings of the commission from analysts who participated in the events of the time, see F. Heisbourg and P. Boniface, op. cit., pp. 241-243.

[38] See W. Feld, 'Franco-German Military Cooperation and European Unification', *Journal of European Integration*, Winter 1989, vol. XII, nos. 2-3, pp. 151-164.

[39] For a discussion of the Protocol of January 1988, see E. Guldner, 'Le Traité de l'Élysée et la Coopération Franco-Allemande en matière de défense', *Stratégique*, no. 1, 1989, pp. 133-150.

Despite the national emphasis of French defence policy, as outlined in the previous chapter, the French continually insisted that the Federal Republic could rest assured that France remained concerned by its neighbour's security. Charles Hernu, in June 1985, stated that the two countries 'have certain security interests in common', whilst one French military officer was reported as claiming that the creation of the Franco-German joint Brigade effectively rendered obsolete debates concerning the likelihood of French intervention in support of her eastern neighbour.[40]

Along with the privileged Franco-German axis, French officials also insisted on the necessity of improving bilateral links with other European states. Britain in particular was referred to as a possible partner in the construction of a European defence identity, with Chevènement, for instance, speaking of the French and British nuclear forces as possibly forming the basis of a *European* deterrent force.[41]

Rhetoric concerned with more multilateral progress in terms of European defence was far more guarded throughout much of the period, and more contradictory in tone. Yet, for all the deliberate vagaries surrounding French conceptions of a future European defence organisation, certain strands of thought and key issues are clearly discernable. The crucial element of the ideas concerning the nature of any increased European defence cooperation was the issue of the implications of such a development for the Atlantic Alliance. Gradually, and especially after the tumultuous events of 1989, French declarations regarding such implications shifted in nature somewhat.

Previously, officials eschewed any notion of using the creation of some form of more autonomous European defence entity as a means of side-stepping the Alliance or undermining its central role as the major institutional forum for European security matters. Before the end of the decade, French references to a European defence were limited to calls for the creation of some kind of 'European pillar' within the Atlantic Alliance.[42] References to European defence throughout the early years of the period stressed the compatibility of such notions with the existing Atlantic security architecture, and the need to ensure the preservation of these structures. Thus Lacaze, speaking before the IHEDN in 1985, stated that:

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[40] 'In the event of conflict, how could France not be dragged in automatically, when a part of its forces could be organically joined to German forces?'. *L'Express*, 3 July 1987.

[41] Speech to the IHEDN of 22 November 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 6, November-December 1988, pg. 72.

[42] See, for instance, Mitterrand's speech before the IHEDN, op. cit., pg. 27.

> The desire to conceive of the defence of Europe outside the Alliance, and without the help of our American ally, would be a profound mistake. Cooperation between Europeans does not exclude transatlantic cooperation....[43]

Indeed, for Prime Minister Chirac, the route to increased European cooperation, and to an increased European voice in security matters led the way of an enhanced French role within the Atlantic Alliance itself:

> France must play a more active role at the heart of the Atlantic Alliance in order that the latter can become an Alliance between equals: North America on one hand, Western Europe on the other....the Atlantic Alliance should, sooner or later, adjust to the developments that have taken place during the last thirty years, characterised by Franco-German reconciliation, and an irreversible process of European construction. France is in a position to play an important, and, I hope, central role in the definition of the Alliance of tomorrow.[44]

Unlike previous incidences of French drives towards European cooperation - notably those of 1963 and 1973 - the European initiatives of Paris during most the 1980's were aimed not at undermining Nato but, rather, at reinforcing it.[45] Thus, the revival of the security clauses of the 1963 Élysée Treaty in 1982 was motivated by a desire to counter the perceived trends towards neutralisation apparent in the Federal Republic, and was thus based on the inverse of the pro-Washington excesses previously ascribed to Bonn by French officials.[46] European cooperation was viewed as a means of reinforcing the Atlanticist loyalties of the Federal Republic.[47]

The corollary of such open espousals of the continued necessity for Nato and of German attachment to the Alliance was both the choice, and scepticism regarding the functional capacities, of the

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[43] J. Lacaze, 'L'Avenir de la Défense Française' op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[44] Press conference of 8 March 1988, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 2 1988, pg. 22. See also ibid, pg. 27.

[45] Reagan wrote to Mitterrand 8 days after his Bundestag speech and told him 'your speech reinforces the Alliance', cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol 1, pp. 268-269.

[46] This was the case despite the increased irritation displayed by Helmut Schmidt with American intransigence over the issue of East-West trade at the Ottawa summit, where he stated that 'West German territory is overwhelmed with bombs, which could go off at any moment, but we don't even get to have a say!'. Cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol 1, pg. 245. In earlier times, Paris would have welcomed such self-assertion by the Federal Republic against US intransigence - indeed 1973 saw Jobert attempting to elicit just such a reaction.

[47] On this, see N. Gnesotto, 'Le Dialogue Franco-Allemand depuis 1954', op. cit., pp. 24-28. See also Robert Grant, 'French Security Policy', in R. Laird (ed.), op. cit., pg. 21.

WEU as a forum for increased European cooperation and dialogue in the mid-1980s.[48] Not only was the WEU a forum associated with the victory of the Atlanticist model of European security in the 1950s,[49] but France, in 1984,[50] was not interested in questioning the supremacy of Nato in security affairs. [51] With regard to French scepticism, which also reflected relative lack of interest at this time in altering the imbalance between trans-Atlantic and European security structures, it should be remembered that Mitterrand, speaking before the IHEDN in 1988, referred disparagingly to the revived organisation as a forum within which members 'meet, consult, but decide nothing'.[52]

Given such limited expectations of the institution, it is not surprising that French officials harboured strictly limited hopes as to the possibilities of European concertation on defence matters. Indeed, during the early part of the decade, and into its latter half, such expectations focused mainly on the possibilities for increased cooperation in the field of armaments, with more far-reaching considerations postponed to an indefinite future:

> The WEU is a place where the states of Western Europe can discuss armaments policies. European armaments. In order to arrive one day at a notion of European security....of European defence....The WEU is indispensable for the coordination of arms policies, in order that European industries can resist the invasion of foreign weapons materials.[53]

Certain ideas concerning the armaments sphere reflected the perceived need to foster the development of European projects and to compete effectively with the United States and Japan. Thus, Prime Minister Fabius suggested that the EC should prohibit 'purchases of military material

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[48] As noted above, Paris was in some ways constrained into espousing a more pro-European line during the early part of the decade.

[49] The WEU came into being only after the failure of the most ambitious purely European initiative in the field of defence cooperation ever witnessed - the proposed European Defence Community.

[50] The revitalisation of the WEU occurred with the meeting in Paris of November - December 1983, followed by the crucial meeting of Defence Ministers in Rome of 27 October 1984.

[51] See on this N. Gnesotto, 'L'Union de l'Europe Occidentale: La France, l'Europe, l'Alliance', *Defense Nationale*, 41, June 1985, pp. 41-52.

[52] Speech before IHEDN, op. cit., pg. 24. There is an interesting parallel here with Britain, whose former Defence Minister, Michael Heseltine, referred to the WEU in very much the same way as a 'talking' shop'. See M. Heseltine, *Where There's a Will*, London, Hutchinson, 1987, pg. 272.

[53] C. Hernu, cited in *Valeurs Actuelles*, 13 December 1984.

outside the Community when one or more member states manufactures a similar product'.[54] And Hernu, speaking before the IHEDN in May 1985, stressed the need for Europe to attempt to match the United States and Japan in the spheres of high technology.[55] Such was also the thrust of the EUREKA initiative launched in April 1985. It was presented by Paris as a purely civilian project, in no way intended as a European response to the American SDI project, but rather as a means of preventing a brain drain to the US.[56] This being said, as Hernu made clear, there was a close link between civilian and military technology.[57] Moreover, it is hard to ignore the fact that the ten sectors stressed by the President of the Republic as the basis of the EUREKA programme were, 'as if by chance' the same as the major domains of the SDI programme.[58]

This is not to say that all rhetoric centred on minimalist notions of European cooperation as extending merely to certain collaborative weapons and high technology programmes. Certainly, even before the events of 1989, which were to lead to a fundamental reassessment of such ideas, certain political leaders, influenced by the experience of the superpower INF deal, and the feeling of marginalisation from discussions with wide-ranging implications for European security, were already propounding more extreme formulae. Thus Chevènement, speaking some months before being offered the Defence portfolio in the newly-elected Socialist government of Michel Rocard, stated that :

> It is time that Europe thought about ensuring by itself its own defence....Today, the aim must be to replace the American defence of Europe with an autonomous European defence.[59]

Yet official circles remained very much more circumspect, although, as we have seen, many of them shared the anxiety of their colleagues regarding Reykjavik and the INF agreement. Indeed, on becoming Minister of Defence, although participating in the more assertive line towards European defence taken by French officials as from around 1990, Chevènement himself was to tone down his remarks somewhat.

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[54] L. Fabius, 'La Défense de la France à l'Aube du XXI[e] Siècle', *Défense Nationale*, 43, November 1987, pg. 22.

[55] C. Hernu, 'Politique de Défense: une Prospective', *Défense Nationale*, 41, July 1985, pg. 10.

[56] F. Mitterrand, *Réflexions*, op. cit., pg. 92.

[57] C. Hernu, 'Politique de Défense: une Prospective', op. cit., pg. 11.

[58] *Le Monde*, 19 April 1985.

[59] Cited in *Le Monde*, 17 October 1987.

A more pronounced and general shift in thinking was to emerge around the end of the decade, in new notions concerning the possible role of the WEU in future European security arrangements. As has been stated above, the shift in French thinking was in no small part due to revived fears of the resurgence of a united Germany. Mitterrand himself stated, in February 1990, that 'the requirement for a common defence of Europe is even greater since the events in Eastern Europe'.[60] Later in the same year, Chevènement made French aspirations in this regard slightly more specific when he stated the French wish that the WEU become the security wing of the EC.[61]

Such ideas concerning an enhanced security role for the EC were formalised in Franco-German proposals immediately prior to, and during the Intergovernmental Conference of the European Communities, which met between December 1990 and December 1991. In particular, these took the form of the letter of 6 December 1990 from Mitterrand and Kohl to the Italian Presidency of the EC, calling for Europe to develop a 'true security policy that would ultimately lead to a common defence'; the letter from the respective Foreign Ministers of the two countries of 4 February 1991 to the Luxembourg Presidency of the EC, which spoke of a role for the WEU which would enable it 'with a view to being part of political union in course, to progressively develop the European common security policy on behalf of the Union'; and, finally, the Mitterrand-Kohl letter of 14 October 1991 to the Luxembourg Presidency, which again spelled out plans to link the WEU organically with the Political Union, as the defence arm of the EC.[62]

The message from Paris was, however, neither consistent nor always clear. Evidently, references to the WEU as the security wing of the EC marked a departure from the situation as established under the 1987 Single European Act in specifically linking the WEU with the EC.[63] Analysts have, moreover, pointed out that, despite the fact that many of the initiatives in this regard were

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[60] *Le Monde*, 15 February 1990.

[61] Speech to the Assembly of the WEU, 4 December, 1990, text of speech furnished by WEU.

[62] For the December 1991 Mitterrand-Kohl letter, see the French Foreign Ministry's *Bulletin d'Information*, 10 December 1990; for the Dumas-Genscher initiative, see ibid, 5 February 1991; for the Mitterrand-Kohl letter of October 1991, see *Le Monde*, 17 October 1991.

[63] The SEA simply reaffirmed the primacy of the WEU and Nato in security matters, without clearly delineating separate roles for them. On the SEA and security cooperation within an EC framework, see Panos Tsakaloyannis, 'The EC: From Civilian Power to Military Integration', in J. Lodge (ed.), *The European Community and the Challenge of the Future*, London, Pinter, 1989, pp. 241-255.

joint Franco-German *démarches*, they came very much at the instigation of Paris. [64] Emphasis on a tight link between WEU and the EC necessarily posed wide-ranging questions with regard to the implications of this relationship for Nato. To posit the need for a *European* defence entity separate from the Alliance, and responding to orders from a *European* political authority rather than forming a 'pillar' within existing Nato structures implied a certain division of responsibilities between the two bodies, the concrete modalities of which were almost bound to lead to fierce wrangles, given the proclivity of certain of the EC members of Nato to resist any moves towards the weakening or undermining of the latter.[65]

However, French decision makers were quick to underline their perception of the necessary maintenance of existing Alliance structures. Hence Mitterrand emphasised, in April 1991, that the Alliance remained the vital guarantor of European security, and that'it is not a question of creating a defence organisation to replace Nato, but of knowing the limits of the Atlantic Alliance and its military organisation....to realise that Europe....should not miss any opportunity to create a common policy and....its own defence.'[66] Chevènement who, before the WEU Assembly, had spoken of the possibility of European cooperation outside the area covered by the Nato Treaty, went on, later in the same speech, to suggest that increased European cooperation would reinforce the Alliance and preserve links with the United States which were an 'indispensable element of the stability of the [European] continent'.[67] And Mitterrand's closest adviser on strategic and diplomatic questions emphasised that 'no one is trying to construct a system in competition with the one that exists'.[68] Moreover, together with ambitious rhetoric regarding the French vision of an enhanced European role in security affairs, French officials also tended to stress the long-term nature of such aspirations, and, as in the earlier part of the decade, were wont to regard the defence dimension of Europe as needing to await other spheres of European construction:

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[64] See D. Yost, 'France and West European Defence Identity', *Survival*, vol. 33, no. 4, July-August 1991, pg. 334.

[65] Perhaps the most outspoken such state was Britain, especially under Mrs. Thatcher, although London enjoyed the support notably of the Dutch. Britain and the Netherlands emphasised both the primacy of Nato, and the role of the WEU, not as organic part of political union, but rather as a 'bridge' between the European Community and Nato. For an excellent recent analysis of Dutch attitudes towards European security, see B. van den Bos, *Can Atlanticism Survive? The Netherlands and the new role of Security Institutions*, The Hague, The Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, July 1992. A classic expose of the British desire to see a 'pillared' approach within Nato to the question of increasing the influence of Europe was given by G. Howe, 'The European Pillar', *Foreign Affairs*, winter 1984-1985, pp. 330-343.

[66] *Le Monde*, 13 April 1991.

[67] Speech to the WEU Assembly of December 1990, text furnished by the French Embassy, London, pp. 3-4.

[68] See *Le Monde*, 29 May 1991.

> The creation of a true European defence identity will take time. In order to allow command, a single authority is needed, and such an authority does not exist at the European level. Prior to that, political agreement about the goals to be pursued is necessary, especially in time of crisis.[69]

Affirmations concerning the necessity of maintaining Nato did not sit easily with claims made regarding the enhanced role of Europe in security matters. Moreover, to underline the long-term nature of a European project merely underlined French doubts concerning a plan whose necessity was in many senses made even more imperious through the doubts the more ambitious rhetoric concerning European construction engendered amongst Americans. American observers were not slow to point out the dangers inherent in appearing implicitly or explicitly to challenge the role of Nato:

> We support a European pillar, but one that does not duplicate the Alliance, one that operates within the Alliance to do Alliance tasks, and outside the Alliance only where it wishes to take on new missions....The US public would not understand what was going on if the Europeans stopped using Nato or began replacing it with other structures to perform its historic tasks.[70]

Paris had increasingly, though, moved way from the idea of a pillar, to one of a more autonomous European identity, comprising an organic link between EC and WEU, making the latter directly answerable to the requests of the former. Moreover, with regard to the missions of the Alliance, it was difficult to see how Paris could avoid coming in to conflict with such analyses, as the issue of Nato's role in the new Europe was one, as we have seen, of considerable disagreement between Paris and some of its allies.

With respect to the practical kinds of cooperation that were possible between Europeans in the defence sphere , Paris was again less than completely consistent in its approach. On the one hand, peacetime military integration was portrayed as an anathema to a country taking so much pride in its national independence: as Defence Minister Joxe argued, 'what is important is to maintain control over our own forces, and thus to have them all under a single and national command. [As]

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[69] P. Joxe, speaking in March 1991, cited in *Le Monde*, 24-25 March 1991.

[70] William Taft, US Permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council, speech at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 8 February 1991, cited in D. Yost, 'France and West European Defence Identity' op. cit., pg. 339.

is the case [now] and will continue to be the case.'[71] On the other hand, French attitudes appeared to differ depending on with regard to *whom*. Thus, Chevènement, in a speech to The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in 1990 rejected proposals for multinational formations, and stated that any such plans in the future could take place only 'in a bilateral form and among Europeans'.[72] In similar vein, Mitterrand himself made the continued presence of large numbers of French troops on German soil contingent on the development of new security structures on the Old Continent:

> Does a great country like yours need foreign troops on its soil, even if these are friendly troops? If it judges this necessary in the framework of a European defence....a new accord would be needed, and we should speak clearly about it....If we want to build together this European system, we must not live upon the post-war force relations of victor and vanquished; it is necessary to create our new relations between equal, friendly, and associated countries[73]

Thus, future cross-stationing arrangements as well as the prospect of European multinational formations were held out as possible features of a new, *European* defence arrangement.

As a result, in the same way as French policy led to a tension between the potential roles of a European and a transatlantic security structure, certain contradictions also arose with regard to the nature of any European structure, and its implications for French 'independence'. In particular, the notion of multilateral units raised questions regarding the nature and provenance of command, and the issue of whether, in the event of German command, forces so assigned would come under the command of Nato (see below). On these issues, French declaratory policy remained somewhat discreet.

Such tensions became markedly more acute as French demands with regard to Europe became more forceful - and enormously more publicised - in the wake of the events of 1989. Certain officials claimed that France had undertaken great efforts during the 1991 IGC to reconcile the national

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[71] Speech to National Assembly of 6 June 1991 cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 21, May-June 1991, pg. 115. He intimated, however that operational integration - that is to say some form of integration during actual conflict, was a *sine qua non* of military success. Ibid, pg. 115.

[72] *Financial Times*, 8 June 1990.

[73] F. Mitterrand, speaking on German television, October 1990, cited in D. Yost, 'France and West European Defence Identity', op. cit., pg. 333.

elements of its defence policy with its more European options.[74] Yet it is difficult to conceive of how such bold undertakings as a Franco-German Brigade expanded into a European corps, presumably at the disposal of a European authority,[75] or the aim of a common defence policy leading ultimately to a common defence, could be reconciled with assertive declarations concerning the rejection of integration, the need to preserve autonomy in the defence sphere, and claims not to be in favour of 'hastening transfers of sovereignty in a domain where the ineluctably national dimension is very soon clear.'[76]

Such problems were especially acute in the domain of possible European nuclear cooperation, which also represented the most frequently alluded to sphere of possible Anglo-French cooperation. Again, the rhetoric was often fairly ambitious. In January 1992, for instance, Mitterrand spoke of the possibility of a European nuclear deterrent doctrine perhaps developing 'one day.[77] The same month, Pierre Joxe hinted at the possibility of considering nuclear cooperation with allies, and spoke of potential discussions with London on the combination of the two nuclear forces.[78] Given the overt emphasis previously placed on the purely national character of nuclear weapons, such declarations could perhaps be seen as constituting a major development in and of themselves. However, as the next section will show, in the nuclear sphere, as in the case of many of the goals spelled out by Paris with regard to Europe, there was no real progress. It is now time to turn to the reality of policy, and to assess this in the light of the sometimes very ambitious rhetoric that had characterised many French initiatives.

Europe: the Reality

Given the increased interest manifested in the idea of European unity, the question is raised as to the amount of practical progress achieved in this sphere during the decade. Once again, as in the spheres of foreign policy and defence, there existed a gulf between political rhetoric and reality.

The Franco-German relationship witnessed certain initiatives in the military domain, to complement

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[74] See E. Cresson, 'Défense et Avenir de l'Europe', op. cit., pg. 18.

[75] See the text of the Kohl-Mitterrand proposals to the IGC in *Le Monde*, 17 October 1991.

[76] E. Cresson, op. cit., pg.19.

[77] *Le Monde*, 12-13 January 1992.

[78] *Le Monde*, 21 January 1992.

the rhetorical commitment of many French officials. With regard to conventional forces, as has been discussed earlier, the creation of the FAR was portrayed as being of great importance for the French role in the defence of Central Europe.

Another practical development in this domain was the unprecedented French decision to introduce the possibility of consultation with the Federal Republic on the potential use of tactical nuclear weapons. Mitterrand, in a declaration on 28 February 1986, stated that:

> Within the limits imposed by the extreme rapidity of such decisions, the President of the Republic declares himself ready to consult with the Chancellor of the Federal Republic on the possible use of French prestrategic weapons on German territory. He notes that the decision cannot be shared in this domain. The President of the Republic announces that he, along with the Chancellor of the Federal Republic, has decided to equip himself with the technical means for immediate and reliable consultation in times of crisis.[79]

For all this, however, there remained limits as to the significance of the concessions Paris was willing to make. After all, the engagement of any French forces - including the FAR - remained at the mercy of a political decision which French decision makers insisted was carried out in full independence, and with no element of automaticity of commitment. Thus, for Charles Hernu, the 'autonomy of the government is total, and there is no automaticity involved in the commitment of the FAR'. Although going on to claim that the fact the FAR existed at all, and could possibly intervene in Central Europe, was a practical expression of the 'Alliance within an Alliance' between Paris and Bonn, whilst preserving independence from Nato,[80] such word games fell short of manifesting a true solidarity with the Federal Republic. So, too, did Mitterrand's rather ambiguous comments of 1987 regarding the targeting of prestrategic weapons.[81]

In short, there still persisted the possibility of France taking what David Yost has termed the 'non-belligerency option': that is to say, that France continued, alongside declarations of solidarity, to maintain its absolute freedom of decision, which could have involved, in the event of hostilities breaking out in Central Europe, the French decision to intervene coming too late to be of any consequence to West Germany. As Egon Bahr rather caustically observed:

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[79] See *Le Monde*, 2-3 March 1986 for the full text of the declaration

[80] See *Le Monde*, 5 November 1983.

[81] See Chapter Five, above. For adverse German reaction to the continuation of the Hadès programme, see the open letter from leading members of the West German SPD to François Mitterrand in *Politis*, 2-8 June 1989.

> From a German perspective, this means that the French decision on the use of nuclear weapons should be taken at a moment when, for Germany, this would be of no interest whatsoever.....The French weapons....will be used only at the moment when it would already be clear that the war could not be limited, and what happens after my death is of no consequence to me.

It is difficult not to feel a certain sympathy with Bahr's point of view, as he continues:

> A certain contradiction exists between Franco-German solidarity on the one hand, and the strategies each of the two countries feels it must subscribe to on the other. Real solidarity requires that one is prepared jointly to put one's existence at stake. This is not the case today, because the French strategy would not come into effect in the event of Soviet troops stopping on the banks of the Rhine or the Weser; it would come into effect only when the very existence of France is threatened and French weapons would not be used in the hypothesis of a limited attack.[82]

Many French officials claimed that the uncertainty regarding the use of French nuclear weapons strengthened overall deterrence in Europe by complicating further the calculations of a potential adversary. In fact, France has traditionally employed two definitions of uncertainty with regard to deterrence. The one - employed also by Britain and the United States - involves the levels of escalation that would be resorted to in the event of an attack - though the underlying claim made by Britain and the US is that this would be the same for Germany as for their own territories. But France has another form of uncertainty which involves uncertainty as to the very existence of any solidarity at all - that is to say, uncertainty as to whether France would do anything at all.[83] Indeed, as one prominent French analyst has pointed out, it represented a sad indictment of the state of relations between the two states in the security domain that the comments of Hernu regarding their common security interests should have been the subject of such a tumultuous welcome, and heralded as a major watershed in France.[84]

The largely verbal commitments made in the aftermath of the reactivation of the security clauses of the Élysée Treaty would seem to confirm scepticism regarding the practical progress made in this sphere. Despite the avowed aim of 'the establishment of common concepts in the area of

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[82] E. Bahr, 'La Politique de Sécurité de la RFA', *Politique Étrangère* 1982, n°. 2., pp. 459-460.

[83] I am grateful to Professor Alfred Grosser for pointing this out to me during a conversation in Paris in 1991. See also his article 'Les Valeurs Fondamentales', *Défense Nationale*, 45, August-September 1989, pp. 41-42.

[84] '....when one of our Defence Ministers pronounced the essential truth - not to say truism that France and the German Federal Republic have security interests in common - this platitude was considered [in France] as an important political event'. F. de Rose, *Défendre la Défense*, op. cit., pg. 150.

defence and security' attributed to the Defence and Security Council,[85] no real progress in this sphere was achieved. Indeed, nor could it have been hoped for, in that France and Germany remained tied to fundamentally differing strategic concepts as a result of their divergent positions with regard to Nato.[86]

Differing national postures with regard to Nato also imposed limits on the degrees of cooperation achievable through the framework of the joint infantry brigade proposed by Chancellor Kohl in June 1987, and the FAR.[87] During the *Moineau Hardi* exercises, the units of the FAR deployed in West German territory had been symbolically and very publicly placed under the operational control of a West German commander. Yet the French veto on the proposed attendance of Nato observers cast doubt on the meaning of such arrangements.[88] Since the German Second Army, which had controlled the exercises came under the integrated command of SHAPE - itself under the command of the SACEUR, whose presence Paris vetoed - did this imply that French participation would have been different had Nato command been exercised?[89]

As for the much vaunted joint brigade itself, at least one analyst has been drawn to wonder whether its utility lay in this symbolism alone.[90] Despite claims that the brigade might serve a role in protecting CENTAG supply lines, or in expediting the movement of French reinforcements

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[85] See *Le Monde*, 22 April 1989.

[86] It is interesting to note the criticism offered by Pierre Lellouche of the analysis by P. Boniface and F. Heisbourg - staunch defenders, as we have seen, of the regime, and indeed members of Hernu's *cabinet* - of the Franco-German strategic dialogue. The former characterises the position of the latter as 'Let us pursue our strategic dialogue....but on the condition that, above all, we change nothing to do with each others' "fundamental choices"'. P. Lellouche, 'Pour qu'enfin s'ouvre le débat en France sur notre Défense', *Le Débat*, no. 36, September 1985, pp. 162-163.

[87] See *Le Monde*, 21-22 June 1987.

[88] *Le Point*, 5 October 1987.

[89] See J. Howorth, 'Defence Policy Under Mitterrand Mark 2', op. cit., pg. 96. For German unease, see *Le Monde*, 27-28 September 1987. Not surprisingly, French officials expressed a different opinion; Giraud, for instance referred to the exercises as 'a practical manifestation of common will animating France and the Federal Republic to reinforce their cooperation in the matter of security and to promote a true European pillar of defence.' Cited in W. Feld, 'International Implications of the Joint Franco-German Brigade', *Military Review*, February 1990, pg. 6.

[90] Lawrence Freeedman, for instance, has written that the brigade was of minimal military relevance, and, moreover, failed to bridge any of the key strategic differences dividing France and Germany. See L. Freedman, 'Defence Cooperation in Political Context', in W. Taylor Jr. (ed.), *Beyond Burdensharing*, Brussels, United States Mission to Nato, the Atlantic Papers: Proceedings no. 1, April 1989. Proceedings of a seminar for Permanent and Military Representatives to Nato sponsored by the US Mission to Nato, 12 December 1988, Brussels, pg. 25.

across the Rhine,[91] French reticence concerning the notion of reciprocal cross-stationing,[92] together with doubts concerning the truly multinational nature of the forces itself tended to underline possible sources of friction rather than advances in cooperation. Given the constitutional limitation on German troops fighting outside the Nato area - and French reluctance to place French troops under Nato command[93] (despite apparent agreement on the possibility of temporarily placing the force under the operational control of CENTAG),[94] the creation of the brigade raised more questions regarding its possible use, than it answered regarding the progress of Franco-German security cooperation.

Bilateral initiatives in the security sphere were not restricted to the Franco-German relationship. The relationship with Britain had, as we have sen, traditionally been stressed as central to the future of Europe role in its own defence. Here, too, some practical progress was achieved during the period under consideration. Perhaps most significant in this regard, were reports that, in the aftermath of the summit meeting between Mitterrand and Thatcher in January 1988, Paris had agreed to allow British access to French air and sea ports of debarkation in a Nato contingency.[95]

Yet having said this, and despite the continued cooperation between the navies and air forces of the two states, it was in the nuclear domain that progress was ultimately most necessary in order that European defence become anything more than rhetorical. For all the talk of the possible emergence of a European nuclear deterrent based on existing European nuclear forces, little, if any, progress was noticeable in this sphere. Certainly, cooperation between the two states progressed in some spheres with much talk towards the end of the decade of possible collaboration in the manufacture

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[91] For details on the brigade, see A. Lavère, 'La Brigade Franco-Allemande', *Défense Nationale*, 45, April 1989, *Le Monde*, 19-20 July 1987, 23 January 1988, 14 January 1989; l'Express , 3 July 1987; *The Economist*, 19 December 1987.

[92] For the possibility of public unrest concerning the stationing of German troops in France, see *Libération*, 7 September 1988.

[93] A joint statement of French and German Defence Minsters declared of the brigade that in the event of a crisis, 'it will fight alongside the other European and Atlantic forces, but it won't be part of Nato' integrated command', cited in *New York Times*, 18 July 1987. The problems regarding German troops and Nato command were reduced somewhat in the case of the joint brigade by Bonn's decision to allocate 'territorial' troops, not previously assigned to Nato, to the force. See W. Feld, 'Franco-German Military Cooperation', op. cit., pp. 154-155.

[94] See D. Ruiz Palmer, *France*, paper prepared for presentation before the conference on *Force Mobilisation, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security*, op. cit., pg. 27.

[95] See *Defense News*, 8 February, 1988, and *The Economist*, 6 February, 1988.

of a long-range air-to-ground missile.[96] However, with regard to operational collaboration and to the prospect of the creation of some form of embryonic European deterrent - speculation which neither side actively discourages[97] - one may conclude that, once again, the rhetoric served in many ways simply to obscure the practical problems, rather than address them. As in the case of the Franco-German tandem, where the thorny issues of overall command and control, operational competence within and without Europe and the like remained untouched, the reality of the practical hurdles to be surmounted before any meaningful nuclear cooperation could occur between London and Paris was never addressed. These problems were clearly spelled out by a British Government document in 1987:

> If one were considering a fully integrated, jointly controlled Anglo-French nuclear deterrent, significant problems would arise. Our two countries would need to agree on the criteria the force would have to meet, the targets that would be put at risk, the details of complementary refits and patrol cycles and, by no means least, the process of consultation leading to launch of a nuclear weapons and the authority for the actual firing of a weapon. And if a jointly controlled force were contemplated, which country would change its defence philosophy? For certainly there would have to be a change. British nuclear forces are committed to Nato, and the Alliance would unquestionably be weakened in military and political terms if they were removed. France, on the other hand, although a member of the Alliance, is not part of the Nato military structure, and her forces are therefore independent of the alliance.[98]

The real problems facing any form of European deterrence prevented anything approaching real progress in this sphere,[99] and this was in many ways symptomatic of a tendency in Paris to propose ambitious schemes at the European or bilateral level, without seeming to offer any of the necessary concessions over staunch attachment to autonomy in defence, which were prerequisites for progress.

Bilateral cooperation was expanded in other directions, notably with Italy and Spain. In the latter

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[96] See *Le Monde*, 7 May 1990.

[97] L. Freedman, 'Defence Cooperation in Political Perspective', op cit., pg. 19.

[98] *Why not an Alternative?* Ministry of Defence, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1987*, vol. 1, Cmd 101-1, London, HMSO, 1987, pp. 41-42.

[99] Aside from doctrinal problems, British agreements with the United States preventing the transfer of technology to third parties also proved a problem. As Lawrence Freedman has pointed out: 'When, in the 1970's, it was suggested that the French and British navies might like to get together to discuss their common problems in managing ballistic missile submarines, the varieties of limitations on what was permissable to discuss eventually left little on the agenda but the dietary needs of the submariners (this episode was known in the MoD as the "cornflake saga")', in L. Freedman, *Britain and Nuclear Weapons*, London, Macmillan, 1980, pg. 48.

case, France and Spain carried out regular military training exercises together, and French overtures increased notably in the aftermath of the 1986 Spanish referendum which emphatically confirmed Spanish Nato membership.[100] Both Spain and Italy agreed to participate in the Helios reconnaissance satellite project, whilst also signing bilateral agreements on air defence and maritime surveillance with France. [101]

On a multilateral level, French policy was also characterised by a number of initiatives aimed at the creation of new defence links, and, so French leaders were wont to claim, a more autonomous European defence. Again, however, the analyst is entitled to question the amount of real progress achieved. Despite declaratory gestures from both Paris, and emanating from the North Atlantic Council during the latter part of the 1980's encouraging the development of a more autonomous European defence identity, such ideas do not really seem to have had much effect.

Certainly, the WEU reported some successful joint initiatives following its reactivation, notable amongst these being the coordinated efforts of sending warships to the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war.[102] What is most noticeable, however, is the fact that where European initiatives were in conflict with traditional French defence policy priorities, the latter invariable were accorded priority. This was most clearly illustrated with regard to the security obligations entailed by French adhesion to the Brussels Treaty, the founding document of the WEU. Unlike the legal obligations incurred under the Washington Treaty, which avoid all notions of automatic military assistance to allies, article Five of the Brussels Treaty contains an obligation to resort to military force should one of the contracting parties be the victim of aggression. In this way, France was signatory to a Treaty which nullified any notion of non-automaticity, and effectively removed the non-belligerency option. Further, with the signing in October 1987 of the Platform on European Security in the Hague by the WEU members, not only did France reaffirm the commitments entered into in 1954, but moreover committed itself to intervention in defence of an attacked ally at the frontiers of the latter, thereby effectively extending its obligations to include participation in

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[100] See Y. Boyer and D. R. Palmer, 'op. cit., pp. 38-39

[101] See D. Ruiz Palmer, *France*, paper prepared for presentation before the conference on *Force Mobilisation, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security*, op. cit., pp. 36-38.

[102] See Y. Boyer and D. Ruiz Palmer, 'Prospects for Enhanced Defence Cooperation Within the Atlantic Alliance, in W. Taylor Jr.(ed.), op. cit., pp. 28-29.

the common defence of the eastern frontier of the Federal Republic.[103] Despite all this, however, French officials continually asserted the complete autonomy of decision enjoyed by Paris with regard to the possibility of intervention in a Central European conflict. The requisites of European solidarity and cooperation, even when enshrined in a theoretically binding international treaty, were secondary to the need of maintaining at least the appearance of independence.

Even in the sphere of more minimalist conceptions, of increased European cooperation in arms production, progress was limited. Certainly, some degree of cooperation in the high technology sector was discernible under the framework of the EUREKA project, which boasted a total of over two hundred collaborative projects in 1988. Paris participated in 107 of these projects.[104] Yet the record was somewhat mixed. Certainly, as we have seen, Spain and Italy were drawn into the Helios project, whilst certain collaborative projects were undertaken in other spheres.[105] Yet for all such progress, the overriding impression of the period is one of France eventually refusing to participate in the single most important collaborative project undertaken. Hernu stated, with regard to the European tactical fighter aircraft project, that it 'is one of the most important projects ever undertaken at the European level'.[106] Yet, faced with a project of immense importance in terms of the future of European cooperation, Paris opted for a national solution to the requirements of its Air Force.

Conclusion

Some thirty five years ago, an American analyst, in the aftermath of the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) scheme, wrote of the French that 'the European idea was handled easily [by them], given the magnificent French gifts of verbal facility, so long as it remained on the doctrinal level.'[107] Gabriel Robin, unsurprisingly, put the point somewhat more forcefully, writing of French reasons for the 1984 reactivation of the WEU: 'What matters is not making advances but making people think that one is ready to advance: not building a European defence,

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[103] Western European Union, *Platform on European Security Interests*, The Hague, 27 October, 1987, pg. 6. Text provided by WEU, London.

[104] See *Le Monde*, 18 June 1988

[105] See Annexe 4.

[106] Cited in P. Buffotot, 'Forces Politiques et Defense: le Débat sur la Defense Européenne', *Ares*, 1984/5, pg. 241.

[107] D. Lerner, 'Reflections on France in the World Arena', in R. Aron and D. Lerner (eds.), *France Defeats EDC*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1957, pg. 209.

but talking about it'.[108]

Certainly, Paris appeared willing to tolerate a chasm between the rhetoric used with regard to the possibilities for the emergence of a more autonomous European defence and the meagre reality of progress. Importantly, France was a state which combined ambitious rhetoric with a relative failure to act in the face of a clear need for policy adaptation. As the two previous chapters have shown, in the spheres of both defence and foreign policy, French policy remained wedded to the concept of national independence, which in turn provided a hurdle in the path of the development of Europe. At the same time, the maximalist rhetoric concerning Europe, although accompanied on many occasions by far more cautious utterances, served merely to increase doubts, especially amongst Americans, concerning the future of Nato. Even if, as one prominent Western broadsheet suggested in its leader, the more maximalist notions contained in French rhetoric were intended solely for rhetorical purposes, to maintain French credentials as a leading pro-European state,[109] such notions, and their repetition by highly-placed officials nevertheless had the effect of helping to undermine the idea that France believed in the utility of the Alliance, thereby undermining the Alliance itself. Indeed, with regard to Chevènement especially, it can reasonably be claimed that his pro-European rhetoric was intended to encourage medium or long-term French planning in this direction, so as to avoid policy makers deciding in favour of moves towards Atlantic reintegration. Given the Defence Minister's inclination to lay great emphasis on national independence, however, it is unlikely that he would seriously have envisaged any effective progress in the European sphere which involved a diminution of French sovereignty. From this came the angry accusations that French public doubts about the permanency of American troops on European soil were in fact merely serving to bring about that very result.[110]

Even if this were so - and this is extremely unlikely considering the proclivity of French leaders to stress the continued necessity of the trans-Atlantic link[111] - the fact remains that French policy

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[108] G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 78.

[109] 'It is possible that the French have already reached [the conclusion that their proposal for an EC defence capability is too ambitious to be accomplished in much less than a decade] and that having decided they would rather stay resolutely independent in defence matters, are preserving their integrationist credentials by proposing an impossible form of integration. Leading article in *The Independent*, 29 May 1991.

[110] See, amongst others, P. Jenkins 'A French recipe for an unsavoury trade war', *The Independent*, 13 February, 1992, and 'The Gravel in America's Shoe', *The Economist*, 1 February 1992.

[111] The rationale for Nato might have changed in French eyes, but it remained as strong as ever. Thus, the idea of Nato as a last resort, implied in much French rhetoric prior to 1989, took another form in the aftermath of German unification; as one French official stated it would be 'a catastrophe' not to have US in Europe to balance Germany

with regard to European defence had the effect of threatening to undermine existing security structures, whilst failing to provide any concrete alternative. Moreover, as the citations from German analysts have indicated, the gap between what Paris said, and what it would do, had the effect of engendering a certain cynicism amongst German elites with regard to the real intentions of the French - a fact which made the eventual emergence of the kind of Europe French policy makers referred to even less likely.

Ironically, then, as domestic economic and international conditions seemed to push the French most strongly in favour of a European alternative to the policy of Alliance without integration, and just as the nature of French rhetoric itself both underlined, and in part intensified this necessity, French policy proved unable to adapt.

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militarily. See *The New York Times*, 6 May 1990.

CONCLUSION TO PART TWO: EUROPE AND INDEPENDENCE, SQUARING THE CIRCLE

Part Two has revealed a tension both within and between the three strands of policy which constituted the Alliance policy of François Mitterrand: the policy of independence towards the blocs, French defence policy, and French European policy. It also illustrated the manner in which shifting international conditions in particular rendered many of the prevailing policy choices espoused by Paris increasingly unsatisfactory.

It is clear from the discussion that there was a gulf between French policy and the declaratory stances associated with that policy. From claims of outright independence in military affairs to assertions of representing a non-aligned 'third way' in international politics, and to calls for a common defence policy for Europe, the reality has differed markedly from the rhetoric. The preceding discussion has highlighted ways in which the rhetoric of Alliance policy itself increasingly undermined French influence, by annoying Alliance partners, and, contrasting as it did in many instances with actual policy, confusing them as to actual French intentions.

Policy, too, became increasingly counterproductive. For most of the period following the accession to power of General de Gaulle in 1958, France had in many ways been able to have its cake and eat it. Whilst arguably detracting from the overall cohesion and effectiveness of Western security, a defence policy focusing on the protection, through strategic nuclear deterrence of French territory, coupled with, and in part providing for, aggressive claims of independence from the prevailing orthodoxies of bipolar international politics, along with ambitious pro-European rhetoric that maintained France's standing as a champion of European integration, all these elements remained fairly constant, and all reaped rewards in the form of French prestige and influence.

However, the end of the Cold War, the unification of Germany, the salutary lessons of the war in the Gulf, along with increasingly apparent economic constraints on defence budgets, all contributed to placing pressure on this foreign and defence policy orthodoxy. Concomitantly, pressures in favour of European integration grew, as a viable solution to the problems raised. Equally noticeable, however, was the lack of progress in this direction accomplished by French policy makers. The Franco-German relationship remained rooted to a large extent in declaratory initiatives, of great symbolic, yet little practical, value. Paris remained isolated from the largest armaments cooperation programme conceived during the decade - the European Fighter Aircraft - deciding instead to proceed with a purely national project - the Rafale. Progress towards the much

vaunted common European defence policy - let alone towards the ultimate aim of a common defence - remained also rooted in the realms of the politics of (at least proclaimed) good intentions.

This was largely attributable to the marked continuity of policy illustrated in Chapters Four and Five. A continued emphasis on independence and autonomy of decision precluded serious progress in European cooperation. The precept of French independence, the central feature of French exceptionalism, was held to favour the achievement of a certain prestige in international affairs. The very nature of defence policy acted as a barrier to further European cooperation, despite protestations to the contrary.[1] German observers were quick to point out that French intransigence on the issue of maintaining the non-belligerency option contradicted often simultaneous claims that France's security was linked to that of the Federal Republic. The continued emphasis, up to the end of the period under consideration, on the nuclear component of French forces indicated that the traditional emphasis of defence policy had not shifted. Reforms, such as the FAR, did nothing to clarify the prospects of French intervention in the event of a central European conflict. Strategic consistency which, as we have seen, did not manage to guarantee even French security, let alone French force projection capabilities, was, therefore, a feature of the period.

Linked to the tension between French defence policy and European aspirations was the contradiction between a policy of greater European cooperation and the very bases of French defence and foreign policy. Some commentators have claimed that there existed a tension between French foreign and defence policies under Mitterrand, with the latter's Gaullism standing in stark contrast to the 'Atlanticism' of the former.[2] What such analyses fail to appreciate, however, is the fact that both were based on the desire to increase French independence and freedom of manoeuvre. Thus support for Nato over INF was predicated on a desire for balance between the blocs which would both reassure Germany and allow Paris to act as an independent and influential force in world politics. The basis of the French belief in the notion of autonomy and independence was a certain view of both international relations in general, and of state sovereignty in particular. We have seen how French officials were apt to refer to the 'self-help' nature of the international system, stressing that, in the last resort, each state alone had to take responsibility for its own security.

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[1] Lacaze, for instance, speaking before the IHEDN in May 1984, stated that there was no contradiction between an integrated European defence and a strategy based on the possession of nuclear weapons. See J. Lacaze 'Concept de Défense et Sécurité en Europe', op. cit., pg. 17.

[2] G. Robin, op. cit., pg 30, 107.

Such a perspective automatically limited willingness to relinquish sovereignty or autonomy of decision. Even in the field of arms cooperation, questions of sovereignty and national independence impinged upon notions of cooperation: as Rocard informed the Assembly of the West European Union:

> Could one really agree to leave the production of certain armaments systems to others? Our industries have developed a certain technological advantage in a specific sector. Should we let others benefit from this, others who are our competitors as well as our partners? There are no easy answers to these questions.[3]

French leaders were thus increasingly unable to reap rewards from policies that were increasingly contradictory and out of touch with international realities whilst prevailing options prevented the espousal of a more European direction in anything but the vaguest rhetorical terms.

> France's continued insistence in [sic] defining its approach to collective defence planning in Europe in terms of its non-participation in the Alliance's integrated military structure, as if Europe were still in 1966, is not only inappropriate to the challenges confronting the Alliance today but at variance with the emphasis of France's foreign policy on multilateral political and economic integration within the EC.[4]

In international terms, French policy undermined the two alternative paths towards revamping the European security architecture to fit the new geostrategic landscape: reforming Nato, or creating some form of European alternative. Inherent in such obstinacy towards policy adaptation lay the risk of marginalisation, as European partners were pushed by the very intransigence of Paris towards the kind of reform of the existing Nato structures that Paris opposed. More fundamentally, perhaps, this situation arose precisely at a time when the traditional foreign and defence policy options of the Fifth Republic were coming under increasing pressure due both to dysfuntionality in terms of international requirements and to domestic economic constraints. The task which now confronts the analyst, therefore, is that of explaining why, in spite of this increasing failure of policy to meet requirements in an international sense, the growing economic pressures facing France, and the fact that French leaders seemed genuinely aware of the possibility of fundamental policy adaptations in the direction of European cooperation in the defence and foreign policy spheres, no such adaptation occurred. It is to this that we now turn.

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[3] *Discours de M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'État, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, devant l'Assemblée de l'UEO*, 5 December 1988, cited in *PEF* November-December 1988, pg. 115.

[4] D. Ruiz Palmer, *France*, paper prepared for presentation before the conference on *Force Mobilisation, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security*, op. cit., pg. 46.

PART THREE
THE LIMITS OF INDEPENDENCE: CONSTRAINTS ON POLICY ADAPTATION

INTRODUCTION TO PART THREE

Part Two illustrated the growing tensions that came to exist towards the end of the last decade, both between the various strands of French Alliance policy, and between certain of its component elements and the requirements of changing strategic and economic realities. French policies, it has been shown, cannot be understood in terms of responses to international imperatives: they no longer aided, and, in some cases, actually hindered the pursuit of traditional and enduring foreign and defence policy goals.

The aim of Part Three is to explain the overall continuity of French Alliance policy despite both the changing international and domestic economic situations, and the fact that, as illustrated in Chapter Two, Mitterrand himself had questioned the bases of traditional Alliance policy prior to his accession to power. It concentrates on two purely domestic explanations: the so-called internal 'consensus' on defence and foreign policies, and the institutional workings of defence and foreign policy formulation under the Fifth Republic.

Analysts who study the decision-making structures of France have tended to concentrate either on the institutional framework of decision making, or on more anecdotal and less analytical studies of foreign and defence policy making. The analytical, institutional work, whilst accepting that a certain 'grey-area' exists constitutionally with respect to defence policy and foreign affairs, tends to accept that the President, in the sphere of defence policy making, is relatively unconstrained and free to act as he will. This freedom of manoeuvre, it is claimed both by analysts and French officials, is enhanced by the existence of broad agreement amongst both elites and the population at large concerning the major elements of French foreign and defence policy. Presidential predominance, backed by the famed defence 'consensus', is, therefore, assumed to make simply for a strong Presidential sector in policy formulation. Such claims fail, however, to take into account the power of the consensus, and of the various institutions, to constrain even the President in his choices. It will be argued that both the powerful institutional pressures at work, as well as the 'consensus', constrain French policy options, thereby helping to explain the increasing dysfunctionality of Alliance policy outlined in Part Two.

The 'consensus' lies at the heart of any explanation of the rift, outlined in Part Two, that has developed between rhetorical and actual policy towards the Alliance, in that continuity of language has been a prerequisite for its continuation. Thus, whilst consensus accounts for the continuities

of policy, it accounts also for the discrepancies between French rhetoric and the reality of policy.

In addition, decision-making structures further constrained policy choice by institutionalising the privileged position of key lobby and interest groups within the policy-making system, thus enhancing their ability to brake the process of adaptation and to impose certain choices on political elites - choices which contrasted with the avowed aim of tight French cooperation with Nato allies.

CHAPTER SEVEN
MYTHS AND THE MAKING OF POLICY: THE 'CONSENSUS' ON DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY

Introduction '....the notion of a French "national security consensus" has become somewhat of a cliché';[1] indeed, few students of defence-related questions can be unaware of the premium attached by the French to the so-called domestic 'consensus' on defence policy. Far fewer, however, have taken the trouble to examine this phenomenon in detail, or to assess its implications for French defence and foreign policy.

The argument of this chapter is that the famed internal 'consensus' on defence matters is both largely fictional, and, moreover, (partly as a result, as we shall see, of its fictional nature), counter-productive. The irony is that the myth of a 'consensus', formed around policies stressing national independence, acts as a powerful constraint, limiting the independence of French policy makers in their attempts to find policies more attuned to the changed international situation at the end of the 1980's.

This chapter will examine the claims made regarding both the nature and effects of the supposed 'consensus' by policy makers since 1981. It will then go on to trace its development from the time of General de Gaulle. The following section will consider the nature of the 'consensus', stressing the fundamental ambiguity of the 'Gaullist legacy' on which it is based, and illustrating its somewhat illusory nature. The final part of the chapter will attempt to demonstrate that, in contrast with the claims made by officials, the myth of 'consensus' played an important role during the period under examination in hampering effective policy adaptation. A preliminary task, however, will be to clarify the *linguistic* ambiguities that surround the word 'consensus'.

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[1] P. Gordon, *Struggling to Adapt: French Security Policy in Europe and the Gaullist legacy, from the 1960s to the End of the Cold War* (2 vols.). Dissertation submitted to the Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Baltimore, Maryland, 1991, pg. 1.

Definitions

Consensus What, then, does the analyst mean when talking about 'consensus'? Some treatments of the notion, particularly within the field of International Relations, discuss the notion without attempting any definition.[2] However, when tackling this issue, the analyst is immediately faced with a problem of terminology. Various notions of what the term implies have been used by theorists at different times, whilst opinions have also differed regarding the necessity of consensus, and its effects.[3]

Within the field of political science, consensus is a term used to denote something more than mere broad agreement. It represents not the denial of the legitimacy or prerogatives of a simple formal majority, but rather the desire to go further than majorities. Consensus is:

> a refusal of confrontation....[but] far from denying [the existence of] opposition, of cleavages, of risks of rupture, it assumes their existence and represents a desire, not to resolve them artificially, or to destroy them, but to transcend them.[4]

Consensus, then, represents a situation of going beyond overall agreement to reach a greater harmony of opinions on a subject. It carries the implication of some form of approximate agreement about more than single issues, but about society as a whole, and in particular about the way in which a particular society is governed.[5]

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[2] Such is, for example, the case with the proceedings of the twenty-fourth annual conference of the IISS at Scheveningen, The Hague, September 1982, which treated the issue of 'consensus' without ever directly addressing the question of what consensus actually is. The proceedings are reproduced as *Defence and Consensus: the Domestic Aspects of Western Security*, 3 vols, Adelphi Papers 182, 183, and 184, London, IISS, 1983. This is not to say that International Relations scholars have completely avoided the term; some theorists have used the notion of consensus, or similar ones, as a basis for theories concerning the elimination or mitigation of conflict. See notably C. Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1962, and A. Etzioni, 'On Self-Encapsulating Conflicts', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 8, pp. 242-255. Moreover, specialists on domestic politics exhibit a certain blindness in their treatment of consensus by referring almost exclusively to its domestic implications and manifestations in various spheres of domestic policy. Thus, despite the high profile of a claimed consensus on defence and foreign policy, there appears no discussion of it in the special edition of *Pouvoirs* dedicated to a discussion of consensus, no. 5, 1978.

[3] The following discussion owes much to that contained in E. Shils, 'The concept of consensus', in D. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Volume Three, Macmillan and Free Press, [USA], 1968, pp. 260-266, and L. Lipsitz, 'The Study of consensus' in ibid, pp. 266-270. Also of use are the various discussions in *Pouvoirs* no. 5, 1978.

[4] J. Rigaud, 'Réflexions sur la Notion de Consensus', *Commentaire*, 5, 1978, pg. 9.

[5] See the discussion by M. Duverger , *Commentaire*, 5, 1978, pp. 27-28, and E. Shils, op. cit.

Rather than being issue-specific, the beliefs that constitute a consensus are 'not clearly articulated [n]or systematically ordered, and are expressed sometimes in maxims and sometimes in ambiguous terms such as "fairness"'. This is in contrast with the notion of 'dissensus'. 'Dissensual' belief patterns:

> are often more explicit and systematic than are consensual patterns which affirm the existing central institutional system. The more dissensual it is, the greater the likelihood of explicitness and systematic coherence in a pattern of belief.[6]

Given such definitions of the notion of consensus, we will now turn to an examination of French claims regarding both the nature and impact of the French 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy.[7]

'Consensus' French officials repeatedly stated that a high degree of consensus existed on the overall options of French defence policy choices.[8] Moreover, the claim was made that broad agreement over defence and foreign policy choices were not confined to elites but rather extended throughout the population as a whole. Prime Minister Chirac spoke in 1987 of the 'massive and unprecedented approval ....[which] bears witness to the profound support of the French for the defence policy defined by General de Gaulle'.[9]

Claimed consensus represented, as in the definitions above, something broader than merely agreement on policy, but a factor which strengthened loyalty to the state, and hence the state itself. The '*accord profond* which, for the first time in their history, joins together the French people....is the cement of national unity, and attachment to the *patrie*';[10] Defence Minister Hernu had made a similar point when presenting the 1983 *Loi de Programmation Militaire* to the National Assembly: 'nuclear deterrence, *the expression of the will of a unified nation*, remains the....foundation of our

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[6] E. Shils, op. cit., pg. 262.

[7] To avoid misunderstanding, I will henceforth refer to the French 'consensus'; this in no way is meant to imply that the 'consensus' was actually a consensus.

[8] See, for instance, Giraud's comments before the IHEDN, 12 November 1986, 'Donner à la France une Défense Forte', *Défense Nationale*, 43, January 1987, pg. 13. For a striking similarity of terminology, illustrating broad agreement, at least on this, across party lines, see Chevènement, interview before the *Grand Jury RTL Le Monde* 15 January 1989, Paris, RTL, Service de Presse, 1989, pg. 26.

[9] Speech before the IHEDN 12 December 1987, D. David, *La Politique de Défense de la France: Textes et Documents*, Paris, FEDN, 1989, pg. 296.

[10] J. Chirac, 'La Politique de Défense de la France', op. cit., pg. 7.

society'.[11]

Assertions regarding 'consensus' were not limited to its nature, but included frequent references to its overall beneficial impact. French leaders were wont to claim that the 'consensus' acted as an '*atout*',[12] a device which reinforced French international standing and the efficacy of its deterrent doctrine. It was, according to Chirac, something which allowed France to be 'heard and respected on the international scene',[13] something which, Hernu alleged, illustrated the country's resolution to the outside world.[14]

Another claimed effect of the 'consensus' was its role in increasing the complete freedom of manoeuvre enjoyed by the President of the Republic in formulating his own foreign and defence policies. Such was the assertion made by Gabriel Robin, who, moreover, claimed not only that the 'consensus' could in this way increase the personal power of the President, but that the 'consensus' enjoyed by Mitterrand since 1981 was broader than that which existed under any of his predecessors:

> The foreign policy of General de Gaulle aroused enthusiastic support but also virulent opposition; that of François Mitterrand benefitted from the former without suffering the latter...Master, as much as any of his predecessors, of all the instruments of international policy, he has over them the additional advantage of a larger 'consensus' from the outset.[15]

As the root of so much good, the 'consensus' had to be preserved. As long as it endured, no-one could speculate as to possible shifts in the overall direction of French defence policy.[16] Certainly, as this chapter will go on to show, the 'consensus' was to prove, during the 1980's, a force mitigating in favour of continuity.

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[11] SIRPA, *La Politique de Défense de la France,* Dossier d'Information no. 75, Paris, 1984, pg. 22.

[12] See Giraud's speech before the IHEDN of November 1986 'Donner à la France une Défense Forte' op. cit., pg. 13.

[13] J. Chirac, *Discours devant l'Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale*, 12 December 1987, text in D. David, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

[14] Speech before the IHEDN, 15 November 1983, cited in D. David, op. cit., pg. 269.

[15] G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 18.

[16] Chirac, speech before IHEDN, 12 December 1987, cited in D. David, op. cit., pg. 297.

The Development of 'consensus' The inception of the *force de frappe*, and the implementation of a policy of independence with respect to France's allies were not immediately the focus of broad bipartisan support in France. Prime Minister Michel Debré had to battle hard three times for the acceptance of the first nuclear-oriented military planning law in 1961. Opposition to the 1966 withdrawal from Nato was, as we have seen, fierce from the Socialist Left, led by François Mitterrand, whilst the hostility of the Left towards the French nuclear force was a feature of the political scene until the late 1970s.[17]

Gradually however, the policy pursued by de Gaulle came to be accepted by the French political élite as serving the interests of France. This was in many ways unsurprising, in that, even if one rejects the more extreme claims of analysts such as Cerny[18] concerning the *Primat der Innenpolitik* during the period, it is certainly undeniable that domestic considerations lay behind certain of the initiatives pursued by the regime.[19]

The Fifth Republic, during the 1960s, needed both to rally elements of the Left and Right to itself, and to convince the Army of both the need for, and the benefits of, loyalty to the regime. A policy of declaratory and over-stated independence, coupled with ambitious prestige projects such as the nuclear force, and the wooing of sections of the armed forces with prestige weaponry, was certainly of great importance in this respect. A policy portrayed as providing France with a certain international standing through its military prowess, enabling the achievement of independence from both superpower blocs (hence avoiding excessive dependence on the United States), was not conceived of in isolation from such factors.

The twin policy objectives of independence and *grandeur* pursued under General de Gaulle gradually gained support on both sides of the political spectrum (though for differing reasons). As one analyst has written, the aggressive policies towards Nato, and the conciliatory line towards the East pursued under the General not only assuaged the yearnings of the Left for improved relations

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[17] For a concise discussion of the attitudes of the major political parties towards French nuclear weapons from the time of the Fourth Republic, see P. Engammare, 'Les Partis Politiques Face à la Bombe Atomique: de la Clandestinité au 'consensus', *Défense Nationale*, 43, February 1987, pp. 37-51.

[18] P. Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980.

[19] Other analysts have argued along the lines that de Gaulle's policies represented a kind of 'social imperialism'. See, for instance, M. Larkin, *France since the Popular Front: Government and People 1936-1986*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, pg. 309.

between France and the Soviet Union (especially after 1963), but they also

> [for both sides of the political spectrum] provided something that could be presented as an independent international role for France. And that was welcome change from the sense of subordination and inferiority that, in the field of foreign policy, had characterised so much of French opinion since the war.[20]

Given this, it is hardly surprising that policy choices were often made with domestic repercussions in mind. This was most apparent with regard to the French Communist Party and dialogue with the Soviet Union. Michel Tatu suggests that the lack of support offered by the PCF to the demonstrators of 1968 might well have been one of the benefits reaped by de Gaulle as a result of his policy of 'détente, entente, and cooperation' towards Moscow.[21]

Such motivations were also apparent in the military sphere. With regard to doctrinal questions, the *tous azimuts* episode of 1967 nicely illustrated both the way in which policy statements could be tailored to meet specifically domestic requirements, and the problems that could be caused when such statements were wrongly interpreted as constituting actual policy.[22] As for practical military choices, the nature of the *force de frappe* was not dictated by military considerations alone. De Gaulle, as we have seen,[23] partly justified his policy of non-integration on the grounds that only through a purely *national* defence would he ever be able to count on the loyalty of his troops. The Army, conscious of the need to possess nuclear weapons in order to be able to compete effectively for funding with the other branches of the Armed services, pressed hard for, and eventually received its own weapon - the *Pluton*. This, as we have seen, was bestowed at the cost of somewhat diluting the doctrine of massive retaliation, and of disconcerting France's German ally.[24]

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[20] D. Pickles, *The Government and Politics of France, Volume 2, Politics*, London, Methuen, 1973, pg. 281.

[21] See Tatu, *Eux et Nous*, op. cit., pg. 108. Tatu goes on to claim that there was, some years later, a certain *connivance* between Giscard d'Estaing, the PCF and Moscow immediately prior to the 1981 elections, with Giscard d'Estaing's 'soft' line towards the Soviet Union over Poland and Afghanistan being rewarded by the increasingly harsh attacks against the socialist candidate both in France by the PCF, and in Moscow by the Soviet press. For a similar claim, see the *Projet Socialiste Pour les Annés 80*, op. cit., pg. 76.

[22] Jean Lacouture, op. cit., pp. 478-480.

[23] See Chapter One, above.

[24] Mitterrand's first Foreign Minister, Claude Cheysson, informed me that during a Cabinet discussion on the possibility of replacing the Pluton by a longer-range alternative, curiosity was aroused as to why de Gaulle had decided to equip French forces with a weapon that so blatantly went against French doctrinal orthodoxy of the time. The resultant search in the archives showed Land Army pressure to have been the cause. Interview, Paris, 17 May, 1991. Edward

Moreover, the politics of nuclear weapons, along with the enhanced freedom of manoeuvre they provided allowed for, provided insurance against a resurgent Germany, another issue which was a focus of broad cross-party support.

The less aggressive stance of Pompidou helped to reveal that the tenets of Gaullist defence policy were not necessarily based on stubborn intransigence and demonstrative theatricality. The recognition, in 1974 at the Ottawa summit, of the positive role played by the French nuclear force also furthered the process of legitimation of the policies of independent national deterrence and non-integration, in that they succeeded in convincing even those more pro-Atlantic elements amongst French political elites of their benefits.[25] Thus, whilst some sections of the French elites approved of the Gaullist legacy because it signified a policy of defiant independence from Nato allies, and from the United States in particular, others were persuaded to abandon their opposition to it as the Alliance itself had recognised its utility.

However, a policy that was in part intended to placate sections of the domestic audience was soon to become one inhibited by the necessity of maintaining this support, leading to an outward continuity of policy that in turn reinforced, under successive Presidents, the appearance of 'consensus'. In many cases, French rhetoric was an inhibition from which it proved very difficult to escape. The exaggerated rhetoric of successive Presidents - especially of de Gaulle - was to become the unquestioned axioms of Alliance policy as far as political debate was concerned. De Gaulle was identified as the great French patriot whose only concern was national security, and attempts to reformulate his policies could then be dismissed as unpatriotic.[26] As one analyst has perceptively stated:

> What neither de Gaulle nor his biographers could have foreseen was that the persuasiveness of Gaullist myths might, for large sections of the population, remain political imperatives in the 1970s, when circumstances had changed...The

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Kolodziej has argued that Land Army pressure was indeed a factor in the decision to fabricate tactical weapons, but that it was the strength of the military rationale for such weapons put forward by leading Land Army figures such as Noiret that led to the political decision to go ahead with their production. See *Making and Marketing Arms*, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

[25] See J. Howorth, 'France and the Defence of Europe: Redefining Continental Security', in M. Maclean and J. Howorth (eds.), *Europeans on Europe : transnational visions of a new continent*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1992, pp. 78-79.

[26] Michel Debré told the author that, in his opinion, military integration was a result of a lack of patriotism, and that a revision of Gaullist nuclear strategy would not be possible until the French elected a President who 'is not patriotic'. Interview, Paris, 1991.

consequences for French defence policy have been paralysing.[27]

Paralysis took the form of staunch opposition to any attempt to alter the strategy as it was perceived to have been formulated by de Gaulle.[28] Thus, according to Pierre Messmer[29] pressure from the Gaullist majority on which Giscard d'Estaing was dependent forced the President, in September 1978, to proceed with the sixth SNLE,[30] whilst attempts at a fundamental redrawing of French strategic concepts, in order to place more emphasis on the hypothesis of French participation in a Central European battle through the notion of *sanctuaire élargie* were foiled by the extent of the protest they elicited.[31]

Alliance policy was limited in scope because such desirable concepts as 'rank' or prestige were an obstacle to an acceptance of military integration. They were also to act as a constraint on defence policy formulation - in particular on efforts to increase cooperation with Nato allies - in that they effectively outlawed statements or decisions implying French weakness. In this sense cooperation itself was subject to the requirements of the appearance of strength in that:

> ...cooperation with Nato was held hostage to the acquisition of a genuinely autonomous military posture, as if France would deal with Nato only once it felt confident that it could do so on the basis of reciprocity and that the other allies should not construe French willingness to cooperate as a tacit challenge to de Gaulle's decisions or an admission of military weakness.'[32]

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[27] D. Pickles, 'The political imperatives and dilemmas of French defence policies', in V. Wright (ed.), *Conflict and Consensus in France*, London, Frank Cass, 1979, pg. 122.

[28] The question of perception is vital, in that the prevailing perception, especially among Communists and the Gaullist right, seemed to be of a heritage of complete independence and self sufficiency in terms of defence, based on the concept of sanctuarisation of the *Hexagone*, and non-alignment in foreign policy.

[29] Interview, Paris, 17 April 1991.

[30] The version of this story recounted to me by Yvon Bourges is slightly different. Giscard d'Estaing's former Defence Minister claimed that the President had never contemplated cancelling the decision on the submarine, but was rather awaiting technical confirmation that it could be of a new generation, with improved technical specifications, before making public his decision to proceed with construction.

[31] See the comments of P. Messmer and M. Debré in *Le Monde*, 11 June 1976, as well as the letter entitled 'Qui conduira la bataille' in the same edition. For a more detailed critique, see P. Gallois, 'French Defense Planning: The future in the past', *International Security*, 1, no. 2, Fall 1976, pp. 16-31. For a brief discussion of internal conditions at the time of the attempted reforms, see J. Howorth, 'France and Gorbachev', op. cit., pp. 64-65.

[32] D. Ruiz Palmer, *France*, Paper prepared for presentation before the conference on *Force mobilisation, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security*, op. cit., pg. 20.

Even the incremental increases in cooperation which did occur during this period were met with clamours from both the Communist Left and the Gaullist Right. Joint naval manoeuvres between France and her Alliance partners under Pompidou were attacked as representing a '*glissement vers l'OTAN*'.[33] The fact that powerful political forces worked to maintain continuity with the policies of the past further encouraged the development of the myth of 'consensus', as successive Presidents, even the non-Gaullist Giscard d'Estaing, appeared to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors.

With the acceptance, in 1978 and 1979 respectively, by Communists and Socialists of the need to preserve the French nuclear force, 'consensus' as a concept was effectively consolidated. This recognition on the part of the Left of the need to maintain a French deterrent capability was, as we have seen, in many ways a natural outcome of the traditional leanings of the more Left-wing factions of the PS and of the PCF towards a form of independence from both blocs which could be identified with much of what General de Gaulle had spoken about. From the *ralliement* of the Left to the security policies of the Republic, the notion of 'consensus' was to become a central one in official discourse, and a key element in any analysis of how security and foreign policies developed.

The French 'Consensus'

The Nature of 'consensus' The first question that needs to be addressed is: how real was the phenomenon of the 'consensus' on defence policy? The discussion of the answer can itself be divided into two distinct sections: one dealing with the centrality and ambiguity of the so-called Gaullist model of security policies, the other with the reality of any 'consensus' amongst various groups in French society - notably political elites and the academic community. A brief section will outline public opinion. Although relatively unimportant in the policy process, the public was, as we have seen, presented as being solidly behind prevailing defence and foreign policy options.[34] The following discussion will serve merely to indicate that this may well not have been the case.

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[33] See, for example, the attacks launched against Pompidou by French Communists, in particular their Assistant General Secretary, Georges Marchais who twice in January 1972 tried to prove the government had fundamentally altered Gaullist foreign policy and was turning it towards ties with the Alliance. See *L'Humanité*, 7 January, and an interview in *Europe No.1*, reported in *Le Monde*, 14 December 1971.

[34] See P. Le Prestre 'The Lessons of Cohabitation', in P. Le Prestre (ed.), *French Security Policy in a Disarming World*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989, pg. 40.

The Centrality and Ambiguity of the 'Gaullist model' The most obvious question facing the analyst with regard to the 'consensus' is 'consensus about what'? As we have seen the 'consensus' took shape around the policies pursued by General de Gaulle, and the markedly similar external policies of his predecessors. It is not, therefore, a phenomenon which could be associated with any defence or foreign policies pursued by French administrations, but is firmly linked to what has become known as the 'Gaullist model'.

The problem with the Gaullist 'model', however, resides in its vagueness and its resistance to clear or consistent definition. Its principal pillars consist of its 'strategic simplicity, diplomatic flexibility and political ambiguity',[35] none of which are open to clear definition or obvious implementation options. If it is true that no one could really disagree with the declaratory central goals of *non-guerre* through deterrence, and national independence,[36] or that one could be pro-European in a variety of different ways, it is equally true, as Part Two of this thesis has illustrated, that concepts such as independence, or European defence are notoriously hard for the analyst to define or pin down to any consistent set of policy goals.

Much of the ambiguity stems from divergences concerning the interpretation of history. For those who saw the 1966 withdrawal in terms of a refusal to risk France being dragged against its will into conflicts external to its perceived national interests, then close cooperation with the United States in the Gulf was quite permissible. So, too, was closer cooperation with allies in the Central European region, since the key to the equation was national interest, rather than any objection to close cooperation with the United States, *per se*. [37] If, however, the Gaullist historical legacy is viewed as something more than simply a practical expression of the defence of national interest, and turned into an ideological demonstration of opposition to the United States and its model of leadership, far different conclusions are obviously inherent - hence, for example, Chevènement's resistance to tight cooperation with the United States during the Gulf War.

Similarly, with regard to European initiatives, opinions differed widely with regard to ideas of what

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[35] P. Hassner, 'Un chef d'oeuvre en peril: le 'consensus' français sur la défense', *Esprit*, 3-4, March-April 1988, pg. 79.

[36] See P. Lellouche, 'Pour qu'enfin s'ouvre le débat en France sur notre defense', op. cit., pg. 157.

[37] Such is very much the thrust of the arguments utilised by F. de Rose. See his *La France et la Défense de l'Europe*, op. cit., 1976, pp. 27-30.

exactly General de Gaulle was trying to do.[38] The fact that so many differing groups with conflicting agendas could claim legitimacy with reference to Gaullist foreign policy - forces ideologically opposed to American hegemony, forces in favour of reinforcing Nato through cooperation with the federal Republic, forces intent on tying in the Federal Republic in order to avoid it exercising untoward influence, forces in favour of a European federation, forces in favour of a *Europe des patries* - was to be of tremendous importance during the Presidency of Mitterrand.

It is important to bear in mind, therefore, exactly which policy was undergoing this process of legitimation through 'consensus'. Crucially, there existed under de Gaulle (and ever since) a dichotomy between declaratory and actual policy. Certainly, this is true of most policy areas in most countries: it is almost a truism that politicians do not confine themselves to saying what they mean, or meaning what they say. In the case of defence policy in France, however, the distinction between rhetoric and reality was almost complete, with rhetoric often baldly contradicting the reality of policy. Thus, nine months after signing far-reaching arrangements with the then SACEUR, Ailleret, the French chief of Staff made his famous *Tous azimuts* address before the *Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale*. The difference between the two initiatives was simply that one was made very public, the other was not at all.

Interpretations concerning the nature of 'consensus', therefore, hinged on whether one referred to the more aggressive declaratory, or the rather conciliatory policies pursued under de Gaulle. They depended on which of the public utterances of the General were taken to be representative of his views - those stressing the need for complete independence, or those underlining the necessity for France to be involved in the defence of the Federal Republic. They depended, in short, on the motives one attributed to the General.

The varied interpretations possible are evident in the historiography. Whilst early American and British analyses focused on the narrowly nationalist motivations of the General, and sometimes verged on the polemic,[39] some subsequent studies have attempted to show that de Gaulle was a far-sighted visionary, who, although none but himself realised it at the time, was forging the bases for a more independent and self-sufficient Europe.[40] Of crucial importance is the fact that one's

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[38] See also the discussion in R. Posner, op. cit., pp. 117-122.

[39] See, for example, J. Newhouse, op. cit.

[40] See, for instance, J. Paolini, 'The Gaullist Model Revisited: Long-Range Strategic Vision and short-term Political Implementation in French Defence Policy', *French Politics and Society*, vol. 7, autumn 1989, pp. 16-23.

position on defence and foreign policy debates in France depended to a large extent on which version of the history one actually subscribed to.

In a sense, the Gaullist legacy thus presented French policy makers with a great deal of room for manoeuvre, as long as policy initiatives were presented in general terms reconcilable with most interpretations of it. On the other hand, central aspects of the model - be they deterrence, or independence, or European defence - had to be dealt with on a very general level, as a descent into specifics would have entailed a clear choice between varying interpretations.

The Myth of 'Consensus' The need to avoid such choices was compounded by the fact that, far from a firm consensus around specifics actually existing, the nature of the so-called 'consensus' in France over questions of defence and foreign policy was rather superficial. Detailed discussion risked opening up this Pandora's box. In the following section, I shall examine the nature of any consensus which may have existed amongst three key groups: political and military elites, the academic community, and the French public at large.

The political and military élites It is among the political and military élites in France that the most frequent references to the idea of a 'consensus' is portrayed as existing most clearly. During the period of *cohabitation* from 1986-1988, frequent references were made, as we have seen, to the effect that the general agreement on defence policy both existed and was a key element of strength of the French position. This is not to say that disagreement did not exist: indeed, one of the most curious aspects of the claimed consensus was that disagreement *did* exist, but was papered over.

Disagreement, in fact, existed from the beginning of the 1980s over several major issues, and these were to be exacerbated during the course of the decade. The most prominent was, without doubt, the budgetary question, over which fierce debates occurred from the start of Mitterrand's first *septennat*. Even prior to 1981, French military programme laws had tended to fail to achieve their ambitions. The most striking example of this perhaps was the 1976-1981 *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, which the Court of Accounts estimated to have provided some fifty billion francs less than its programmes would have required in order to be fulfilled.[41] Following Mitterrand's accession to power, the budgetary issue lay at the heart of most of the Right-wing criticism of the government, which accused the Socialists of financial mismanagement, and of undermining national

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[41] C. Hernu, 'Une Défense Moderne et Crédible', *Le Monde*, 12 July 1985.

defence through an inadequate financial effort in the defence sphere.[42] Both the RPR and the UDF voted against the 1985 defence budget in November 1984,[43] whilst that for 1986 was supported only by the PS, with the Communist Party joining the ranks of the opposition. Inter-party disputes were continued under the *cohabitation* administration, with Socialist Deputies criticising the incoherence of the 1987-1991 law, and the fact that it failed to make any practical choices on defence policy options.[44] In a similar vein, the Right were quick to criticise the Rocard government's amendments to the preceding law, again on the grounds of inadequate expenditure.

Nor were such disagreements on budgetary questions either confined to political circles or limited to inter-party disputes. The 1980's witnessed a series of hostile reactions from the armed forces in response to proposed reductions of spending on defence. Moreover, as economic pressures increased, along with pressure in particular from within the Socialist Party for a peace dividend to mark the effective end of the Cold War,[45] divisions within the governing PS became increasingly apparent. Whilst Prime Minister Michel Rocard acknowledged the need for some decrease in defence spending, Chevènement expressed his lively hostility to such a project in July 1990:

> Those who want to make more severe cuts in the equipment budget should try spelling out which weapons systems they want to get rid of amongst all those initiated by my predecessors.[46]

Meanwhile, some politicians on the Right called for a sizeable increase in military spending.[47]

Besides budgetary wrangles, real disagreements existed over fundamental policy choices. These concerned some of the central issues of Alliance policy, notably French nuclear strategy, the role of tactical weapons, and the role of France in the defence of Central Europe. Interestingly, on almost

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[42] The RPR in fact argued in 1984 for the French defence budget to be increased so as to account for 5% of French GDP. On the divisions within even the RPR on the issue, see J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic Choices', op. cit., pg. 321, f.n. 22.

[43] See *Le Monde*, 11-12 November 1984.

[44] F. Hollande, 'Équipement militaire pour les années 1990-1993', Paris, Assemblée Nationale, 3 October 1989, pg. 3027. See also J-M Boucheron, *Rapport*, op. cit., pg. 165.

[45] Former Prime Minister L. Fabius called for cuts in defence spending in 1990, see *Le Monde*, 10 July 1990.

[46] *Le Monde*, 13 July 1990.

[47] J. Baumel, 'Réviser notre appareil militaire', *Le Figaro*, 20 January 1991.

every major question, there existed apparently broad agreement at the level of generality, where lip-service was paid to the orthodox themes of foreign and defence policy. None of the major political groupings questioned deterrence; none openly proposed reintegration into Nato as such; none questioned the need for some kind of solidarity with allies. However, a detailed analysis of the positions of various groups and individuals on certain key issues, reveals these divisions and disputes.[48]

Behind the apparent pro-nuclear 'consensus' discord prevailed over several issues. Whilst Mitterrand, as we have seen, rejected the idea of French participation in the SDI programme, members of the Right pushed for a more positive posture. Chirac, in particular, stressed his belief that France could not afford not to participate.[49] Whilst Mitterrand welcomed the INF agreement of 1987, members of the government, and André Giraud in particular, deplored the consequences of the Treaty for European security.[50]

More importantly, attitudes towards both the components and operational use of the French nuclear force differed widely. Even though no main-stream group questioned the necessity of maintaining a strategic deterrent capability, opinions varied as to both its significance, and its composition. Several voices were raised amongst the military which questioned the premises of French nuclear strategy,[51] whilst the Secretary-General of the UDF, Michel Pinton, delivered a stinging critique of the *tout ou rien* of French doctrine in an article in *Le Monde*.[52] The RPR in the early 1980's had accompanied strident demands for increased defence spending with calls for a vastly improved ballistic missile submarine capability.[53] During the course of the decade, leading members of the Party came increasingly to stress the necessity of a relative decrease in the priority accorded to the SNLE force,

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[48] A plethora of publications dealing with defence were released by the various parties during the 1980's. Of especial interest are: Union Pour la Démocratie Française, *l'Affaire des Euromissiles*, Paris, UDF, 1983, *Défendre l'Europe*, Paris, UDF, 1984, *Redresser la Défense de la France*, Paris, UDF, 1985. Parti Socialiste, *La Sécurité de l'Europe. Texte adopté par le Bureau Executif du Parti Socialiste le 26 Juin 1985* Paris, PS. Rassemblement pour la République, *Libres et Responsables. Un projet pour la France*, Paris, Flammarion, 1984.

[49] *Le Monde*, 24 May 1986.

[50] Mitterrand himself underlined the fact that his position on the agreement differed substantially from that of his political opponents. See J. Howorth 'Defense Policy under Mitterrand Mark 2', op. cit., pg. 80.

[51] See, for example, É. Copel, *Vaincre la Guerre. Une autre Défense, une Autre Armée* Paris, Lieu Commun, 1984, and P. Debas 'Tout ou Rien', *Le Matin de Paris*, 7 January 1982.

[52] 'La nouvelle ligne Maginot', *Le Monde*, 16 June 1983.

[53] See the dramatic submarine building programme - with the goal of 15 submarines by 2010 called for in RPR, *Réflexions sur la Défense*, Paris, RPR, 1980, pg. 36.

in order to permit the modernisation of the land-based component by means of a mobile missile.[54] Whilst the PS moved increasingly, along with the UDF, in the direction of a relative increase in the priority accorded to conventional weapons, (see below) the party's leadership,and Mitterrand in particular, stressed the centrality of the *force de frappe*, and in particular of its submarine component.[55] Mitterrand, moreover, unlike the Right, rejected the notion of replacing the land-based silos on the Plateau d'Albion with a mobile replacement.[56]

Opinions on France's short-range missiles also diverged significantly.[57] Whilst some political leaders questioned the very notion of French possession of such weapons,[58] differing opinions were evident as to their correct use, with Chirac seeming at one stage to imply a *rapprochement* with the Nato strategy of flexible response, whilst Mitterrand, as we have seen, had caused some confusion with his remarks concerning the eventual targeting of the weapons.

The question of the use of tactical weapons was closely related to the wider issue of French participation in the defence of Western Europe. Mitterrand contributed to undermining the myth of 'consensus' when he wrote in 1986 that one 'hears from all sides, of late, calls for our nuclear force to drop the concept of 'national sanctuary' and extend that of 'vital interests', to offer West German territory the strategic deterrence applicable to our own.'[59] The leading political parties produced documents at variance with Gaullist orthodoxy during this period.[60] The UDF cast doubt on the efficacy of a purely nuclear deterrent stance, and stated that France must 'make clear its will to respond at the forward frontiers of Western Europe, with all our conventional and, if necessary, tactical nuclear means, to a possible aggression, as soon as this occurs'; this in turn would create a

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[54] See in particular Giraud's intervention before the Defence Commission of the National Assembly, in *Le Monde* 29-30 June 1986, and his interview in *L'Express*, 30 May-5 June 1986. See also Chirac, 'La Politique de Défense de la France', op. cit., pg. 10.

[55] See the excerpts of the President's speech at the Caylus military camp in *Le Monde*, 15 October 1986.

[56] *Le Monde*, 5 February 1987.

[57] As we saw in Chapter Five, opinions varied with regard to the question of the terminology that should be used to denote this class of nuclear weapon.

[58] See, for example, F. Fillon, 'A quoi sert l'Armament nucléaire tactique?' *Le Monde*, 10 November 1984. J. Amalric, in 'Les Tentations Stratégiques de M. Mitterrand', *Le Monde*, 22 October 1987, claims Mitterrand himself always believed the development of tactical nuclear weapons to have ben a mistake.

[59] *Réflexions*, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

[60] Paul Marie de la Gorce, referring to the UDF and PS electoral platforms for 1986 elections stated they not only called into question certain elements of French defence doctrine, but completely overturned other aspects of it. P-M de la Gorce 'Dissausion Française et Défense Européenne' *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 378, September 1985.

requirement for close consultation both with European partners and allies in Nato with a view to arriving at common conceptions of the use of tactical weapons. [61] Giscard d'Estaing, in his preface to the same document, had indicated that it was necessary to split the use of tactical weapons from that of strategic forces, using them to counter aggression in Germany.[62]

Whilst the RPR retained a more traditional stance with regard to the use of tactical weapons, with Chirac - in the main, though as we have seen, inconsistently - stressing their utility as a first stage of deterrence,[63] the PS also moved from governmental orthodoxy, stressing the need, in the document adopted by the *Bureau executif* in 1986, both for progress towards a 'regional deterrent', and for the reinforcement of conventional deterrence in order to raise the nuclear threshold'.[64] The stark contrast with Hernu's remarks concerning conventional forces (see Chapter Five above) need hardly be pointed out. Whilst both the PS and the UDF, in contrast with the administration, thus moved closer to positions adopted by Nato allies, the PCF angrily denounced such developments in government policy as the agreement on consultation on tactical weapons use - even proposed by the RPR[65] - as representing a 'rampant' reintegration into Nato.[66]

Linked to the notion of solidarity with the Federal Republic was that of the construction of some form of European defence identity. As in so many spheres, an apparent similarity of thought concealed profound disagreements between leading figures and groups. All the major political groupings expressed a strong interest in the idea of enhanced European defence cooperation. Indeed, by the later 1980's, '....every single politician with a claim to credibility was to be found singing the praises

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[61] *Redresser la Défense de la France*, op. cit., pg. 5.

[62] Ibid, pp. xiv-xv. It is also interesting to note that an influential think-tank with close to links to the UDF, and which included such eminent figures as Guy Méry (Giscard d'Estaing's former Chief of Staff) came to similar conclusions, with implications for France's position with regard to Nato. Renouveau Defense have called for France to reintegrate Nato planning committees and declare herself willing to shift from the notion of final warning shot to one of forward deterrence'. Renouveau Défense, *L'Affaire de l'Option Zero*, Paris, UDF, May 1987, pg. 21. The group was, moreover, encouraged by Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to pursue its reflections. See Guisnel, *Les Généraux: Enquête sur le Pouvoir Militaire en France*, Paris Éditions de la Découverte, 1990, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

[63] *Le Monde*, 28 February 1986.

[64] PS, *La Sécurité de l'Europe*, op. cit., pp. 8, 12.

[65] P. Buffotot, 'Forces Politiques et Défense', *Arès*, 3, 1986, pg. 62. Chirac had even gone so far as to propose (or so it seemed) the extension of French nuclear protection to the Federal Republic, though he modified his proposals somewhat in later weeks, owing to the storm of protests his original scheme elicited. See J. Howorth, 'Of Budgets and Strategic choices', op. cit., pg. 321, f.n. 36.

[66] *Le Monde*, 10-11 November 1985.

of a Franco-German defensive pact as the basis of the "European pillar"'.[67] Jacques Chirac in October 1983 had raised the possibility of West German participation in the setting up of a Euro-American deterrent force,[68] and some years later, was still proposing the creation of a 'European defence personality'.[69] As we have seen, various Socialist leaders, both in power and in opposition, had expressed interest in the idea of a European defence. Behind such general themes, however, lay real differences with regard to the nature any future defence should take place, and, in particular, the degree to which France could agree to any further diminution of sovereignty through European defence integration. Some figures stressed both the anachronism of purely national defence as a result of both economic constraints and the small strategic space represented by Western Europe,[70] and the consequent need for not only cooperation but also an integrated European command, involving a deliberate abandonment of a degree of autonomy by Paris.[71] Others, however, although they had expressed support for European defence cooperation, were quick to underline the necessity of maintaining France's autonomy.[72] As was pointed out in the previous Chapter, the pro- European enthusiasm of Chevènement, given the emphasis he placed on national autonomy, may well have simply represented a delaying tactic.

Such widely differing opinions, masked by the protective cover of a few simplistic 'catch-phases' reveal the largely illusory nature of 'consensus'. Divergences both within and between the parties, coupled with the fact that different individuals shifted position on key issues, calls into question the notion of even minimal agreement. Disagreements were numerous, and, as this Chapter will go on to illustrate, impacted on the adaptability of policy.

The academic community The so-called consensus allegedly extended to the universities and research institutes, with the very close links between academia and policy-making circles hampering effective critical analysis. The problem stems in part at least from the difficulties the analyst encounters in trying to separate out analysts and experts from policy makers. Many experts on strategic and

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[67] J. Howorth, 'France and Gorbachev', op. cit., pg. 67.

[68] Cited in J. Klein, 'Le Débat en France sur la Défense Européenne', *Stratégique,* 4e Trimestre, pg. 27.

[69] *Le Monde*, 28 February 1986.

[70] G. Fuchs, 'Une chance à Saisir', *Le Monde*, 14 March 1987.

[71] See the comments of UDF deputy Arthur Paecht in the National Assembly on 13 November 1991, cited in P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War*, op. cit., pg. 48.

[72] Chirac, for instance, stated that the French must 'conserve in our own hands the mainstays of the mastery of our destiny, with all the necessary instruments for doing so', see *Le Monde*, 12 April 1990.

foreign policy questions in France combine university or research careers with an active participation in policy making.[73] This, perhaps inevitably, imbues analysts, like politicians, with a sense of the importance of maintaining the perceived 'consensus', and may have affected standards of analytic impartiality.[74]

The strong ties between key professors and the policy makers hampered effective discussion of defence-related issues. What debate does exist tends to be confined to the realms of polarised debate between political factions, resulting in polemics rather than detailed and substantive criticism.[75]

This is not to claim that no analysts questioned the prevailing orthodoxies of French policy. The trend towards the end of the decade was towards an increasing number of criticisms being published by both military and non-military specialists.[76] This said, it is nonetheless striking to note the relative lack of *autocritique* amongst analysts in France. Even those analysts who did criticise prevailing policy choices were loath to question some of the dominant *leitmotifs* of Gaullist doctrine. Thus, whilst in favour of increased cooperation with allies, and even of the stationing of nuclear-equipped French troops on the Elbe, Pierre Lellouche steered clear of questioning the fundamental necessity for independence or non-integration.[77]

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[73] To take a few examples, François Heisbourg has worked for Thomson-International, a major French arms exporter, as well as in the *Cabinet* of Charles Hernu, whilst also carrying out research on defence issues; he is currently working for the arms manufacturer MATRA. His collaborator Pascal Boniface has worked in the *cabinets* of successive Defence ministers, whilst also being linked to the Université Paris-Nord. Pierre Lellouche, formerly an analyst at IFRI, is now an adviser to Jacques Chirac.

[74] Perhaps the most striking example of this is the Preface to the work by F. Heisbourg and P. Boniface, *La Puce, les Hommes et la Bombe*, op. cit. Certainly, the British reader will be struck by the eulogy which precedes this analysis of French defence options in the mid-1980s: 'Having had, under many different circumstances, the honour and the pleasure of working with Charles Hernu [at the time Minister of Defence], we are grateful to him for the inspiration with which his example has provided us, both as Defence Minister and as citizen. He has constantly worked towards reinforcing the security of our country, achieved through a rapprochement between the Army and the Nation on the one hand, and the promotion of cooperation with our partners in Europe and the world on the other.' Interestingly, Boniface, in a later book, suggests that Hernu's *cabinet* - of which he was a part - consisted of remarkable individuals. See his *L'Armée, enquête sur 300000 soldats méconnus*, Paris, Éditions n°. 1, 1992, pg. 301.

[75] See, for example, G. Robin, op. cit., and H. Claude, op. cit.

[76] See notably P. Lellouche, *L'Avenir de la Guerre*, op. cit., in which the author (pg. 281) proposes that France place troops permanently on the Elbe. Another long-standing critic of French defence foreign policy has been F. de Rose. See *La France et la Défense de l'Europe*, op. cit.; *Contre la Stratégie des Curiaces* Paris, Juillard, 1983; *Défendre la Défense*, op. cit.. Increasing numbers of critical works have been published by former high-ranking military staff, and also by serving officers and high-level functionaries through the use of pseudonyms. See in particular J. d'Albion (pseud.). *Une France sans Défense*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991; J. Galois (pseud.), *Notre Défense en mal d'une Politique* Paris, Economica, 1988; J. Lacaze, *Le Président et le Champignon*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1991.

[77] See *L'Avenir de la Guerre*, op. cit., pp. 279-288. Even the staunchest critics of current policy have failed to be as forthright as one might expect; note the rather ironic use of a pseudonym by the authors of one such work Galilée *Oser le Dire*, op. cit., 1986.

The public and the 'consensus' Talk of a 'consensus' on defence among the French political élite was not confined to that same élite, but was, it was alleged, extended to include the whole French population.[78] Many analysts have cited the striking endorsement by French Catholic bishops of nuclear deterrence as a proof of the widespread support for deterrence in France.[79]

The opinion polls, however, tell a slightly different story.[80] On the heated question of the Euromissiles, for instance, which was the major defence-related issue at the time of the '*alternance*' of 1981, 45% of the French declared themselves, when polled in 1983, favourable to the deployment of Pershing missiles on French soil. Moreover, only 28% of the population saw national independence as a peace-time necessity.[81] Coupled to this was a striking trust in the probability of American military nuclear intervention in the case of hostilities in Europe.[82]

The Euromissiles episode provided a good example of the divergence of public opinion from political orthodoxy and the alleged consensus. More striking still was the way in which French public opinion moved as a result of the developments in Europe of the later 1980s, with regard to both the Soviet Union and the question of the defence of Europe. By 1988, half the French believed that France should commit itself to defend the Federal Republic with her nuclear weapons,[83] while, at a time when members of the Chirac government were expressing serious reservations with respect to the credibility of Gorbachev as a reformer, and the reality of Europe's new détente, only 17% of the population were inclined to the Soviet Union as the major threat confronting their country.[84] The previous year, moreover, 51% of those questioned in an opinion poll had replied that France should extend an automatic strategic nuclear deterrent cover to the Elbe, whilst 54% felt that West Germany, in order to assure her security most efficiently, should be associated with a European

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[78] The Chief of Staff, Maurice Schmidt, claimed in February 1988 that the French 'great majority [of the French] support the defence system of our country'. Cited in *Le Monde*, 2 February 1988.

[79] On the bishops, see *Le Monde*, 10, 11 November 1983.

[80] For detailed yearly accounts of public opinion on these matters, see SOFRES, *l'État de l'Opinion*, Paris, Seuil, 1987, 1988, 198, 1990, 1991, and *Opinion Publique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, 1985, 1986.

[81] *Le Point*, 30 May 1983.

[82] 41% of those polled claimed they were sure such intervention would occur, whilst a further 37% answered 'yes, perhaps'. *L'Express*, 23 April 1987.

[83] *Le Monde*, 9 February 1988.

[84] *Le Monde*, 25 February 1988.

nuclear deterrent force.[85]

This brief sketch suffices to show that the general 'consensus' on defence policy among the population as a whole differed in important respects from the official policy of the country. Opinion polls, of course, are not necessarily representative and voter preferences are liable to fluctuate. Yet, given the tremendous premium attached in official rhetoric to the maintenance of 'consensus' at a popular level, not to mention the fact that public opinion is, in theory at least, relatively malleable and open to being moulded,[86] the apparent cracks and disagreements that seemed to characterise it are certainly worthy of mention.

The Impact of the Myth of 'Consensus': 'Consensus' and Alliance policy

To some extent, then, a consensus did not exist. Rather, its existence was a question of a carefully constructed myth, which was used to embellish a reality of divisions and disagreement. Clear fault-lines and points of disagreement symptomatic of 'dissensus' were clearly in evidence. Whilst the existence of any consensus is dubious, however, its claimed presence was of immense significance. This was the case in three important respects. Firstly, so long as prevailing government policy could be reconciled with the orthodoxies of the Fifth Republic, a premium was placed on 'consensus', and debate and public disagreement were discouraged, except in the budgetary sphere. Secondly, powerful constraints were placed on the freedom of manoeuvre of policy makers in their attempts to refine or amend prevailing policy. In particular, the need was felt to stress continuity with the past and the continued relevance of the Gaullist model, and to maintain the traditional rhetorical *leitmotifs* of the Fifth Republic such as national independence, military strength, and the like. Hence, finally, it proved difficult to attempt to overcome some of the ambiguities of French policy which Mitterrand had pointed out in opposition, and which, as we have seen, continued to exist during the period under consideration.

Claims regarding the external impact of a perceived defence 'consensus' contained a degree of truth in that perceptions of a certain unanimity over defence questions certainly led to much foreign admiration and envy. As Pierre Hassner has stated, with regard to the early 1980's:

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[85] See *L'Express*, 17-23 April 1987.

[86] See J. Howorth, 'France and Gorbachev,' op. cit., pg. 66.

> all the western democracies, torn by anti-nuclear demonstrations, looked with an astonishment tinged with admiration at this paradise of 'consensus' which unanimously voted increased military spending, which did not endure pacifist demonstrations, and at whose frontiers the Chernobyl cloud itself halted in respect.[87]

Such perceptions were translated into certain benefits on a policy level, in that the relative absence of pacifism in France during the early 1980's allowed Mitterrand a degree of freedom of manoeuvre in his international policies denied his western counterparts. This was especially true during the Euromissiles crisis, when the French President found himself far less constrained in what he said than many of his counterparts who faced strong pacifist movements at home.[88]

Despite the claims of some analysts, the existence of the 'consensus' did not, however, increase the freedom of manoeuvre of the administration in other sectors, and at other times. Most strikingly, specific decisions or policy adaptations were in fact aborted explicitly because of a perceived need to maintain 'consensus'. Thus, in 1985, Defence Minister Paul Quilès warned that the American SDI programme could cause a 'conceptual destabilisation' that 'could break the 'consensus' in France around nuclear deterrence',[89] whilst Mitterrand himself displayed similar fears in his refusal to countenance the construction of a French mobile missile.

Perhaps the most insidious consequence of adherence to the 'consensus' was the stifling of the debate on the nature of traditional defence and foreign policy options. Jean Guisnel pointed out that:

> Full of analyses, of debates, of policy stances of intellectuals, diplomats, politicians, also of military men, the pages of the Anglo-Saxon broadsheets illustrate how far behind France is in this sphere[90]

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the manner in which such debate was undermined in France was the article written by the then Secretary-General of the UDF Michel Pinton, which questioned the

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[87] P. Hassner, 'Un Chef-d'oeuvre en peril', op. cit., pg. 71. See also J. Fenske, 'France' in G.M. Dillon, *Defence Policy Making: a Comparative Analysis* Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1988, pg. 164.

[88] Serge July, cited in P. Favier and M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 241.

[89] *Le Monde*, 18 December 1985.

[90] Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 173. For more on the lack of investigative journalism in France, and the implications of this in terms of foreign and defence policy, see D. Moïsi and G. Flynn, 'Between Adjustment and Ambition: Franco-Soviet Relations and French Foreign Policy', in G. Flynn and R. Greene (eds.), *The West and the Soviet Union: Politics and Policy*, London, Macmillan, 1990, pg. 73. See also J. Howorth, 'The President and Foreign and Defence Policy', in J. Hayward (ed.), *De Gaulle to Mitterrand: Presidential Power in France*, London, Hurst, 1993, pp. 182-183.

validity and utility of the French nuclear deterrent.[91] Regardless of the content of this article, the importance of the episode lay in the violent and emotive responses it engendered. Very few critics bothered to question the point that Pinton was making,[92] whilst political leaders were less interested in the content than in the fact that one of their number had dared to question the basis of bipartisan support for traditional Gaullist policies. Pierre Mauroy, the Prime Minister, attacked Pinton for 'undermining the coherence of our deterrence' - to undermine 'consensus' was to undermine deterrence.[93]

The lack of effective debate was necessarily increased by the strong links that existed between the academic community and policy makers. Indeed, far from attempting to stimulate debate, some members of the intellectual elite went so far as to argue the need for a lack of discussion. If 'consensus' was held to increase the prestige of France, it was also deemed to be one of the foundation stones of effective deterrence. This rested, it was claimed, on two crucial factors - the credibility of the nuclear forces themselves, and the belief on the part of the potential adversary that France would use these weapons should the need arise. Following logically on from this premise, therefore:

> Those few voices in France which cast doubt on the credibility of the French nuclear deterrent are proclaiming (or rather trying to proclaim) self-fulfilling prophecies. If the majority of politicians, military men, and experts were to repeat that our nuclear force is nothing but a new Maginot line, no-one doubts that it would automatically become so. A potential adversary would then merely have to draw the logical conclusions from this 'consensus': the French nuclear force does not deter because it is the French who are deterring themselves from making use of it.[94]

The fact that such rationales for conventionality emanated from those whom one would expect to provoke discussion necessarily acted as a constraint on debate and discussion.[95] The logic was clear:

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[91] Op. cit. Perhaps the ultimate irony resides in the fact that Mitterrand himself, during the debates over the motion of confidence arising from French withdrawal from Nato, used exactly the same phrase to characterise France's nascent defence posture. See JO, débats, AN, 14 April, 1966, pg. 672-7 for Mitterrand's intervention.

[92] The notable exception to this was François de Rose, himself considered among military and political circles as something of a 'dissident' on defence questions. See F. de Rose, 'Chantage et dissuasion', *Le Monde*, 13 July 1983.

[93] See *Le Monde*, 19-20 June 1983.

[94] P. Boniface and F. Heisbourg, op. cit., pp. 234-235. For a revised opinion, see P. Boniface, *Vive la Bombe*, Paris, Edition 1, 1992, pp. 97-109.

[95] An interesting aspect of the question of the complicity of certain groups with regard to preserving the myth of 'consensus' is the degree to which such complicity resulted from the very similar educational and social backgrounds of France's elite, formed through the system of *Grandes Écoles*. For a discussion of this, see 'France', in S. McLean

pacifism and anti-nuclear forces represented a threat to the security of the *patrie* and could, therefore, be dismissed.[96] Moreover, governments could not claim to be without some responsibility for pacifist tendencies amongst their populations. Heisbourg and Boniface, as we have noted earlier, suggest that independence acts as a means of preserving a defence 'consensus'. A former close adviser of Mitterrand turned this idea into the aphorism that '*plus alignés les gouvernements, plus neutralistes les populations*'.[97] Thus, if pacifism implied a lessening of French security through an undermining of deterrence, this process could only be encouraged by a policy which abandoned independence in favour of alignment.

Nor were such attempts to avoid debate confined to intellectual elites. Indeed, the political and military class were happy to lend support to the idea that criticism implied a lack of patriotism. The military authorities were not averse to quashing dissent within their own ranks, especially when such dissent touched on the nature of French strategy.[98] Such censorship was also present in political circles, as evinced by Mitterrand's decision to remove Hernu's book *Nous, les Grands*[99] from circulation in 1981 because of the views it expounded on supposed Soviet military superiority.

Debate and disagreement were frowned upon, and this translated itself into a striking unwillingness to question the bases of defence and foreign policy amongst political elites. We have seen how lively budgetary debates involving not only political but also military leaders were commonplace during the 1980's. The situation was markedly different in terms of effective choices and the overall nature of French policy towards the Alliance. The very fact that 'consensus' appeared to be crumbling towards the end of the 1980's, and in particular in the wake of disagreements over the 1987 INF agreement, meant that the requirements of continuity, and of avoiding discussion of tendentious issues were heightened: the very insistence of Chirac and Mitterrand, during cohabitation, on stressing their agreement and underlining the good health of 'consensus' was indicative of the necessity felt to

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(ed.), *How Nuclear Weapons Decisions are Made*, London, Macmillan, 1987, pp. 155-157, pg. 184. For the armed forces, see Guisnel, op. cit., pp. 31-53, and F. Cailletaux, 'Elite Selection in the French Army Officer Cops', *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 8, no. 2, Winter 1982, pp. 257-274.

[96] In a similar vein, Roland Dumas wrote that a foreign policy consensus was the 'most pressing national responsibility', 'La Logique du Consensus', *Le Monde*, 25 July 1985.

[97] R. Debray, *Les Empires Contre l'Europe*, Paris, Gallimard, pg. 153.

[98] *Stagiaires* in the Land Army were not allowed, for instance, to publish certain of their texts analysing nuclear deterrence if these differed too widely from official positions. See Guisnel, op. cit., pg 170-171. See also the article by General Dubroca in *Le Figaro*, 19 September 1989.

[99] Op. cit.

preserve a crumbling structure. An illusory 'consensus', then, acted as a more powerful constraint in many ways than a real one: '*N'y touchez pas: il est brisé*'.[100]

It was the question of specific choices to be made, and their implications for French defence doctrine that provided the barrier against discussions of budgetary issues spilling over into a wider debate concerning the nature of this doctrine itself. Doctrinal questions were not, it would appear, to be treated in the same way as questions of mere finance, for, as we have seen, to question deterrence was to weaken it. As Prime Minister Rocard pointed out in his statement before the Boucheron Parliamentary Committee on the 1991-1993 *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, despite Socialist opposition to some of the spending priorities contained within the 1987 law, 'a negative vote by the Socialist Party would have been interpreted by the opposition, at the time, as a disagreement on the French deterrent doctrine'.[101] Thus, whilst parties could argue about figures, they were reluctant to be seen as questioning the *lignes directrices* of policy.[102]

This was hardly surprising for two reasons. Firstly, given the ambiguous heritage bequeathed by de Gaulle, specific policy discussions would have engendered an exercise in attempting to come to some from of agreement on the nature of that legacy. 'Once the heritage of that great verbal magician, the General, is examined closely, the need to bring political discourse nearer to reality must become apparent'.[103] Moreover, given the rather precarious nature of the 'consensus', and the value attributed to it, such an exercise would undoubtably have been most damaging. As one commentator has noted with regard to the Euromissiles debate of the early 1980's, the 'President of the Republic's statements in favour of [their] deployment....were greeted by a 'consensus' which was so unanimous that one wonders whether it concerned their actual content, or a desire not to discuss them'.[104] Whilst the 'consensus' of the 1970's prevented policy initiatives which ran counter to a certain notion

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[100] P. Hassner, 'Un chef-d'oeuvre en péril', op. cit., pg. 74.

[101] Michel Rocard, paraphrased in J-M Boucheron, *Rapport*, op. cit., pg. 721. In a similar vein, Gaullist spokesman François Fillon accused the government of the ultimate crime - risking a disintegration of the 'consensus' by sacrificing the coherence of French defence policy in order to make financial savings. See ibid, pg. 719.

[102] For an extremely detailed and informative discussion of the manner in which a desire to preserve 'consensus' prevented defence becoming a source of open disagreement during cohabitation, despite the numerous differences that existed, see P. Buffotot, 'Les Partis Politiques et la Défense. "La Cohabitation et le 'consensus'"', *Arès*, 3, 1987, pp. 97-115.

[103] D. Moïsi, 'L'épreuve de la Réalité', *Politique Étrangère*, vol. 50, no. 2, summer 1985, pg. 317.

[104] André Glucksman in *Le Monde*, 1 December, 1983.

of the Gaullist legacy,[105] the fractured 'consensus' of the 1980's prevented any real initiatives, so increasingly divided were opinions by this time concerning the Gaullist legacy.

Only when policy initiatives failed to reassure observers of their consistency with accepted orthodoxy did real dissent emerge. The creation of the FAR, for instance, raised fears amongst some concerning the implications of the new force. Thus RPR Senator Jacques Chaumont in a parliamentary report of 1984 wrote that reintegration into the integrated military command of Nato was the inevitable outcome of the reform; similarly, Georges Marchais evoked in February 1984 the danger of reintegration of Nato, and the 'casting of doubt upon the decision taken by General de Gaulle in 1966'.[106] The accompanying reform affecting tactical nuclear weapons was also the object of Gaullist criticism, with Yves Lancien questioning whether the dependence of the *Hadès* on allies for intelligence on possible targets was compatible with France's supposedly independent defence stance.[107] Moreover, early Socialist rhetoric stressing solidarity with the United states led to some members of the PS, especially on the Left, denouncing what was seen as Atlanticism in the tradition of the old SFIO.[108]

Given the necessity of preserving continuity of political rhetoric, for fear of accusations of betraying the Gaullist legacy, even - indeed especially - significant instances of practical military cooperation between France and her allies were down-played, and new initiatives often made most discreetly.[109] Such initiatives, moreover, were invariably followed by stark declarations of the immutability of French policy. As Hassner has stated:

> as much on the strategic as the economic level, a network of practical arrangements....led to *de facto* engagements. But their discretion, their plurality, and repeated affirmations of a refusal of automaticity allowed for an ambiguity which was the basis of the internal 'consensus': each political family could stress either national independence or Atlantic solidarity, or a European project. Similarly, on the military

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[105] Writing in 1980, William Wallace briefly referred to the fact that the domestic consensus was sufficiently weak and ill-formed to place limits on the degree to, and speed at which the President could shift the direction of foreign policy; 'Independence and Economic Integration: the Ambiguities of French Foreign Policy', in P. Cerny and M. Schain (eds.), *French Politics and Public Policy*, London, Methuen, 1980, pg. 288.

[106] For Chaumont, see *Le Monde*, 2 December 1983. For Marchais, see ibid, 14 November 1984. See also the criticisms of General Valentin in Chapter Five, above.

[107] *Le Monde*, 22 December 1982.

[108] See the remarks of Pierre-Luc Séguillon, cited in P. Krop, op. cit., pg. 149.

[109] See T. Posner, op. cit., pg. 136.

> level itself, the absence of radical choices allowed,...at the cost of certain strains on the doctrine or on logic, the satisfaction - more or less - of the different branches of the armed forces.[110]

Specific correlations of political forces increased the constraints on policy changes. As we have seen, *cohabitation* imposed its own requirement for conformity. The inclusion of Communists in the second Mauroy government increased the freedom of manoeuvre of the administration by effectively shackling the PCF. Towards the end of the decade, however, as 'consensus' evaporated, the resignation of the influential Chevènement from the Ministry of Defence, had the effect of acting as a powerful constraint on policy adaptation in the field of relations with Nato - especially as legislative elections were looming.[111]

Explicit references to the Gaullist legacy were also a means of legitimising policy. Thus Chirac, in his arguments in favour of the creation of the FAR, stated that 'Gaullism is not a refusal of solidarity'.[112] The Socialists themselves were not averse to exploiting the trappings of Gaullism for legitimation purposes. Mitterrand must have revelled in doling out a '*leçon de gaullisme*' when he attacked those, including the (right-wing) Prime Minister, who, the President claimed, had tried to diminish France's independence of manoeuvre by associating it with the research project associated with SDI.[113] Such overt references to Gaullism were also apparent with the recruitment by the Socialist administration of Lucien Poirier, one of the architects France's nuclear deterrent posture, to justify the creation of the FAR.[114]

The creation of the FAR presents a revealing illustration of the need to preserve a fragile domestic base of support behind foreign and defence policy decisions. David Yost has pointed out that the FAR was similar to the reforms of French strategy attempted unsuccessfully in 1976. Writing in 1985, he went on to point out five *presentational* factors which differentiated the 1983 initiative from that of 1976, and which facilitated its successful implementation. The fact the FAR was also dedicated to overseas contingencies, rather simply than to Europe; the presentation of the FAR as a reassurance to West Germany, rather than as casting doubt on France's ability to defend itself;

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[110] P. Hassner, 'Un chef-d'oeuvre en péril', op. cit., pg. 78.

[111] D. Yost, 'France and West European Defence Identity', op. cit., pg. 345.

[112] *Le Monde*, 28 October, 1983.

[113] For Mitterrand, see *Le Monde*, 29 May 1986. For Chirac, see ibid, 24 May 1986.

[114] See on this Guisnel, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

the fact that the FAR concerned conventional forces alone; the presentation of the FAR, as shown above, as being in the *droit fil* of Gaullist strategic thought; and finally, claims that the FAR represented a tool of crisis management rather than of war fighting.[115]

From this, it becomes clear how the ambiguities in defence policy, outlined in previous chapters came to be maintained. Whilst welcomed, as we have seen, by allies, the FAR was never clearly portrayed as an instrument solely for intervening in a Central European conflict. Interviews conducted in Paris in 1991 revealed a bewildering variety of opinions concerning the intended roles of the new force.[116]

It has been claimed that the existence of the internal 'consensus' helped the government to take on 'without complexes', the problems of European security, in particular its German dimension.[117] However, as Chapters Five and Six illustrated, these problems were largely dismissed by an administration intent on keeping to the orthodoxies of Fifth Republic defence and foreign policy, and speaking only in generalities.[118] The continued tendency of French leaders to stress the independence of their country in defence matters continued to confuse the issue of French participation in a European battle, and hence acted as a hindrance to the strengthening of defence ties with the Federal Republic in particular. Thus, even when Prime Minister Chirac claimed that there could not be 'two battles' in Europe, he nevertheless maintained that France remained at liberty to chose whether or not it participated in any conflict. He thus failed to remove the ambiguity which surrounded this vital point. Similarly, Mitterrand's 'European' initiatives, whether within the context of the WEU, the IGC, or with the 'confederal' idea of 1989 were reminiscent of de Gaulle's policy style. Grand gestures, which attracted much attention, no doubt, although the workings of schemes such as the joint brigade were left very vague. Given the divisions which existed, this was hardly surprising. Indeed, as William Wallace has pointed out, an active foreign policy, characterised by dramatic initiatives in many ways, even if 'European' in content, served the domestic purpose of underlining French independence by stressing its ability

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[115] See D. Yost, *France and Conventional Defence in Central Europe*, op. cit., pp. 96-99.

[116] For some of these opinions obtained in interviews, see the following chapter.

[117] F. Heisbourg and P. Boniface, op. cit., pg. 246.

[118] The reason why Mitterrand could act in the case of the INF deployment was that his intervention did not fundamentally challenge these orthodoxies as questioning, for example, the notion of France's deterrent remaining purely national, would have.

to act alone, and imaginatively.[119]

Claimed continuity with the content of past policies was based around, and reinforced by, a strong element of continuity in the *language* used by successive French leaders. The 'consensus' was built around certain vague, ill-defined concepts such as 'independence' and France's 'role' in the world, the importance of which lay as much in continued reference to them as in their reality.

The fact that the need for apparent continuity of policies affected both rhetoric and practical policy initiatives in this way affected perceptions of French policy abroad. We have seen in Part Two how administrations during this period in many ways moved closer to Nato than ever before in terms of concrete military cooperation. Such policies were permissable in that they were kept very quiet. The fact, however, that they were accompanied by the traditional maximalist language of independence, however, was confusing for French allies. We have seen how Secretaries of State were incensed by the distinction between what the French would say in private, and what they would subscribe to in public.[120]

Apparent gaps between rhetoric and reality invariably led to doubts concerning French commitment to solidarity, and annoyance at apparent French 'free-loading'. As Thierry de Montbrial put it:

> Our European and American partners do not understand our rhetoric about 'national independence'. The average English or Dutch politician is no better informed than his French counterpart concerning the subtlety of the Ailleret-Lemnitzer and following agreements. He judges by image, and ours is a negative one. We are accused of cheating, that is to say, of benefiting from the advantages of the (Alliance) club, whilst not sharing the costs.[121]

The frequent adoption of apparently untenable positions in international negotiations was a useful mechanism for strengthening the image of national independence at home.[122] As such, the need felt to accompany gestures towards the Alliance with harsh rhetoric refuting the possibility of reintegration in any form undeniably lessened French influence within the European security debate in that practical concessions were not offered, leading its European partners increasingly to adopt rather 'Atlanticist'

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[119] W. Wallace, 'Independence and Economic integration', op. cit., pg. 286.

[120] See Chapter Four, above.

[121] T. de Montbrial, in his preface to F. Bozo, op. cit., pg. 12.

[122] W. Wallace 'Independence and Economic Integration', op cit., pg. 286.

alternatives to meet new security challenges.

More subtly, the 'consensus' on the broad lines of defence policy also acted as a kind of legitimating force for the 1958 Constitution. The emphasis on independence, and in particular on the nuclear force on which that independence was based, was, more than simply an emphasis on Presidential power to choose the timing and modalities of French military action, but rather an acceptance of the fact that the very survival of the French nation could be placed in the hands of one man. Early Socialist opposition to the nuclear-based defence policy of de Gaulle had in part been founded on a belief that this would favour a fundamentally undemocratic form of government. The rallying of the Left to nuclear weapons, however, also entailed a rallying to the constitutional implications of this - namely the high degree of power accorded to the President of the Republic in the defence sphere and in particular his personal control over the FAS as from 1964.[123] The Republic thus became, for the first time, one of the Left as well as the Right, symbolised by Mitterrand's statement that 'I incarnate the nation, the State, and the Republic.'[124]

In this sense, the 'consensus' not only legitimised defence policy, but also the particular form of policy making, characterised by low parliamentary and - in most instances - governmental control. Hence, as we shall see in the next chapter, 'consensus' also formalised the legitimacy of an institutional arrangement which allowed great power to be vested in the hands of those whose interests were perceived to lie in a continuation of past policies.

Conclusions: 'Consensus as an Explanatory factor for Policy Inertia

Jolyon Howorth has written that the 'gradual emergence of a national 'consensus on defence and

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[123] The relationship between the 'consensus' and the institutions was in fact a symbiotic one. Whilst the former undoubtedly led to an increased legitimacy being enjoyed by the latter, the institutional arrangements of the Fifth Republic also helped the development and consolidation of 'consensus'. Thus, in the words of Giraud, the fact that the constitution allowed for circumstances such as *cohabitation* meant that the various political tendencies had to define their policies largely in accordance with the prevailing 'consensus'. See his address before the IHEDN, 'Donner à la France une Défense Forte' op. cit., pg. 13. The existence of a bicephalous executive also increased pressures toward 'consensus' during the period of 1986-1988 in that Jacques Chirac was unwilling to question the defence and foreign policy prerogatives of a Presidency which he hoped to ascend to himself in 1988. He was therefore quick to underline the fundamental agreement on defence policy issues linking him to the President - an alacrity which Mitterrand did not hesitate to mock for electoral purposes. See F. Mitterrand, *Lettre à tous les Français*, Paris, L'Avenir Graphique?, 1988, pp. 8-11.

[124] See I. Koplboom, 'La Politique de Sécurité de la France: un point de vue allemand', in K. Kaiser and P. Lellouche (eds.), op. cit., pg. 70. Some analysts have gone so far as to imply that a return to factional divisions over foreign policy could, in an extreme case, lead to the end of the Fifth Republic. See D. Moïsi and G. Flynn, op. cit., pg. 59.

security issues, precisely at the point in time when the historic and diplomatic factors which had given rise to the bases of that 'consensus' were ceasing to exist, was ironic more than it was serious.'[125] In this sense, he seems to have confused the relative unimportance of the claimed popular consensus with the detrimental effects of the myth of an elite consensus. What this Chapter has intended to show is the constraining role of the 'consensus' in terms of the formulation of foreign and defence policy. The constraints imposed have in two senses increased since the 1960's and 1970's. In the first place, as we have seen, concern about a disintegrating 'consensus' has increased the perceived necessity to avoid divisive initiatives in the foreign and defence policy fields, or at least to dress such initiatives up in such a way as to minimise disagreement - and therefore, as in the case of the FAR - shroud the reform in ambiguity. Moreover, it is no longer, as at the time of de Gaulle, a case of simply avoiding political defeat at hands of opponents, that necessitates concern about 'consensus'. As we have seen, with the acceptance by the Left of the premises of Gaullist foreign and defence policies, political leaders came increasingly to stress 'consensus' as a *bienfait en soi*. In this sense, the preservation of a 'consensus' perceived to strengthen both deterrence and French international standing (amongst other benefits it brings) has to some extent become an end in itself.[126]

This has obviously had consequences for Alliance policy. The required ambiguity of policy has certainly both confused and irritated allies. More crucially, 'consensus' has prevented the constant reexamination of existing policies, which has contributed to their shift from functionality to dysfunctionality.[127]

Consensus did not exist in the sense of overall agreement on broad issues, simply because disagreements about specifics, if carried to their logical conclusions, would have undermined the large support that could be mustered behind vague notions such as independence and non-integration. This chapter has revealed, however, the powerful force that such 'dissensus' can prove to be. Whilst consensus as such was absent, broad agreement existed on the inadvisability of exploring at length the divisions which separated the various factions within the defence debate. Extending beyond policy-makers to include intellectuals and experts, this contributed to the lack of open discussion of defence and foreign policy options. Most importantly, it translated itself at the political level into a

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[125] J. Howorth, 'France and Gorbachev', op. cit., pg. 66.

[126] Thus Chirac accused Mitterrand of *insidiously* questioning 'a defence policy which has guaranteed the independence, security and rank of our country, whilst inspiring the support of the vast majority of French people'. J. Chirac, 'Une Remise en Question de notre Défense', *Le Monde*, 10 June 1989.

[127] See J. Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 171.

reluctance to take steps which would threaten this agreement. Whatever the genuine desire of policy makers to improve relations with Nato, therefore, their efforts were hamstrung by this fact.

Part Two illustrated the fact that the traditional options of Alliance policy were no longer either financially sustainable or appropriate for post Cold War Europe, that, in short, given the new European security system that had gradually emerged since the mid 1980's 'it was simply irrelevant for France to continue incanting the traditional Gaullist verities about 'independence' and 'national sanctuarisation'', as Gaullism had 'outlived its historical usefulness',[128] it also demonstrated the perennial emphasis of French rhetoric on those precise themes. This chapter has aimed to explain one of the factors lying behind not only such continuity in the rhetorical sphere, but also the real inability of Paris to adopt practical policies in line with changing international requirements. The 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy in this sense acted as a powerful brake on Alliance policy adaptation. It alone, however, cannot fully explain the maintenance of options which many of the political elite found unnecessary or counterproductive. It is now time to turn to the other factor which explains the trend towards international dysfunctionality: the institutions and policy-making processes of the Fifth Republic.

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[128] J. Howorth, 'France and Gorbachev', op. cit., pg. 67.

CHAPTER EIGHT
ALLIANCE POLICY MAKING:
CONSTRAINTS ON POLICY ADAPTATION

Introduction The previous chapter illustrated the manner in which a perceived need to preserve the rapidly crumbling 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy contributed to the policy inertia that characterised French responses to an increasingly dysfunctional Alliance policy. This alone, however, cannot fully explain the constraints on adaptation that existed.

What this chapter will illustrate is the degree to which the President of the Republic finds his choices and decisions structured by groups within the decision-making process. These groups lobby the Head of State and the Head of Government to ensure that their opinions prevail. Often, the decisions reached were based on domestic, rather than international considerations. In this way, the constraining effect of the consensus exercised over Alliance policy formulation was reinforced by pressures within the policy-making system.

Thus, behind the increasingly counterproductive continuity in Alliance policy lay, in part, the nature of the policy-making process in France. As we have seen,[1] traditional analyses of foreign and defence policy decision-making, based on the notion of rational foreign policy responses to international imperatives, emphasise the relative freedom of manoeuvre enjoyed by the President of the Republic. They thus underplay, if not ignore completely, any institutional or interest group pressures acting on him.

This final chapter will first examine the nature of the Constitution of 1958. It will then go on briefly to illustrate the way in which constitutional practice made of the President the ultimate locus of decision making on defence and foreign policy matters. Then the institutions and groups involved in the lower stages of decision-making will be examined; this section will illustrate the way in which powerful organised interest groups and lobbies grew up around traditional Gaullist policy options, which were to have the effect of limiting the actual, if not potential, ability of Presidents to alter prevailing policy options. The next section of the Chapter will turn to the Presidency of François Mitterrand, and analyse the sectors of policy influenced by these various pressures. Whilst underlining the primary influence of certain corporate interests in this respect,

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[1] See Introduction, above.

the Chapter will make clear that other groups, too, had a significant influence over policy. A final section will discuss the ways in which this affected Alliance policy as a whole.

Firstly, it is necessary to consider a fundamental analytical distinction, which will shape the following discussion.

Policy-Making and Decision-Making[2] As was illustrated in Parts One and two, Alliance *policy* is comprised of many different strands. Each of these individual elements is the outcome of series of individual *decisions*. Policy, therefore, 'covers a bundle of decisions'.[3] It cannot simply be asserted, however, that a policy 'involves a general predisposition to respond in a particular way'.[4] *Intended* policies could be classified in this way, though *actual* policies may differ sharply from the nature of the predisposition. This is simply because individual decisions, which form a part of an overall policy may result in *policy slippage*, that is to say policy taking a different form to that originally intended. The resultant *policy output*,[5] therefore may fail to coincide with initial preferences at all; nevertheless, it still represents policy.

Although apparently semantic, the above discussion will help to clarify the following discussion on Alliance policy which will be shown to be the sum of a host of differing decisions. The pressure of the various decision will be seen to have profoundly affected the nature of the overall policy, in some instances contrary to the expressed preferences of political leaders.

The President as Ultimate Decision-Maker

Constitutional Arrangements: the Theory The Constitution of the Fifth Republic, and subsequent provisions regarding the institutional mechanisms of foreign and particularly defence policy formulation are ambiguous. In particular, the allocation of competences between a legally bicephalous executive branch is somewhat unclear.

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[2] The following discussion is based largely on the typology presented in R. Hague, M. Harrop and S. Breslin *Comparative Government and Politics: an Introduction* London, Macmillan, third edition, 1992, pp. 14-16, 397-398.

[3] Ibid, pg. 397.

[4] Ibid, pg. 397.

[5] *Policy output* refers to the actual policy implemented, *policy outcome* to the consequences of that policy. The latter can often differ from the original intentions of policy makers.

Turning first of all to the constitution of October 1958,[6] it becomes immediately apparent that competences are by no means clearly allocated: 'powers are shared but power is ill-defined'.[7] Thus, whilst Article 15 of the document names the President as Commander in Chief of the armed forces, and responsible for presiding over the defence councils and committees,[8] Article 20 indicates that 'the government has at its disposal the administrative services and the armed forces'.[9] The text goes on, in its next article, to attribute to the Prime Minster responsibility for national defence, and the power to appoint to certain civil and military posts (Article 13 states that the President enjoys a similar right of appointment, and that certain such appointments should be made in the Council of Ministers).[10]

Evidently, then, the text of October 1958 provides for some form of dyarchy with regard to questions of defence.[11] If anything, the relative weight of the Prime Minister in this equation was increased with the issuing in 1959 of an ordinance, Article 9 of which referred to a Prime Minister, 'responsible for national defence' who 'is in charge of the overall and military aspects of defence'. This same article also charged the Prime Minister with ensuring the coordination of the actions of all ministerial departments which had some bearing on defence. Ambiguity was heightened, however, by the preceding Article 7, which indicated that defence policy would be defined in the Council of Ministers, over which, of course, the occupant of the Élysée presided.[12] Yet despite this, it could reasonably be argued that, given the terms of the January 1959 ordonnance, the legal

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[6] For the Constitution, see P. Campbell and B. Chapman, *The Constitution of the Fifth Republic*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958.

[7] V. Wright, *The Government and Politics of France*, Third Edition, London, Routledge, 1992, pg. 13. Given this admission, it is all the more surprising that the author goes on to exaggerate the degree of Presidential influence over Defence policy formulation. See the slightly awry interpretation of events under Giscard d'Estaing, pp. 58-59.

[8] P. Campbell and B. Chapman, op. cit., pg. 19.

[9] Ibid, pg. 21.

[10] Ibid, pg. 22, 18.

[11] An exception to this lies with the so-called emergency powers attributed to the President under Article 16 of the 1958 constitution. See ibid, pp. 19-20. Moreover, although not specifically referring to this, it would appear that the content of this article owed much to thought of a possible nuclear war, in which case the President alone was empowered to make the fateful decisions necessary. See B. Chantebout, 'La Dissuasion Nucléaire et le Pouvoir Présidentiel', *Pouvoirs*, no. 38, 1986, pg. 22.

[12] See A. Lebougre, 'Les Responsabilités Politiques de Défense sous la V[e] République', in J. Robert (ed.), *L'Esprit de Défense*, Paris, Economica, 1987, pp. 42-43.

balance of power had shifted in favour of the Matignon.[13]

The constitutional amendment of 6 November 1962, allowed for the direct election of the President of the Republic. Although the text of this reform itself makes no mention specifically of defence, it is clear that the responsibilities associated with nuclear status - the ability to make decisions affecting the very survival of the French nation - explains at least to some extent the decision to make the President directly elected by the French people.[14]

A little over a year later, the decree of 14 January 1964 empowered the President of the Republic alone to decide on the engagement of the *Force Aérien Stratégique*. Intriguingly, although clearly marking an evolution towards the Presidentialisation of the defence sphere, even this measure was not without its ambiguities. Subsequently, France, as we have seen, equipped itself with a nuclear triad of strategic weapons, along with air, sea, and land based tactical nuclear forces. Legally, however, the President of the Republic enjoys undisputed control over only the air-launched strategic weapons - perhaps the least significant part of the French nuclear arsenal.[15]

In 1978, (just prior, as Jolyon Howorth points out, to the elections that first held out a real possibility of *cohabitation*)[16] a further step towards the effective presidentialisation of the defence sphere was taken. Under the terms of the decree of 1962 which created it, the *Secrétariat Général de la Défense Nationale* (SGDN) was placed at the disposal of the Prime Minister, although it was also allotted the task of aiding the President by acting as a non-participant secretary to defence councils. In January 1978, a new decree stipulated that the SGDN could receive orders from the President of the Republic as well as from the Prime Minister.

The theory, then, is far from clear with regards to the division of competence on the question of defence. It was only with practice that the real division - or rather abrogation - of power was to

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[13] See M. Guillaume-Hofnung, 'La Préparation de la Décision Militaire Sous La V[e] République', *Administration*, no. 123, March 1984, pg. 56.

[14] See B. Chantebout, op cit., pg. 22.

[15] Another, less often cited contradiction existed with regard to control over nuclear weapons. France is a signatory to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the fourth of which demands that civilians be protected against any acts of violence. The regulations of the French armed forces contain the stipulation (Article 7) that the 'superior authority cannot order the carrying out of tasks that are contrary....to international conventions'. How, then, would the armed forces react to an order from the President of the Republic requiring the unleashing of France's anti-city deterrent force? See J. Toulat, 'La Monarchie Nucléaire', *Le Monde Diplomatique* May 1989.

[16] See J. Howorth 'The President and Foreign and Defence Policy', op. cit., pg. 152.

become clear.

Constitutional Practice Over twenty years of political practice prior to the accession of Mitterrand to the Presidency served the purpose of clarifying the operation of the contradictory stipulations of the formal situation. The practice of successive Presidents of the Republic was quickly to establish the ultimate supremacy of the Presidency over defence and foreign affairs.[17]

As was the case under his predecessors, the Presidency of Mitterrand was not unfamiliar with purely personal Presidential initiatives in Alliance policy. The text of the Bundestag speech of 1983, for instance, was drawn up by the President, as a reworked version of a speech prepared by his advisors, and one far more explicitly supportive of the Nato double-decision.[18] Similarly, Mitterrand himself took control of French diplomacy during the Gulf crisis, and, once hostilities had broken out, exercised tremendous personal control over military operations.[19]

Even the period of cohabitation, which some analysts had foreseen as marking the death knell for Presidential supremacy in the domain of defence policy[20] did nothing to decrease Presidential predominance within the executive branch. Despite claims by Chirac that he intended fully to exercise his role in defence policy,[21] it would appear that the period 1986-1988 saw no real challenge made to Presidential predominance, with Chirac backing down over every point of disagreement that arose.[22]

Despite certain constitutional ambiguities, therefore, political practice during the course of the Fifth Republic ensured that the President consolidated a tight grip over foreign and defence policy. Yet, as the following sections of this thesis will illustrate, the direction taken by these policies did not

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[17] See on this V. Wright, *The Government and Politics of France* op. cit., pp. 55-59. S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire*, op. cit., J. Howorth, 'The President and Foreign and Defence Policy', op. cit.

[18] See P. Favier et M. Martin-Roland, op. cit., pp. 266-267. Cheysson made the same point to me, interview, Paris, 1991.

[19] See J. Howorth 'The President and Foreign and Defence Policy', op. cit., pp.185-188.

[20] S. Cohen, for instance, predicted that cohabitation could lead to the Prime Minster 'taking over the powers of the President'. *La Monarchie Nucléaire*, op. cit., pg. 251.

[21] *Le Monde*, 12 July 1986.

[22] See J. Howorth, 'The President and Foreign and Defence Policy', op. cit., pp. 154-163. See also the discussion of disagreements between the President and Prime Minister over French strategy, and in particular the correct use of tactical weapons, in Chapter Five, above.

reflect his sole will.

The Evolution of Policy-Making Structures

Although placed at the apex of a hierarchical decision-making structure, the President did not act in a vacuum. To a large degree his decisions were structured not only by the international environment within which he acted, as well as by the policy options of his predecessors - a mainly nuclear defence, composed of a triad of nuclear forces and so on - but also by the choices which he was offered.

Given the personalised nature of ultimate executive authority within the Fifth Republic, the ability successfully to lobby the President became of crucial importance. This becomes readily apparent if we consider the development of policy making in the sector of Alliance policy. As with the 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy, the structure of Alliance policy decision-making under Mitterrand cannot be understood without reference to the development of those structures previously. In many senses, the *institutional* legacy of General de Gaulle was as important as the *policies* he bequeathed to his successors: Gaullism 'survived its leader in an institutionalised form'.[23]

De Gaulle's Intentions According to Philip Cerny, one of de Gaulle's aims in pursuing his ambitious foreign policy was to legitimise the authority of the political system of the Fifth Republic, and the transfer to the state those functions which had 'in effect fallen traditionally to various vested interests....to the benefit of those vested interests and to the detriment of the national interest'.[24] This was to be done by means of the use of 'charismatic authority' to create rules and institutions, and to institutionalise processes which in turn gained legitimacy through that of the individual leader involved.[25] In this way, Cerny claims, de Gaulle had intended to remove from the policy process the unhealthy influence of those vested interests which perverted the policy of the state to their own ends. He wished to institute a process of 'heroic policy making', which was able to emphasise the short, medium, and long-term *national* interest over sectional interests.

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[23] M. Hayne, 'The Quai d'Orsay and the Formation of French Foreign Policy in Historical Context', in R. Aldrich and J. Connell (eds.), *France in World Politics*, London, Routledge, 1989, pg. 201.

[24] P. Cerny, op. cit., pg. 100. See also D. Moïsi and G. Flynn, op. cit., pp. 49, 58-59, 66.

[25] P. Cerny, op. cit., pp. 110-121.

Policy Making 1958-1981 Despite the increasing presidentialisation of the defence and foreign policy spheres, various actors continued to have an input into Alliance policy making. These included the President and his staff, the National Assembly, various Ministries, groups within those Ministries, and certain interest groups.

The Élysée As was pointed out above, foreign and defence policy were marked by an increasing presidentialisation of policy making. In particular, this exhibited itself through the increasing reliance, on the part of successive incumbents of the Élysée, on either the Élysée staff, or unofficial advisers.[26] Within the Élysée, a growing number of Presidential staff members and special advisers played a role in policy formulation. In particular, the Secretary-General of the Élysée, and the personal Chief of Staff of the President (*Chef d'État-Major Particulier*, CEMP) were central to this.[27] Additionally, Mitterrand has employed the services of numerous advisers, both official and unofficial - around twenty-five of the staff of the Élysée dal in one way or another with foreign or defence policy. Presidential resources are, therefore, substantial, though as one close adviser to the President has pointed out, insufficient to allow for complete dominance of the Élysée over all - and particularly routine - matters of policy formulation.[28]

Parliament Although the influence of the Parliament was reduced dramatically under the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, both the National Assembly and Senate had an interest in Alliance policy, and both possessed standing committees[29] to deal with foreign and defence policy. Moreover, as we have seen, Parliament could act as an important constraint on the freedom of the President of the Republic to formulate policy, as was the case with Giscard d'Estaing's attempted reforms of French defence policy in 1976.

Ministries The various Ministries also played a role in policy formulation. Whilst they could be

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[26] See S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire* op. cit., pp. 51-78. See also by the same author *Les Conseillers du Président - De Charles de Gaulle à Valéry Giscard d'Estaing* Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1980, and 'Les Hommes de l'Élysée', *Pouvoirs*, no. 20, 1982. For the period since 1981, M. Schiffres and J. Sarazin, *L'Élysée de Mitterrand. Secrets de la Maison du Prince*, Paris, Alain Moreau, 1985.

[27] Under Mitterrand, the post of Secretary-General has been held by three men: Pierre Bérégovoy, Jean-Louis Bianco, and Hubert Vedrine. That of CEMA by Jean Saulnier, Gilbert Forray, Jean Fleury, and Jacques Lanxade.

[28] J. Howorth, 'The President's Special Role', op. cit., pp. 177-180.

[29] In the Senate the *Commission des Affaires Étrangères, de la Défense, et des Forces Armées*, in the National Assembly, the *Commission de la Défense Nationale et des Forces Armées*. Other Parliamentary Committees are also periodically involved in external relations questions, such as the *Commission des Finances, de l'économie Générale et du Plan*.

excluded from decisions of major importance, such as that to withdraw from the integrated military structures of 1966,[30] at other times certain key Departments played a crucial role. The Finance Ministry acted as a powerful constraint on excessive defence spending. More permanently involved in defence and foreign policy making were the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs respectively. Whilst their influence was inevitably diminished by the increasing Presidentialisation of policy making, both could at times play an important role within the policy process.

Ministerial Sub-groups Within each Ministry, there existed different groups lobbying in favour of often divergent interests. Thus, contained within the Ministry of Defence were both the armed forces, with their emphasis on operational questions, and military funding, as well as the *Délégation Générale pour l'Armament* (DGA) charged with overall control of French armaments policy. The influence of the military has already been indicated in previous chapters with regard to the intense lobbying of the Land Army for access to tactical nuclear weapons.[31] In many senses *Pluton* represented a 'pay-off' to the branch of the armed forces which had lost access to nuclear weapons as a result of the 1966 withdrawal. High ranking officers were sceptical in 1966 of de Gaulle's announcement of withdrawal from integration, not least because it was they who experienced the practical disadvantages of the move - notably the withdrawal by the United States of their Honest John missiles from French regiments in Germany.[32]

It is interesting to note that the forces were not able simply to impose their own view even within their own Ministry. Whilst the Land Army lobbied for a *Pluton* missile with a range of only 70-80 k.m., to be used as a battlefield artillery, the *Centre de Prospective et d'Évaluation*, more aware, because not solely comprised of military men, of the political requirements of such weapons, demanded a range of 300 k.m. The eventual outcome - a range of around 120 k.m. - represented a compromise.[33]

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[30] For details of the decision of 1966, and the decision-making procedures involved, see M. Guillaume-Hofnung, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

[31] The General did not pay much attention to the *Pluton* issue, leaving it to his Prime Minister, Pierre Messmer, to deal with it. Even under de Gaulle, the task of managing all of foreign and defence policy proved too much for one man. Interview with Pierre Messmer, Paris, 1991.

[32] On the dissatisfaction of the forces with the 1966 decision, see *Le Monde*, 25 September 1968. Guy Méry, at the time posted in Germany, described to me the complete confusion amongst French forces regarding the 1966 withdrawal - many thought that France had left the Alliance altogether in order to assume a neutral posture. Interview, Paris, 1991.

[33] See A. Bru, 'Méiose du Nucléaire Français', in *Stratégique*, 1er trimestre 1992, pg. 161.

The various Ministries did not constitute homogenous entities but were often mirrored by the competing interests involved in the policy process. Indeed, certain divisions, or cells, were created specifically to provide a different perspective from that of the Ministry as a whole. This was, for instance, the case with both the *Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision* of the Quai d'Orsay, and the *Centre de Prévision et d'Analyse* of the Defence Ministry.[34]

Interest Groups Apart from those departments or Ministries specifically charged with performing a certain role in policy formulation in this sphere, other non-ministerial groups at times played a far from insignificant role in the policy process. To be counted amongst these were, increasingly, Trade Unions, as the arms industry came to employ ever more people, and groups as apparently divorced from Alliance politics as students, whose competing claims came into conflict with the requirements of defence by means of issue linkage through the conveyor belt of the Finance Ministry. Perhaps most significantly, other groups, created to meet the requirements of Gaullist policy, came to be staunch defenders of their own interests, hence ardent supporters of those policies, and opponents of policy adaptation. As we have seen in Chapter Five, the requirement of a strong national arms industry was coupled very closely to that of assuring a purely national defence capability, which itself was the bedrock of foreign policy based around the notion of national independence.

Ironically, de Gaulle himself had not ruled out the prospect of French dependence on others, even in the nuclear field. In his speech of 3 November 1959 to the *École Militaire*, he had simply stated that it 'goes without saying that the heart of this force [de frappe] will be a nuclear weapon - that we will either construct ourselves, *or that we will buy* - but which must belong to us'. [35] It was, therefore the issue of autonomous control over the force rather than its purely national provenance which was of crucial importance.

Such relative openness to foreign weapons was not, however, to remain a feature of the security policies of the Fifth Republic. Increasingly, the requirement of a national capacity for producing the weapons France needed, came to be equated with the bases of Gaullist foreign and defence policy. Thus, the notion of independence in military affairs came to incorporate the ability of

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[34] On the former, see S. Cohen, 'Prospective et Politique Étrangère: le Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision du Ministère des Relations Extérieures', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, vol. 36, no. 2, December 1982, pp. 1059-1060. On the latter, see Lucien Poirier, *Des Stratégies Nucléaires*, Paris, Hachette, 1988, pp. 316-317.

[35] Cited in D. David, op. cit., pg. 73. Emphasis added.

France to provide itself the means for that defence. The *Livre Blanc*, for instance, stated that France must 'maintain and modernise an industrial potential which assures us of an independence sufficient to ensure that the efficacy of our defence is not tributary to foreign economic constraints which would compromise our freedom of decision'.[36]

The need for an arms industry in order to support costs of national defence was heightened by that to export arms in order to support the costs of the development of the French deterrent force, the technology for which could not be exported.[37] One of the primary functions of the arms industry was to provide, through the efficient exporting of weapons, additional funding to supplement a defence budget under considerable pressure due to an inadequate resource base, especially given the additional constraints on that base engendered by the events of 1968.[38]

Arms sales came to be justified in terms of the overall ambitions of Gaullist foreign policy:

> It is difficult to evade the duty of responding to the requests for arms of certain countries, concerned about their defence, which wish to ensure this defence without recourse to the dominant powers of the two blocs. Not to respond to such requests would be to increase the hegemony of the big powers....[39]

Such rationalisations certainly strengthened the influence of the DGA within the policy-making system, turning it into a central feature of the Gaullist legacy. The original institutional position of the then *Délégation Ministérielle pour l'Armament* placed it higher than the Chief of Staff within the hierarchy of the Ministry of Defence. Even the change in 1977 to the title of *Délégation Générale pour l'Armament*, and the placing of the institution on an equal par with the Chief of Staff of the armed forces had the effect of increasing the influence of the DGA by shielding it from the limelight, and close inspection from hostile forces.[40] Even in its new institutional position, the DGA enjoyed considerable autonomy.[41]

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[36] *Livre Blanc*, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 45.

[37] E. Kolodziej, *Making and Marketing Arms*, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

[38] Ibid, Chapter Three.

[39] *Livre Blanc*, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 54.

[40] See E. Kolodziej, *Making and Marketing Arms*, op. cit., pp. 241-242. See also A. Sanguinetti, 'Défense de la France ou Subvention aux Lobbies?', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1990.

[41] E. Kolodziej, *Making and Marketing Arms*, op. cit., pp. 239-298. See also *Le Monde, Affaires*, 10 June 1989.

Indeed, such autonomy led to the rather paradoxical situation of an arms industry which promoted sales nominally to enable it to provide for the needs of the armed forces, managing to impose choices on the forces against their wishes. During the so-called 'sale of the century' in the mid-1970s, the Air Force, although interested in the construction of an *Avion de Combat Future*, was obliged to commit itself to the purchase of Dassault's F1 fighter, in order to support the company's attempts to export the plane to Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway. When the bid failed, a high DGA official characterised Dassault's loss of the contract as a victory for the Air Force.[42]

The very success of Gaullist policy in terms of reconciling the interests of various groups led to the creation of powerful forces within the policy-making system. The armed forces had been rallied to the new French doctrine, on condition that all three of the services received nuclear weapons, and that none suffered too severely from conventional force cuts. The Arms lobby revelled in the new trend of arms sales *tous azimuts* necessary to fund ambitious French armaments policies. Pressures from outside the foreign and defence policy communities - notably from Finance - also shaped the development of policies.

Alliance Policy Making Under Mitterrand

As we have seen, Mitterrand adjusted rapidly to the prerogatives accorded to the President in the foreign and defence policy fields. Indeed, the President himself on many occasions was wont to underline the centrality of his position as the ultimate decision maker in these spheres. In terms of French deterrent strategy, he did not balk at naming himself as the central part of that strategy: 'The essential element [*pièce maîtresse*] of French deterrent strategy, is the head of state, is me; everything depends on his determination. The rest is but inert material'.[43] As for foreign policy, Mitterrand made a similar point: 'It is I who determines French foreign policy....It is inconceivable that a policy can be put into place without my agreement, in fact, without my initiative.'[44]

Clearly, Mitterrand was exaggerating his own competence, and ability to control his subordinates. As Samy Cohen has stated, the 'idea of a single man acting only on his own ideas, is mythical. The head of the executive of a large industrialised country such as France cannot control foreign

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[42] E. Kolodziej, *Making and Marketing Arms*, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

[43] F . Mitterrand, speaking on *Antenne 2* 16 November 1983, cited in S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire*, op. cit., pg 16.

[44] *Le Monde*, 20 January 1983.

policy alone'.[45] The very vastness of the foreign policy sphere in a sense mitigated against such Presidential control, especially as a result of the increased involvement of 'technical' ministries in foreign policy.[46] Even in traditional areas of diplomacy, the President could not directly control all policy. Thus, for example, the signing of the natural gas contract with the Soviet Union - at a time when relations with the United States were already strained owing to differing positions on the issue of economic relations with the Communist bloc - took place without the specific go-ahead of Mitterrand. The latter was reportedly furious when he heard about this on the radio.[47]

On a more systematic level, pressures existed at lower tiers of the decision-making structure that continually pressed for policy to take a certain shape. It is to those specific areas of policy-making which were affected by the nature of the decision-making process: the overall form of Alliance policy; the size of the defence budget; the allocation of resources within that budget; specific choices of military equipment; and finally operational planning, that we now turn.

The Overall Shape of Alliance Policy The nature of Alliance policy *per se* was not the object of overall agreement. Most significant in this respect were the disagreements between the Defence and Foreign Ministries and the implications of these for specific policy choices. For the military within the Ministry of Defence, the premium was traditionally placed on military efficiency in the field. It is the military who were responsible for negotiating the series of around fifty accords that link France and Nato, and for ensuring their implementation. General Fourget,[48] at the time commander of the FATAC was told in 1985 by Charles Hernu simply to go ahead and negotiate targeting agreements with his Nato counterparts if this would improve efficiency in the field - regardless of questions of principle such as the oft-repeated necessity of independence. The predominance of the Rue Saint Dominique over *operational* questions was again evident with the

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[45] S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire*, op. cit., pp. 15-16. Mitterrand was not averse to underplaying his own authority in the defence sphere when difficult choices lay ahead. Thus, faced with increasing pressure on the defence budget in 1989, and with *arbitrage* required regarding weapons programmes, he stated that 'the President of the Republic, having no power or *domaine réservé*, contrary to what I read here and there, intends to work these things out and obtain a final solution with the Prime Minister.' See his Élysée press conference of 18 May 1989, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 9, May-June, 1989, pg. 13.

[46] See P-C Gonnot, 'L'Élaboration de la Politique Extérieure de la France', *Défense Nationale*, 42, May 1986, pp. 29-30

[47] P. Favier and M-M Roland, op. cit., vol 1, pp. 251-251. During the period of *cohabitation*, when Mitterrand was left with less time for dealing in depth with certain foreign policy issues, the Quai d'Orsay also managed to wield a large degree of influence, notably over the French negotiating position over the CSCE Review. See D. Moïsi and G. Flynn, op. cit., pg. 67.

[48] Interview, Paris, 1991.

creation of the FAR, largely at the instigation of Hernu. Some observers have claimed that the Rue Saint Dominique pressed for closer relations with Nato.[49] Indeed, towards the end of 1991, Defence Minister Pierre Joxe appealed for France to participate more fully within rapidly evolving Nato structures, and, unusually for a French official, expounded on the tight links and cooperation agreements which bound France to its allies.[50]

The keepers of the doctrine are to be found, not in the Rue Saint Dominique, but at the Quai d'Orsay.[51] Whilst the former often pressed for a more pragmatic approach to relations with allies, the Foreign Ministry largely charged, according to some sources, with running relations with Nato,[52] determined policy along largely political rather than military lines. A member of the *Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes*, the department which effectively runs Alliance policy in the Quai d'Orsay, noted that 'the fundamental principles which guide our actions towards Nato are political principles'.[53] It is in the Foreign Ministry that one can most easily hear talk of French independence having mitigated the danger of superpower condominium, or the argument that should France renounce its independence, the effect in the long term would be to remove any prospect of an eventual European defence.[54] Thus, it was no coincidence that Roland Dumas was the Minister who reaffirmed that France had no intention of changing the nature of its relations with Nato,[55] a message he restated the day after Joxe's speech.[56]

The disputes between the Foreign and Defence Ministries were not, however, simply based on

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[49] Interview with Mark Lyall-Grant, British Embassy, Paris, 13 February 1991.

[50] Joxe argued that France should revise 'its accords with Nato [in order] to take account of the profound geostrategic changes that have taken place in Europe'. Speech to the *Cours Supérieur Interarmées*, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 24, November-December 1991, pp. 120-121. See also *Le Monde*, 4 December 1991, and P. Gordon, *French Security Policy After the Cold War*, op. cit., pg. 14.

[51] A member of the *Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes* M. Rhein referred to the role of the Quai d'Orsay as the 'guardian' of doctrine. Interview, Paris, 1991.

[52] Interview with Mark Lyall-Grant.

[53] Interview with Henri Laval of the Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes of the Quai d'Orsay. M. Laval acknowledged that the nature of French relations with Nato did cause certain *inconvénients* on the conventional level, as military planners could not effectively plan ahead for a conventional conflict, though such uncertainty was a positive benefit when it came to nuclear weapons. Interview, Paris, 18 March 1991.

[54] Interview with M. Rivasseau, of the Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes, Paris, 1991.

[55] *Le Monde*, March 23 1991.

[56] See *Libération*, 6 December 1991.

rather esoteric matters of principle. Quarrels over Alliance policy reveal the very real issue of competence and a power struggle between the diplomats and the military. As a former CEA official seconded to the Quai for some years pointed out, as long as relations with Nato remained something to be discussed at a political level, the diplomats retained control; once discussions move onto issues of practical cooperation, they occurred between the Defence Ministry and the Élysée.[57] The distinction between the two ministries became apparent during the discussions over possible French participation in the ACCS system: predictably, whilst Defence favoured such a move, Foreign Affairs expressed strong reservations.[58] Defence Ministry concern with the operational practicalities of defence policy, in contrast to the more abstract doctrinal considerations of the Quai d'Orsay could also set the two Ministries at loggerheads over specific practical issues. Thus, whilst Roland Dumas appeared to indicate a softening of the Paris line towards SDI with his statement to a conference in Paris that he was relatively unconcerned by the implications of the project for the French deterrent posture, the Rue Saint Dominique, engaged in making practical choices for the weaponry that would become operational in the 1990s, could afford to be far less sanguine.[59]

This is not to exaggerate the degree to which all Defence or Foreign Ministers acted in the same way in the defence of the same interests. Certainly, personality played an important role in determining the stances adopted by Ministers - from the staunch loyalty of Roland Dumas,[60] to the (sometimes embarrassing) verbal unpredictability of Cheysson,[61] from the staunchly nationalist Chevènement to the more European-orientated Giraud,[62] it clearly mattered who headed the ministries concerned. Yet, it was nevertheless the case that the pressures exerted by the Ministries in defence of their perceived interests acted as a constraining force on Presidential freedom of manoeuvre. Presidential *arbitrage* took place in the context of conflicting advice, making it difficult for the incumbent of the Élysée to impose a coherent direction on Alliance policy.

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[57] Interview with Olivier Debouzy, Paris, 1991.

[58] French officials are loath to refer to specific disagreements which have existed between various sections of the administration. Informed observers of shifts in defence policy in Paris, however, informed me that such divisions *did* exist over the ACCS issue. Interviews with John Berry, US Embassy, and Mark Lyall-Grant, British Embassy.

[59] See *The Times*, 28 February 1985.

[60] See G. Robin, op. cit., pg. 10.

[61] See S. Cohen, *La Monarchie Nucléaire*, op. cit., pp. 152-163.

[62] Thus, Mr. Berry, political counsellor at the US embassy in Paris suggested that the outcome of the Rafale saga would most probably have been much different had it been Giraud at the Rue Saint Dominique after 1988 rather than Chevènement. Interview, Paris, 1991.

Parliament also affected the manner in which Alliance policy was presented. Thus, the National Assembly required policy to be portrayed in a certain manner in order to ensure the compliance of Deputies. Certainly, the Parliamentarians enjoyed very limited influence over defence and foreign policy formulation,[63] yet they were not completely powerless. We saw in Chapter Seven how the manner in which the FAR was presented can be explained at least partly as an attempt to avoid the kind of political backlash that had greeted the attempted reforms of 1976. This was at a time when the Socialist Party enjoyed a clear majority in the National Assembly. During the period after 1988, when the PS was in the position of a minority government, such considerations mitigated against ambitious projects aimed at adapting policy.

The Defence Budget The nature of defence policy was to a large extent determined by the funding accorded to the military. Disputes between the Ministries of Defence and Finance over military funding were particularly acute. Thus, pressure from the Rue de Rivoli led to a 10% decrease in the funds allotted to nuclear weapons in 1982;[64] in 1990, whilst pressure from Pierre Bérégovoy at the Rue de Rivoli acted in favour of a diminution of military spending, Chevènement launched an offensive against those who demanded such a reduction.[65]

It was finance that represented a central cause of policy-linkage. Through the question of finance, Alliance policy was inextricably intermeshed with aspects of *domestic* politics.[66] Policy making could not occur without reference to other issues. Foremost amongst these was employment, and, more generally, the prevailing economic situation. Mitterrand, for instance, stated bluntly that any possible reconversion of the French arms industry[67] to other uses could not occur given the high level of unemployment in France, and the low level of growth of the French economy.[68] Such considerations were particularly important with regard to the huge French arms industry. Apart

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[63] Thus, a debate over actualization of *Loi de Programmation Militaire* scheduled for 1985 was abandoned on governmental initiative, with Hernu merely, in June 1985, presenting a report to Parliament stressing need to implement the law. Jean Combasteil, a PCF deputy, was led to comment that Parliament had been deprived of its control over finances in this way. See *Le Monde*, 10-11 November 1985.

[64] S. Mclean (ed.), op. cit., pp. 178-179.

[65] See *L'Express*, 13 July 1990.

[66] See for instance the comment of Paul Quilès: 'If some people want to do more [in the defence sphere]....it will be necessary to raise taxes'. *L'Express*, 29 November-5 December 1985

[67] Of the sort he had called for prior to 1981.

[68] See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 1983.

from its enormous contribution to French economic activity (conducting business to the value of 116 billion francs, or 2.4 per cent of PIBm in 1988)[69] the arms industry *directly* employed some 261,000 people, or around 5 per cent of the French industrial workforce.[70] The wider implications of restricting French arms manufacturing, and particularly exports are hard to calculate, though it is clear that many of France's leading high technology firms were heavily dependent on arms sales,[71] and that huge numbers were *indirectly* employed by the arms trade.[72]

Employment was not the only sphere of 'low' politics which impinged on Alliance policy. Education, too, affected questions of defence. In the first instance, it did so directly, through the setting up by Charles Hernu and Education Minister Alain Savary on 23 September 1982 of a '*Commission Défense-Éducation Nationale*'.[73] Later in the period, education figured in more indirect manner in reflections on defence and Alliance policy, as the priority accorded by Mitterrand to national education at the start of his second term at the Élysée placed increased budgetary pressure on the defence sector.

The issue of the overall size of the Defence budget was one which involved not only the various Ministries, but also certain subgroups. We have seen in the previous chapter how several members of the armed forces felt impelled during the 1980s to criticise the budgetary policies of the government of the time in the sphere of defence. Claimed underfunding of the land Army had led to vociferous, public protests, and to at least one important resignation.[74] Relations between the Ministry and the civilian authorities reached a nadir in 1988, with the publication in *Le Figaro* of a letter signed by 45 military officers openly calling for the French to support Chirac in the forthcoming Presidential elections.[75] As was pointed out in Chapter Two, there existed some

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[69] DGA, *L'Industrie Française de Défense*, op. cit., pg. 12.

[70] Ibid, pg. 13.

[71] In 1989, for instance, 49% of the total business of Aérospatiale, 71% of that of Matra, and 79% of that of Thomson-CSF was military. See J-G Branger, *Avis présenté au nom de la Commission de la Défense Nationale et des Forces Armées sur le projet de loi de finances pour 1990 Tome V Défense Recherche et Industrie d'Armement. Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 12 octobre 1989*, Paris, National Assembly, No. 923, pg. 9.

[72] A confidential study predicted that stopping the export of arms could add as many as one million to the list of the unemployed. See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 1983.

[73] See P. Kropp, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

[74] That of General Delaunay, Chief of Staff of the Land Army.

[75] *Le Figaro*, 3 May 1988.

suspicions within the Socialist movement concerning possibly adverse reactions in the military to the election of a Socialist civilian authority. The letter of 1988, to many, confirmed such suspicions, and, indeed, Guisnel claims that attempts to decrease the power of the military within decision-making structures - notably the decision taken under the Socialist government of 1988 to replace the military head of the SGDN with a civilian *fonctionnaire* resulted from such distrust.[76]

If anything, such distrust made administrations between 1981 and 1992 even less inclined than their predecessors to attempt to impose choices on the armed forces. Guisnel points to Mitterrand's overriding fear of spawning disaffection within the armed forces as a primary cause of his hesitations in making choices to adapt French defence policy to the new imperatives of post Cold War Europe.[77]

Successive governments proved unwilling openly to cut the defence budget.[78] Thus, when reviewing the provisions of the 1987-1991 *Loi de Programmation Militaire* in 1990, the Socialists finally refused to cancel any of the large programmes involved.[79] The expedient finally arrived at was that of stretching out [*étaler*] the prestige projects contained within the law over longer than originally anticipated.[80] One Presidential adviser at the Élysée stated bluntly, with regard to discussions concerning the 1990 Defence budget, that:

> Choices were possible. In terms of defence, the President was only too willing to do less. It is politically, and with regard to the [military] institution that it was felt that there was no real alternative [to keeping spending levels high][81]

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[76] See Guisnel op. cit., pp. 59.66.

[77] Ibid, pp. 172-173.

[78] France was the only Western country to increase its defence budget in 1990. *L'Évènement du Jeudi*, 15 July 1990.

[79] It should be noted here that the National Assembly armed forces commission, under the terms of the ordinance of 2 January 1959, does not have the power to make decisions concerning specific arms programmes, but can only approve or reject whole titles of proposed legislation, making this weapon something of a blunderbuss. See A. Volquin, 'A Quoi Sert la Commission de la Défense Nationale de l'Assemblée?', *Défense Nationale*, 32, June 1976, pg. 43.

[80] Thus, when Mitterrand decided in early 1989 to cut 40-45 billion francs from the defence budget, he did not cancel any of the major programmes contained in the preceding *Loi de Programmation Militaire*. See his Élysée press conference of 18 May 1989, cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, no. 9, May-June 1989, pp. 13-14. Pierre Bérégovoy in July 1990 demanded a seven billion franc reduction in the 1991 defence budget, see *Le Figaro*, 6 July 1990. In response, the President of the National Assembly Armed Forces committee Jean-Michel Boucheron stated that 'I would prefer to plan to spend forty billion less over five years than approve a budget that has lost seven billion'. *L'Évènement du Jeudi*, 19-25 July 1990.

[81] Cited in Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 175.

Even given political pressure from leading elements in the Socialist party for the provision of a peace dividend, and support from the Élysée itself for a reduction in military spending, the civilian authority had real difficulty imposing any budgetary cuts on the forces.

Resource Allocation Within the Defence Budget Once the overall size of the defence budget had been decided, there remained the question of resource allocation between differing defence priorities. Whilst the Rue Saint Dominique acted as a potent lobbyist when its perceived interests diverged from those of other Ministries - notably the Quai d'Orsay or Finance - its various sub-divisions were by no means always united behind a common perspective or point of view. Within the Ministry itself, fierce struggles were not unknown as groups jostled for position over financial questions in particular. These groups included the three branches of the armed forces, as well as the powerful DGA. Lobbying from below necessitated the making of concrete financial choices which in turn affected the overall nature of relations with allies.

The pressure exerted on political leaders varied by sector. The ability of the various branches of the forces to influence the policy-making process was to some extent the result of certain institutional constellations of forces.[82] As Guisnel has pointed out, there existed four key military posts within the decision-making structures: the *Chef des États-majors des Armées* (CEMA) or Chief of the General Staff; the director of the military *Cabinet* of the Prime Minister, based at the Matignon; the *Chef d'État-Major Particulier* or presidential Chief of Staff; and, finally, the *Chef du Cabinet Militaire du Ministre de la Défense*.[83] As those appointed to positions of overall command could be expected to represent the interests of their own particular branch of the services more than those of the other two,[84] appointments to these posts were made not only on the basis of simple personal chemistry, but also with a view to equally dividing the lobbying potential they provided between the branches of the forces. Their could be mainly symbolic, such as the decision to appoint Jean Saulnier, a former commander of the *Force Aérien Stratégique* to the post of

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[82] Boniface argues that, whilst the politicians may think they choose the men for the top military posts, all they actually can do is ratify choices made several years previously within the military hierarchies. *L'Armée*, op. cit., pg. 297.

[83] See Guisnel, op. cit., pp. 123-143. Boniface makes the interesting point that it is only the military who are allowed such domination of decision-making in their own sphere of expertise. Farmers and teachers, for instance, do not necessarily hold high advisory positions within the ministries responsible for their professions. *L'Armée*, op. cit., pg. 296.

[84] This point is also made by Jean d'Albion (pseud.), who states that each *Chef d'État-Major* sees himself first and foremost as the head of the union of his own branch of the forces. Op. cit., pg. 203.

CEMP.[85] In other instances, it would appear that particular constellations of service loyalty aided or impeded policy outcomes. Thus, of crucial importance to the outcome of the struggles over the Rafale was the fact that, until Saulnier left his post in November 1987, the Air Force occupied three of these four positions.

Given the increased pressure on defence budgets towards the end of the 1980s, and also the shifting nature of the military threats confronting France, clear choices needed to be made.[86] Yet various pressures affected the ability of policy makers to impose such choices on the forces. The absence of any efficient coordinating mechanism for budgetary decisions - despite the constitutional role of the CEMA in this capacity[87] - clearly worked in this way.[88] So, too, did the vigorous lobbying - often public - from the chiefs of the three services in favour of their own branch of the forces.[89] Also of tremendous importance with regard to the difficulty experienced in not only reducing defence spending, but also redirecting the financial effort towards newly-defined defence priorities in the light of an ever-changing strategic situation, was the support given to the forces by the arms lobby. As Antoine Sanguinetti has pointed out, the existing balance of resource allocation between forces was steadily maintained, with the arms industry playing a role in helping the Chiefs of the various forces to ensure their own branch received a fair proportion of the budget - a budget decided less in terms of the defence policy needs of the time than as a function of the perceived

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[85] General Saulnier confirmed to me that his appointment was perceived by many as representing a clear signal of the intention of the Socialists to prioritise strategic nuclear deterrence. Interview, Paris, 1991. For more on this, see M. Sifres and M. Sarazin, op. cit., pg. 177.

[86] Thierry de Montbrial, for instance, pointed to the difficult choices that needed to be made, in contrast to the relatively easy choice of weapons necessary at the start of France's rise to nuclear power status in his presentation to the conference of 16 October 1986, DGA, *La Délégation Générale pour l'Armament face aux Défis de l'Avenir*, Paris, FEDN, 1987, pp. 42-43.

[87] Created by the ordonnance of 1962, the CEMA was given a role in the formulation of programme laws under the terms of the 1972 White Paper. The decree of 8 February 1982 specified that the CEMA be consulted on matters of planning and military programme laws. See H. Haenel and R. Pichon, *La Défense Nationale*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, pp. 32-37.

[88] Both Generals Méry and Saulnier pointed out to me the difficulties involved in making such inter-service choices. Interviews, Paris, 1991. See also Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 174, and J. d'Albion (pseud.), op. cit., pp. 202-205.

[89] Public lobbying took the form either of speeches or articles destined to sway political leaders. See, for instance, the articles produced by various Chiefs of Staff of the forces in 1985, notably Admiral Leenhart, 'Réflexions pour une Stratégie Navale d'Avenir', *Défense Nationale*, August-September 1985, pp. 11-34, B. Capillon, 'L'Armée de l'air d'Hier à Aujourd'hui: le fait aérien: une nouvelle dimension de la Défense', *Défense Nationale*, 41, June 1985, pp. 23-30. Jeannou Lacaze, in his farewell speech had also made the point that underfunding risked compromising operational efficacy. See his 'L'Avenir de la Défense Française', op. cit., pp. 15-17. Intended to be less public in nature were the communications from the chiefs of the three branches to General Lacaze regarding proposed funding for the military. All three criticised a policy of budgetary rigour which, they claimed, undermined the operational efficiency of the force. The reports were in fact leaked and published in *Le Matin*, 6, 7, 8 December 1982.

need to maintain the equilibrium between the three forces.[90]

Specific Equipment Choices Within the Defence Ministry, it was not only the armed forces that pressed for the maintenance of defence spending at previous levels, or that imposed constraints on policy choices. The arms lobby also represented a potent force for affecting political decisions; indeed, the lobby enjoyed certain advantages over the military within the decision-making process, and was able to use these to good effect when the requirements of elements of the armed forces differed from its own.

In some cases, the desires of arms producers have taken precedence over those of the military itself. This had been the case, as we have seen, in the 1970s during the so-called 'sale of the century'. Again, in the case of the Rafale in the 1980's, the French Navy was more interested in purchasing the American Crusader than the Dassault aircraft for its aircraft carriers.[91] Despite the protestations of the Navy, however, its objections were overruled.

As the *Ingénieurs de l'Armament* within the DGA worked on projects for long periods of time, certain arms initiatives developed a momentum of their own, and became progressively more difficult to curtail for politicians and military Chiefs who remained in their posts for relatively short periods of time.[92] This was the situation encountered by André Giraud, confronted with a programme - the *Avion de Combat Française* - initiated in 1982, and accepted by all political parties bar the PCF within the 1987-1991 *Loi de Programmation Militaire*. 'At that stage what else could one do? Stop the programme? This would have been fatal for French industry, which was already largely embarked on the project as a whole'[93]

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[90] A. Sanguinetti 'Défense de la France ou Subventions aux Lobbies?', op. cit. See also J. d'Albion op. cit., pg. 203.

[91] See D. Coulmy, 'Les Grands Programmes d'Armament', *Stratégique*, 1er trimestre 1992, pg. 182.

[92] Short tenure meant a relative inability to follow long-term programmes efficiently. This was equally true at the political level. Jack Hayward makes the point for economic policy - equally relevant for defence - that whilst in Britain, despite relatively short ministerial tenure, the permanent secretary of each ministry provides for effective bureaucratic coordination, and scrutiny of long-term initiatives, the more transitory French system of *directeurs de cabinet* fails to provide such constancy. See J. Hayward, *The State and the Market Economy: Industrial Patriotism and Economic Intervention in France*, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986, pp. 40-41. The problem of controlling the military was exacerbated for political leaders by the fact that, unlike his political *cabinet*, the Minister of Defence had relatively little control over the composition of his military *cabinet*. See P. Boniface, *l'Armée*, op. cit., pp. 295-296. On the relative powerlessness of the Defence Minister with regard to the military, see F. Cailletaux, controller-general of the armed forces, cited in A. Sanguinetti, 'Défense de la France ou Subvention aux Lobbies?', op. cit.

[93] Giraud's predecessor, Paul Quilès, had also attempted to prevent continued development of the plane - which continued anyway. See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 September 1988.

Such was also the case with the *Hadès*, a weapon whose production had been decided on in the early 1980s, but whose utility, given events in Eastern and Central Europe was dubious to say the least. Moreover, not only was the weapon increasing redundant in military terms, but, more, importantly, significant elements of the French elites were steadily coming to perceive this redundancy.[94] However, by the later 1980s most of the money allocated to the programme had already been spent, which provided the manufacturers with a ready argument to counter demands for the cancellation of the programme.[95] In this way, the influence of political leaders over practical defence choices was severely constrained.[96]

With regard to specific choices, cooperation between arms manufacturers and the armed forces proved extremely effective. This, in some respects, was the case with regard to the history of the Rafale.[97] The project, first conceived in 1982, and promoted as an alternative to the European Fighter Aircraft project, was opposed by several influential political figures including the Defence Minister of *Cohabitation*, André Giraud, and also the Prime Minister of the following government, Michel Rocard.[98] Despite this, however, it was continued, not least because of the strong support offered for the aircraft by the Air Force.

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[94] Hubert Védrine informed me that Mitterrand became increasingly dubious, during the course of the 1980's, as to the utility of the weapon. Vedrine himself expressed the opinion that the *Hadès* did not fit in with French nuclear strategy, and was particulary useless given the existence of another weapon - the medium-range air-to-ground missile (*Air-sol moyen portée*, ASMP) to deliver the final warning shot on Soviet territory. Cheysson assured me that the Hadès performed no useful function, and served to please certain interest groups. Jean-Pierre Maulny, Secretary of the Socialist group within the National Assembly informed me that Jean-Louis Bianco, a close adviser of Mitterrand, had made attempts to get the programme cancelled in October 1988, but was defeated. Interviews, Paris, 1991.

[95] See on the *Hadès* Guisnel, *Les Généraux*, op. cit., pp.182-190. François Schlosser further points out that the Hadès launcher was designed to work for the S-4 missile as well, which lay the path open for the latter to be produced. This is a nice example of the way in which arms projects build their own momentum. See his 'Quand les Industriels Dictent Leur loi....,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 September 1988. Another good example of the lack of tight political control was the case of the proposed French mobile missile; although vetoed by the President of the Republic himself, the DGA in fact continued to work on the project for several months following the Presidential elections of 1988. See Boniface *l'Armée*, op. cit., pp. 293-294. Nor were politicians themselves averse to diverting funds for their own personal projects. Thus Jolyon Howorth claims that Giraud attempted to use funds earmarked for the *Hadès* for his own long range mobile missile project. See J. Howorth, 'François Mitterrand and the "*Domaine Réservé*": From *Cohabitation* to the Gulf War', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, no. 1, winter 1992, pg. 57, fn. 11.

[96] As one commentator has put it 'the masters of our defence today are the researchers, the engineers, the industrialists and the financiers'. See *Politis*, 2-8 June 1989.

[97] Some analysts have claimed that the Rafale project was forced through, not by the military, but solely by Dassault and the DGA. See the interview with Hubert de Beaufort and General Jacques de Zélicourt in *L'Évènement du Jeudi*, 1-7 November 1990.

[98] Rocard stated that there were several unsatisfactory elements to the way in which the Rafale dossier had been handled, and noted that the project '*est dans un état de sinistre avancé*'. See *Le Figaro*, 17-18 September 1988.

Cooperation between the armed forces, the DGA and the arms industry was certainly facilitated by the close links that bound them in terms of personnel. Linked to the DGA by 'intensive' movements of personnel,[99] the large arms producers, and especially the huge aeronautics firms are in many cases the natural allies for the *Délégué*.[100] As for the forces, Pierre Messmer pointed out in the mid-1970s with regard to the Mirage 2000 development plan, that, although Dassault may not have bribed prominent members of the Air Force, 'everyone knows' at the DMA and in the Air Force 'that when one retired one could have a professionally and financially rewarding post at Dassault'.[101] This was certainly the case for Bernard Capillon, a former Air Force Chief of Staff, who moved to Dassault after his retirement from active service. Capillon was to become one of the most ardent champions of the Rafale project. The close personal links between these different arenas has led one commentator to speak of an 'occult network' between the firms, the *Ingénieurs d'État* and the officers, which 'distorts the decision-making process'.[102]

The influence of the military and the *ingénieurs* stemmed mainly from the near monopoly on technical expertise that they enjoyed, which strengthened their position immeasurably vis-a-vis the political authorities. As Guisnel points out with regard to Mitterrand's degree of control over the *Rafale* project, the President 'doubtless wields the real power, but certainly does not enjoy the information networks which would allow him to enjoy an independent and autonomous capacity for analysing such a complex dossier.'[103] The needs of research and development programmes are often prioritised within the armaments community, in such a way as to impede the making of effective policy choices. Programmes which do reach completion, therefore, often did so without the military rationale for them having been thought through fully: hence, for instance the dilution of French nuclear deterrent doctrine necessitated by prestrategic weapons.

In this respect, it became especially difficult for politicians to resist the arguments put forward by

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[99] S. McLean (ed.), op. cit., pg. 173.

[100] Examples of such 'cross-fertilisation' were Hugues de l'Estoile and Gérard Hibon, both of whom left high-ranking posts within the state arms complex to move to the private sector - Breguet-Dassault and Aérospatiale respectively. See *Le Monde, Affaires*, 10 June 1989.

[101] Cited in C. Carlier, *Marcel Dassault*, Paris, Perin 1992, pg. 345.

[102] P. Marion, *Le Povoir Sans Visage, Essai sur le Complexe Militaro-Industriel*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1990, pg. 45.

[103] Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 215.

Dassault and its partners[104] regarding the centrality of the Rafale for the future of the French aeronautics industry. Claims that, regardless of operational needs, the Rafale was essential in order to ensure the survival of the French aeronautics industry[105] were difficult to disprove for politicians confronted with technical and detailed reports from specialists convinced of the necessity for the plane.

The choice of weapons systems in general was structured partly by the influence of the DGA, partly, as noted above, by the unwillingness of political leaders to question the necessity for an independent arms production capacity - and hence a powerful institutionalised arms lobby - which itself formed part of the overall 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy discussed in the previous Chapter. The terms in which the President of the *Groupe d'Intéret Économique* (GIE) referred to the criticisms of the Rafale project put forward by sections of the media are striking. Capillon expressed 'profound regret that a programme so important for defence, for the aeronautic industry in general, and the national economy has been presented in a polemical way, *thus damaging its national and international credibility'*.[106] The similarity with the calls to order over defence policy cited in the previous Chapter are evident.

The extension of features of consensus to armaments policy entailed a further erosion of the ability of political leaders, loath to question prevailing assumptions concerning the need for an autonomous and powerful national armaments capability, to make autonomous decisions . Political leaders continued to insist on the need for arms exports as a vital element of a policy of independence and non-alignment.[107] The underlying themes of the importance of exports for ensuring the ability to fund domestic weapons projects,[108] the need to preserve national production capabilities in all sectors,[109] and the fundamentally healthy spin-offs of the arms industry on the civilian authority thus did not come under close political scrutiny, though all three have been shown by analysts to

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[104] Grouped within the groupe *d'Intérêt Économique ACE International Rafale* were Avions Marcel Dassault, Snecma, Thomson-CSF, and Electroniques Serge Dassault.

[105] See Guisnel, op. cit., pg. 209.

[106] Cited in *Le Figaro*, 17-18 September 1988, emphasis added.

[107] See Hernu in *Le Monde*, 5-6 September 1982, and 6 April 1982.

[108] See Chevènement's interview in *La Tribune de l'Expansion*, 25 October 1988, and Hernu, cited in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 3 June 1983.

[109] A 1989 Parliamentary report stated that France's defence policy choices meant its arms industry should be able to make anything, and should be at the forefront of all technological fields. J-G Branger, *Avis* , op. cit., pg. 5

be either of questionable validity, or practically unsustainable.[110]

The resultant erosion of political ability adequately to control the pressure exerted by the arms lobby - especially when this was accompanied by backing from the forces- was increased by the not inconsiderable informal links that existed between political leaders and representatives of certain powerful pressure groups. Thus, for instance, analysts have pointed to the close links that existed between forces favouring the creation of a new mobile component of the *force de dissuasion* and the Right Wing governmental majority of 1986-1988 as an explanation for political pressure for the creation of such a component.[111] Political leaders could act as powerful allies for the arms lobby. In certain cases, they could act as powerful representatives of the views of their own departments. This was notably the case with regard to Jean-Pierre Chevènement and the *Hadès*. We have seen how French prestrategic weapons fitted only uneasily into the overall shape of French deterrent policy, in that they apparently involved a concession towards the Nato orthodoxy of flexible response. It has also been pointed out that Mitterrand himself was not fully convinced as to the utility of the *Hadès*. Chevènement, however, lobbied hard for the continuation of the programme, and was instrumental in ensuring its continuation long after it strategic utility had been eroded following the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe.[112]

Although it is important not to overstate the 'cosiness' of a system which included many disparate groups competing for influence, it is nevertheless the case that personal ties doubtless aided powerful interest groups to impose their views on political leaders.

Operational Planning Aside from questions of simple funding, the forces provided staunch

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[110] On the possibly detrimental effects of exports, see J-P Hébert 'Bénéfices Illusoires et Calculs Politiques', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 1988. In the desperate quest for foreign customers, the arms industry in fact used measures - notably on-site production - which some claimed actually risked the longer term competivity of the arms industry by building the foundations for future competitors. See *L'Express*, 15 February 1985, and *Le Monde*, 17 April 1985. On the infeasibility of maintaining capacity in all sectors, see the report of the *Centre de Prévision et d'Analyse* cited in *Libération*, 9 March 1990. On military spending and the civilian economy, see Nations Unies, *Conséquences économiques et Sociales de la Course aux Armements et des Dépenses Militaires*, New York, United Nations, 1975, and F. Chesnais, *Compétivité Internationale et Dépenses Militaires*, Paris, Economica, 1990.

[111] Thus, the '*lobby* defending the SX missile....succeeded in selling its project to the new majority.' P. Buffotot 'Les Partis Politiques et la Défense: "La Cohabitation et le Consensus" ', op. cit., pg. 100. Jolyon Howorth claims that Chirac's lobbying for SX instead of S4 during 1986 was because of advice from his military adviser Jacques Foccart, rather than because of strategic rationales. See 'France and Gorbachev', op. cit., pg. 85 fn. 59.

[112] Interview with Hubert Vedrine, Paris, 1991.

resistance to many initiatives aimed at reforming their structures. This was noticeable with regard to the Land Army reforms of 1982-1983. Jean Guisnel gives a detailed account of the opposition of the Land Army towards the proposed reforms, and of the manner in which Fricaud-Chagnaud deliberately attempted to by-pass the hierarchy of the forces in order to have the idea accepted, with the use of GROUPES, with its non-military director, as a forum for considering the plan. He portrays the army mobilising opponents of the plan in the Senate to defeat the proposed *Loi de Programmation Militaire*, and actively trying to sabotage the proposed FAR.[113] The plan succeeded, claims Guisnel, solely because it enjoyed the support of many influential figures outside the Land Army. The whole episode, however, serves as an illustration of the manner in which the armed forces, whilst ultimately subordinate within the decision-making hierarchy to the politicians, can act as a powerful force of inertia within that hierarchy.

The example of the FAR provides a good example of the care with which the political elite approached reforms which had an effect on the armed forces. As already noted, there were a bewildering variety of opinions regarding the rationale that lay behind the FAR. Thus, Admiral Leenhardt, Chief of Staff of the Navy at the time of the creation of the force, insisted that one of the key roles of the FAR was to be interventions outside Europe; evidently, as Chief of Staff of the branch of the services which would have most benefited from such a role, this was seen as a positive innovation by him. François Cailletaux, a former member of the *cabinet* of Hernu insisted that the force was intended by the Defence Minister as primarily one for displaying European solidarity. Clearly, these opinions are not mutually exclusive. Yet the fact that such conflicting opinions prevailed amongst the highest echelons of decision making indicates the level to which, in the face of shrinking resources mitigating against the explicit satisfaction of the needs of all groups, ambiguity of presentation was regarded as a necessity in order to maintain the guise of overall consensus, and avoid antagonising sections of the armed forces.

The Policy Process and the Nature of Alliance Policy

The impact of such pressures on Alliance policy in general are evidently hard to measure in any strict sense. The above discussion casts an interesting light on the failure of French policy makers to adapt policies to the new international and domestic economic environment. Not all the

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[113] See Guisnel, op. cit., pp. 145-159. General Fricaud-Chagnaud told me that Guisnel's account of the circumstances of the creation of the FAR is essentially correct: interview, Paris, 1991. In a similar vein, see Guisnel's account of the planning of the *Armées 2000* plan, pp. 159-164.

repercussions of the influence of various vested interests in the policy process were negative with regard to the overall nature of Alliance policy in international terms. Pressures to maintain defence spending at relatively high levels throughout the period inevitably constrained the ability of political leaders to make sacrifices in the sphere of defence in order to fund projects in other sectors, and thus contributed to the image of a France which was, in the words of one American official 'in many ways a model of a burden-sharing country'.[114]

Other pressures, however, led to less positive outcomes. The disputes between the Defence and Foreign Ministries contributed to the uncertainty which shrouded allied perceptions of French policy. Initiatives aimed at cooperation were often accompanied or at least closely followed by declarations of staunch independence and of the sacred principle of non-automaticity. This stemmed in part, as we have seen, from the requirements of 'consensus'. It also resulted, however, from the disagreements between the Quai d'Orsay and the Rue Saint Dominique over the form that French relations with the Alliance should take. We have seen above how it was Dumas who quashed speculation regarding possible French reintegration into Nato military commands following the comments of Joxe. French policy was contradictory, because it was pursued by French officials with often conflicting aims. As the episode of the FAR illustrates, Parliament, and a desire to appease all branches of the armed forces in this respect mitigated against Paris clearly stating a preference for enhanced cooperation with allies, and in favour of precisely the kind of ambiguity which undermined French claims to be loyal allies.

In the budgetary sphere, the unwillingness to make financial choices exacerbated the already severe financial crisis facing the armed forces. The proclivity simply to extend the projected length of especially prestige projects, rather than make painful choices regarding the cancellation of certain of them merely increased the equipment shortages experienced by the military. Moreover, the refusal to reallocate priorities between armed forces, and to simply share resources out between the three services hampered attempts to redefine priorities in the post Cold War World.

Similarly, the continuation of the *Hadès* programme bore witness to the strategic implications of arms programmes necessitated by the power of the military and the arms lobby in that its very existence, not to mention the large numbers produced, clearly came into conflict with French

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[114] Interview with Mr. Davies, American Embassy, Paris, 1991.

denunciations of flexible response.[115] The continuation of the programme long after the revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe, and therefore after the expiration of its military utility, illustrated the ability of influential interest groups to pre-empt reasoning based on strategic or political considerations, and contributed to the impression of a French policy that remained based on purely national security considerations.

This impression was heightened by the Rafale. Quite apart from the fact that the whole saga of French withdrawal from the cooperative EFA project cast doubt on the real desire of Paris to engage in armaments cooperation, the type of plane that Paris decided to construct itself represented a denial of declaratory protestations of solidarity with allies. The capabilities of the Rafale - a relatively light plane in comparison to its European competitor, made it a less than ideal instrument of French participation in a Central European conflict, although enabling it to both land on aircraft carriers and serve in the defence of French territory.

Continued French emphasis on national armaments production, often at the expense of cooperative ventures, minimised the possibility of the development of interoperability between allied military forces, and cooperation between national arms industries. The continued use by the allied forces of different equipment meant that ammunition and other supplies often differed. A purely national emphasis also weakened French conventional capabilities, by limiting the amount of up-to-date material France could produce for itself. Hence one commentator was led to ask:

> ....is it desirable that France continue to produce on a national basis ninety-six per cent of the equipment of its armed forces and whether, in many cases, buying 'off the shelf' from allies would not be preferable to stretching out programmes that shrink with inflation. From the Jaguar, in service since 1968, which never received the ....equipment that was supposed to equip it, for lack of funds; to the AMX-30, the oldest of all the tanks deployed by the principal Nato states, in service since 1967; to the new 155mm guns whose production was stopped after only a few tens; to the carrier-based Crusader aircraft, so old that we are the last country in the world to deploy it, the Philippines having replaced theirs in 1988; to the surface ships of the fleet, most of which were constructed before 1960 and whose last modifications date from before 1980, a long list demonstrates the maladjustment of our conventional force structure and the necessity of.... overhauling it....[116]

Further, as Thierry de Montbrial has pointed out, doctrinal *rapprochement* is in many ways a *sine*

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[115] See P. Boniface, *L'Armée*, op. cit., pp. 292-293.

[116] E. Faudon (pseud.), 'La Guerre avec l'Irak et la Programmation Militaire Française', *Libération*, 27 February 1991.

qua non of meaningful industrial cooperation.[117] Yet the armaments pushed through the decision-making system by interest groups were not consistent with a more European-oriented military strategy, and in this way hamstrung attempts to create either operational or arms manufacturing cooperation.

Pierre Joxe had, in 1991, criticised the Nato decision, taken at the May 1991 Defence Planning Committee, to create a Rapid Reaction Force, questioning 'the logic of an initiative which leads our partners to redefine the force structure of the Alliance without even having decided on the evolution of the threat, or the renewal of Nato's strategy and role'.[118] Ironically, many French military decisions were taken in a similar way, with force requirements being considered independently of the geostrategic situation.[119] Mitterrand himself, despite his comments concerning Presidential control over defence and foreign policy, was forced to admit that the Rafale decision had been influenced by stubborn industrialists, thus preventing France from embarking on a course of enhanced European cooperation.[120]

Specific choices and different pressures had, therefore, the effect of aggravating the inability of French Alliance policy to face up to the requisites of the prevailing international situation, even if certain political leaders realised the nature of those requisites.

Conclusions

What this Chapter has illustrated is the capacity of certain groups to exploit a propitious institutional environment in order to make their views prevail on political leaders. This in turn was of significant importance in terms of the nature of Alliance policy, as specific *decisions* had a profound impact on its overall form. Routine decisions taken at tiers of the decision-making process below the political level affected vital aspects of policy; thus, although, as Howorth points

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[117] Cited in J-P Hébert, *Stratégie Française et Industrie d'Armament*, Paris, FEDN, 1991, pg. 34.

[118] Speech to the National Assembly of 6 June 1991, cited in *Propos Sur la Défense*, no. 21, May-June 1991, pg. 108.

[119] Witness, for instance, the suggestion by Jean-Guy Branger that France should proceed with the S4 missile project, not because of its military necessity, but because of the negative effect that a failure to do so might have on French armaments research teams. *Avis*, op. cit., pg 34. This contrasts with the opinion of one former President of the National Assembly armed forces commission who stated that, when it came to choosing between weapons materials, the only people qualified to choose were the military themselves. See A. Volquin, op. cit., pg. 46.

[120] Speech to the IHEDN, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

out, the Gulf crisis and war reduced the policy making role of the Defence Ministry from 'near zero to actual zero',[121] the tools France had at its disposal to use during the Gulf - and a possible European - conflict were conditioned by routine decision making choices within that Ministry..

The institutions of the Fifth Republic, and in particular those concerned with defence policy making had benefited from legitimisation through consensus. Acceptance of Presidential supremacy in these spheres paved the way for a relatively high degree of secrecy to surround supposedly executive choices. Thus, decisions could be made quietly, and without public knowledge of the forces that were at work lower down the decision-making structures. Belief in a *domaine réservé* thus focused attention away from the effects of powerful lobbying groups situated under the President.

Decision making, in many instances, then, was made less with reference to the international requirements of the time - military or political - than as a result of persistent and effective lobbying from groups whose intention was to further their own interests, rather than rationalise French Alliance policy. This is not to say that the system provided no scope for Presidential initiative or direction; on the contrary, it is accepted here that the French Presidency enjoys 'a *capacity* for policy initiative, a *potential* for far-sighted planning and a *propensity* to impose its will when it is necessary to attain public objectives'.[122] Both the capacity and potential exist, as we have seen.

The problem resides in the fact that the President usually acts on the basis of advice given to him from below. In this case, his propensity to impose his will depends on his perception of a public objective. In many cases, these were defined in terms of domestic, rather than international criteria, as was the case with the *Hadès*, and the reluctance to close down unprofitable arms complexes. In others, although the language of persuasion used by those trying to win the ear of the President was of international necessity, the ultimate aim was the defence of their own sectional - domestic - interest; hence the intensive lobbying of the forces, and the attachment of the Quai d'Orsay to independence.

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[121] J. Howorth, 'François Mitterrand and the "Domaine Réservé"', op. cit., pg. 51.

[122] J. Hayward, 'Mobilising private interests in the service of public ambitions: the salient element in the dual French policy style?', in J. Richardson (ed.), *Policy Styles in Western Europe*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, pg. 116.

The nature of policy making differed between sectors. Thus, the DGA was most heavily involved in construction for Navy (accounting for 37 per cent of armed forces orders to the DGA) and land army (39 per cent). It was less directly involved over aerospace, where the military and political elites formed close ties directly with the large arms firms directly.[123]

Noticeable in all sectors, however, was the relative absence of any input from the *Parti Socialiste* itself, usurped as it was by various competing interest groups, few of whom shared, for example, its proclivity to demand some form of peace dividend. Unlike the situation during the 1970s, when Mitterrand found himself obliged to take into account the opinions both of his own party and of the Communists, in his quest for an electorally powerful alliance, party considerations were of considerably less importance after May 1981. Indeed, the sentiments publicly expressed by senior Socialist Ministers about their Communist colleagues implied that their opinions on defence and foreign policy were no longer of any great interest to France's new rulers.

Yet Mitterrand proved unable to impose the political preferences he had enunciated prior to 1981, despite his occupancy of the *Chateau*. Contrary to the wishes of de Gaulle, the Fifth Republic did not manage to eradicate the influence of vested interests policy formation. As in the case of the consensus, institutional and interest group pressures often led to policy being defined in terms of domestic requirements, thus helping to explain the growing dysfunctionality that came to characterise French Alliance policy.

The overall nature of Alliance *policy* thus resulted in many senses from a series of *decisions* based on domestic rationales. Almost inevitably, then, this hampered the ability of policy to achieve *international* objectives, leading to the dysfunctionality discussed in Part Two.

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[123] See *Le Monde*, *Affaires*, 10 June 1989.

CONCLUSION TO PART THREE

Part Three has illustrated the manner in which both institutional constrains, and policy inertia resulting from an unwillingness to threaten the appearance of 'consensus' acted as a brake on policy adaptation.

It has outlined a largely symbiotic relationship between consensus and the institutions of Alliance policy making. Thus, whilst consensus has included a legitimisation of the institutions of the Fifth Republic, (in keeping with some of the political science usages of the term), the same institutions have helped to nurture consensus.

Domestic constraints affected not only the *content*, but also the *style* of French Alliance policy. In terms of the former, both the overall shape of policy at the declaratory level, and specific choices and decisions which have repercussions for nature of Alliance policy were profoundly affected. Thus, 'consensus' necessitated the presentation of reforms in a certain (ambiguous) way, and excluded the possibility of certain policy choices - independence and non-integration were raised to the level of unchallengeable principles guiding defence and foreign policy. Institutional pressures imposed certain choices of equipment on policy makers, and helped exacerbate both the general funding crisis within the French armed forces, and the lack of clear choices in the light of the new strategic situation in Europe. Moreover, the vested interest of certain groups in maintaining a position of staunch independence meant that the Quai d'Orsay in particular watched closely over policy reforms in order to maintain a steady distance rom Nato allies.

As for the style of policy, the often brash nature of French rhetoric owed much to a perceived need to preserve the appearance of consensus at home. The vague nature of much French rhetoric regarding in particular the nature of any future European defence organisation was necessitated by the perceived impossibility of proposing detailed plans which would involve compromising the sacred principle of national independence. The often contradictory policy statements which characterised much of French policy was attributable to the different interests of different actors within the policy making system, leading to, for instance, staunch reassertions of independence by Foreign Ministers coexisting beside far more conciliatory rhetoric and initiatives emanating from the Rue Saint Dominique.

Thus, it has been shown that domestic factors were largely responsible for the slide of Alliance

policy into dysfuntionality. A series of discreet decisions, channelled through a complex policy-making process, withteh requiremnts of 'consensus' always present in the minds of political leaders shaped overall policy in a certain way.

CONCLUSIONS:
THE AMBIVALENT ALLY AND THE LIMITS OF INDEPENDENCE

This thesis has sought to perform four major tasks. First, it has briefly elucidated the nature of French Alliance policy and of Socialist policies with regard to Alliance relations prior to 1981. Second, it has examined the nature of Alliance policy between May 1981 and February 1991. Third, critically examined the components of that policy. Finally, it has examined the reasons which explain the policies pursued under Mitterrand. This conclusion will summarise the findings of the research work, both empirical and theoretical.

Empirical Findings

1945-1981 Prior to 1981, French Alliance policy was characterised by a high degree of continuity, centred on the Gaullist legacy of a policy of Alliance without integration. France was shown to have benefited considerably from the policies pursued, gaining an international influence out of proportion with its economic or military power, and enjoying a 'special' status amongst its allies. Also the object of remarkable continuity was the tendency of French leaders to tolerate a divergence between the rhetoric used about Alliance policy and the nature of the policies pursued. Thus close cooperation with Nato coexisted alongside declarations of outright independence - both military and political.

Under the leadership of François Mitterrand, the once staunchly Atlanticist and anti-nuclear French Socialist movement came to accept, as mutually complementary, the necessity of both independence from the two blocs and the *force de frappe*. Yet behind overall acceptance of the *lignes directrices* of French Alliance policy lay dissatisfaction with some of its components. Unease about a policy of arms sales *tous azimuts* was one of several specific points of dissatisfaction. Whilst the CERES criticised the pro-American leanings of Giscard d'Estaing in particular, and called for a more ambitious policy of outright independence from the two blocs, (supported in some instances by more 'Gaullist' elements within the Party such as Charles Hernu), Mitterrand, although sceptical of the security benefits offered by an American-dominated Alliance, remained convinced of the continued necessity of French membership of that Alliance. He also, moreover, showed an awareness of the tension within prevailing French policy between a declaratory emphasis on nuclear weapons, and the need to display practical solidarity with allies. Whilst tending to maintain the

French tradition of equating the two superpower blocs, and criticising American tendencies towards especially economic imperialism, he increasingly recognised the need to resolve this tension, especially in the light of his belief that a possible conflict in Western Europe could not be contained so as to make French non-belligerency a viable option.

Although broad cross-party support existed for the Gaullist grand design of Alliance without integration, therefore, there was reason to expect certain shifts in emphasis under a Socialist administration with Mitterrand at the Élysée.

The Ambivalent Ally The analysis of Alliance policy under Mitterrand carried out in Part Two reveals, however, a striking continuity of both rhetorical and actual policy towards Nato. The language of independence was preserved, both in terms of relations with the superpowers, where French officials continued to speak in terms of a 'third way' propounded by Paris, and in the defence sphere, where Paris clearly affirmed both its ability to defend its own territory, and its lack of interest in committing itself in advance to the defence of others.

Yet policy wavered somewhat. Whilst previous maximalist notions of independence continued to figure in rhetoric, so, too, did rather more minimalist conceptions regarding the inability of France to aspire to the role which de Gaulle had set for it. Certain officials questioned France's ability to maintain a position of foreign policy independence in the face of the superpowers, and spoke in increasingly warm terms of the community of values represented by the Atlantic Alliance (thereby down-playing the notion of 'non-alignment'). So, too, did declarations on defence policy demonstrate a growing desire for France to be seen to participate in the defence of Central Europe, whilst practical choices in the military domain underlined the requisite of strict independence.

Doubts concerning strict independence were reflected increasingly in the interest exhibited by French officials in an increased 'Europeanisation' of security structures. Certainly, French policy also reflected a number of other factors, including the traditional French distrust of superpower motives, and the desire to be able to play an active part in diplomacy which profoundly affected the fate of the 'Old Continent'. Increasingly, however, Europe, came to be seen as the most suitable vehicle for such aspirations. As in defence and foreign policy, however, conciliatory declaratory or symbolic gestures towards partners were accompanied by contradictory actions and rhetoric. Thus whilst it is undoubtedly true that French European initiatives were far more ambitious than they had ever been before in the defence sphere, an unwillingness to provide details

of grandiose rhetorical plans, or openly to question the principles of independence or national control over defence forces effectively deprived them of much of their value.

The overall picture of Alliance policy that emerges is one of an ambivalence which created uncertainty. In the first place, Paris on many occasions did not seem clear as to the nature of the policy it wished to pursue. Beyond the contradictions between what French leaders *said* and what they actually *did* lay a further tension between different elements of policy. European policy in particular came into conflict with the emphasis placed on national independence, whilst the military independence so beloved of French officials appeared in stark contrast to the professions of loyalty to an Atlantic Community of values that came increasingly to characterise French declarations on foreign policy.

The ambivalence of policy fostered an uncertainty amongst allies as to the nature of French policy and the intentions of Paris. Thus, the often contradictory nature of defence policy initiatives cast doubt on both the French desire, and the French ability to participate in a Central European conflict. Moreover, a policy characterised by a distinction between rhetoric and reality often exasperated French Alliance partners, unsure of which strand of French policy reflected the real beliefs of the political leaders in Paris.

Whilst in many ways taking the *rapprochement* with allies further than under any previous President, Mitterrand failed to address the contradictions in that policy which he had pointed out prior to May 1981. Uncertainty, it was shown in the analysis of Alliance policy, contributed to increasing dysfunctionality.

Alliance Policy: the Critique Apart from illustrating the major elements of Alliance policy during this period, Part Two of the thesis - in particular Chapters Four, Five, and Six, analysed those policies in the light of the goals set by French policy makers, and of changing international circumstances.

It was shown in Part Two that the aim of a certain influence in international affairs, referred to by the shorthand of *grandeur*, remained a *leitmotif* of the wider aims of French Alliance policy. Through the policy of Alliance without integration and of ensuring (theoretically) by itself its own defence, France aspired to a greater voice in international politics than it would have enjoyed from within the integrated military command structures of Nato. In certain instances such claims were

not without foundations throughout the 1980's. It was shown how the intervention of Mitterrand during the Euromissiles debate, and particularly before the Bundestag in January 1983 was a crucial turning point in the history of the crisis, and, probably more significantly for our purposes, recognised as such by France's allies. Similarly, Mitterrand was in a position to play an important mediatory role during intra-Alliance disputes concerning both the double-zero option and the proposed Nato short-range missile modernisation of the later 1980's.

Increasingly, however, French influence, particularly with regard to its Nato allies was undermined. This was especially the case as a result of the continued refusal on the part of Paris to participate fully in the debate on the new security environment in Europe. Hence, as we have seen, initiatives opposed by the French, such as the Nato Rapid Reaction Force, went ahead because of the absence of any French presence in the decision-making institutions.[1]

The style of French foreign policy, too, increasingly came to undermine the ability of Paris to influence its allies. Abrasive rhetoric, unilateral initiatives scarce on detail, and both implicit and explicit criticisms of American hegemonic tendencies did little to endear France to allies. Such a style served a purpose at a time of rigid bipolar confrontation in fostering the myth of French international independence from superpower control. But in a time of detente, when the security structures of the Cold War were rapidly crumbling, it served merely to reduce the trust in France of its partners.[2]

The hesitations and uncertainty which characterised policy compounded such declining trust on the part of French allies, confusing them as to France's real intentions. The gap between rhetoric and reality, particularly in so far as Europe was concerned, led to accusations that France was merely trying either to gain cheap political capital, or to drive the Americans out of Europe, whilst offering no meaningful concessions in return. This in turn resulted in France's allies, and the Americans in particular, being loath to accept the creation of a European defence entity along the lines suggested by Paris. As one American official put it, if 'it wasn't for the French, we might be able to accept the assurances that a new European security entity would be part of a trans-Atlantic

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[1] Pierre Lellouche wrote of the Nato reforms of 1991 that, to the extent that Paris remained aloof from the reforms, Britain and America profited from this and sorted things out to their own advantage. P. Lellouche, 'OTAN: l'atlanticisation', *Le Point* , 1 June 1991.

[2] Footnote reputation and also American quote on not trusting the French from Anthony.

partnership, but on this issue, we don't trust the French'.[3]

Further, French policy came to be increasingly dysfunctional, in that it progressively ceased to assure the function of providing the military means for independence and *grandeur*. This was true in three senses. In the first place, French doctrine itself lacked credibility, and the insistence on a notion of military independence which precluded the stationing of allied troops and installations on French territory, and the automatic and unambiguous solidarity of France in a possible Central European conflict detracted from the military efficacy of the Alliance itself. Second, changing international and domestic economic circumstances progressively reduced the operational capabilities of French military, (in particular conventional) forces, and increasingly cast doubt on the continued viability of the notion of an independent defence for a medium-sized European power. Such problems were, in turn, exacerbated by the continued insistence on the part of Paris on the need for independence in the military sphere to entail national production of as many elements as possible of the national defence machine. Finally, shifts in the nature of the international system following the end of the Cold War, in particular the devaluation of nuclear weapons as a guarantor of influence once bipolar confrontation had ceased, rendered the French defence posture even less able to guarantee French 'rank'.

Thus, whilst the ambiguities, contradictions and vacillations manifested by French policy reduced the influence of Paris over developments in Europe, the notion of remaining separate from changing security structures itself was seriously devalued.

Explaining Dysfunctionality: the Limits of Independence Much of the rhetoric on Europe, as well as the comments made, by Mitterrand in particular, prior to May 1981, illustrated the fact that leading French officials after 1981 were aware of the increasing pressures coming to bear on the traditional options of French Alliance policy. Certainly, declarations continued to persisted in claiming that French policy was fully functional, ensuring not only French security and rank, but enhancing the security of Western Europe as a whole. Yet the doubts that emerged in official speeches and articles revealed the extent to which the French governing elite were increasingly aware of the shortcomings of traditional policy choices. How, then, can the analyst explain the continued tendency of Paris to cling tightly to those options, eschewing the very reforms - that is

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[3] See *The Independent* 28 November, 1991. The issue of reputation, and others' perceptions of one's reliability is an important one. As Roger Fisher agues, a reputation for fair dealing 'can be an extraordinary asset as it opens up a large realm of creative agreements that would be impossible if others did not trust you.' R. Fisher (ed.), *Getting to Yes*, London, Randon Century, 1991, pg. 163.

to say European cooperation - that so much of its rhetoric pointed to?

The major explanations, as revealed in Part Three, lay within France itself. Certainly, this is not to argue that international imperatives had no effect on policy. Mitterrand's intervention before the Bundestag in 1983 owed more to fears regarding German trends towards neutralism and the possible imbalance of forces caused by the Soviet SS-20s than anything else. The changes that swept through Europe in the later part of the 1980's and early 1990s were of such a dramatic nature that they could not fail to influence policy. The revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union created a situation unlike any that had existed since 1945.

Most striking, however, was the fact that the rapidly shifting situation of the later 1980's and early 1990s led to no *fundamental* reappraisal of policy options in Paris, and this may be put down largely to domestic pressures. Part Three examined two domestic constraints: the internal 'consensus' on defence and foreign policy, and the policy-making process in these sectors. It was shown how each of these, in a different way, hindered effective policy adaptation. All aspects of policy were affected.

On a declaratory level, the consensus imposed the requirement of a certain degree of fidelity to the Gaullist legacy of the 1960's, as even badly divided opposition parties proved willing to make political capital out of perceived divergences. This was reinforced by the position of the Quai d'Orsay which monitored developments in policy, and was quick to underline the need for independence from the constraints entailed by excessively tight cooperation with Nato allies.. The requirement to maintain a certain form of presentation of policy was further heightened by the fact that the ruling Socialists found themselves in a minority within the National Assembly following the legislative elections of 1988. Such pressures encouraged the maintenance of relatively maximalist notions of national independence in foreign and defence policy declarations.

The substance of policy, too, was affected in a variety of ways by these internal factors. The constraint imposed by the 'consensus' meant that reforms needed to be carefully managed in order not to antagonise the self-appointed guardians of the Gaullist legacy: hence the ambivalence surrounding the FAR, which contributed to the uncertainty of France as an ally. Moreover, given the disagreements which existed regarding the role of conventional forces and tactical nuclear weapons, moves towards increasing French capabilities, or changing operational strategy in these areas would have run the risk of meeting stiff opposition. This, in turn, helps to explain the

continued emphasis placed on the French strategic nuclear deterrent force, despite continued claims from Paris - more strident in tone than under previous Presidents - that France was directly concerned by the security of its neighbours.

Specific policy choices, which, in turn, had an effect on the broader nature of Alliance policy were also often made on the basis of domestic considerations. Thus, the debate over the mobile missile was influenced by Mitterrand's fears concerning the effect of such a weapon on public opinion, whilst pressures from the arms lobby forced the right-wing government of *cohabitation* to press forward with the project. More damaging in terms of relations with allies were, notably, the continuation of the *Hadès* programme - especially given the large number of the weapons originally planned - and the failure of France to participate in the European fighter aircraft programme. Choices imposed by domestic pressures in this sense worked against the professed desire of French officials for closer relations with allies, and in particular for enhanced European cooperation in the defence sphere, and added to the ambiguity resulting from the distinction between what Paris said, and what it did.

Theoretical Implications

As was pointed out in the Introduction, the empirical findings of the thesis are of great interest for analysts, for they examine in detail for the first time the nature and explanations of French Alliance policy under the Presidency of Mitterrand. They may also be of some theoretical interest. In particular, they relate to the two crucial questions outlined in the Introduction: one pertaining to the 'level of analysis' question in International Relations, the other to the study of foreign policy and the domestic political process.

Opening up the State The most readily apparent theoretical implication of the thesis is that foreign policy outputs cannot be understood simply as 'rational' responses to altered international imperatives. Not only did French Alliance policy not represent a 'rational' response to international pressures, in many cases it did not represent a response to international pressures at all. Systemic-level International Relations theories, as well as the Political Science models mentioned in the Introduction, posit continuity of policy as proof of their claims of French policy-makers being able to impose a specific 'grand design' in the foreign policy sector, a design conditioned by the realities of geography and power. The thesis tends to suggest continuity of

policies resulted from the impact of domestic pressures on policy makers who increasingly came to recognise the need for policy adaptation in the light of fundamentally altered international conditions.

Alliance policy-making What the findings indicate is the need for detailed study of *domestic* conditions within states in order fully to comprehend the nature of Alliance policy, or foreign policy in general. As Rosenau asserted, in the early 1970's,' *what* a state does is on no small way a function of how it decides what to do - in other words, foreign policy action is a product of decisions, and the way decisions are made may substantially affect their contents.'[4] This requires more than the tokenistic acceptance of simplified models which incorporate aspects of domestic political activity into explanations of foreign policy outcomes. Rather, the analyst of foreign policy is drawn towards the kinds of concepts used by students of the domestic political process as a whole, that is to say, towards some of the analytical tools of Political Science.

Crucial to an analysis of decision making and policy formulation is the question of the *actors* involved in the decision-making process. This, in turn, is directly related to the issue at hand. At one extreme, should a sector be perceived by the *Élysée* as being of supreme importance, Presidential initiative could by-pass the complexities of the decision-making process. As we saw in Chapter Eight, Presidential predominance over foreign and defence policy has been enshrined by over three decades of political practice. We can thus concur with one assessment of Presidential power in the United States:

> The President stands at the center of the foreign policy process....His role and influence over decisions are qualitatively different than [sic] those of any other participants. In any foreign policy decision widely perceived at the time to be important, the President will be a principal if not the principal figure determining the general direction of actions.[5]

Clearly, however, Mitterrand was unable to exercise such personal control over all the decisions which impinged on Alliance policy, though, as we have seen, in times of crisis such as the Gulf War, power was very centralised. Moreover, it was partly as a result of the information presented to him by the actors involved in lower stages of the decision-making process that his final *arbitrage*

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[4] See J. Rosenau (ed.) *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, New York, Free Press, 1969, pg 169.

[5] M. Halperin and A. Kanter, 'The Bureaucratic Perspective: a Preliminary Perspective' in M. Halperin and A. Kanter (eds.), *Readings in American Foreign Policy: A Bureaucratic Perspective*, Boston, Little Brown, 1973, pg. 6.

took the form it did. The processes of routine decision making in this way were of crucial importance in structuring Presidential choices regarding Alliance policy.

A first point that needs to be made concerning such routine decision making is that the decisions arrived at were often of crucial importance in shaping the Alliance policy pursued by France. It is not possible to distinguish, as some analysts have tried to do, issues of 'high politics' - matters pertaining to the security and power of the state - from those of 'low politics' - mainly technical and welfare issues. The thesis has revealed how issue linkage occurred across different ministries, and how the nature of welfare priorities put enormous pressure on defence budgets. It also, moreover, has shown the way in which apparently routine decisions, such as those taken to continue with studies on the *Hadès*, could profoundly affect both the nature of policy and the perceptions of that policy on the part of allies.

Turning to the processes that characterise such routine decision-making, at the most general level, we can broadly concur with the claims of the 'pluralist' school of policy making, which asserts that in 'each issue area different actors [appear], their roles [are] different and the kinds of alternatives they had to choose among [are] different'.[6] As Richardson and Jordan assert:

> The point is not only that many groups are involved in policy making but that policy making is to a large extent made in 'issue communities'. Policy making is segmented.[7]

From the Ministry of Finance, to those of Defence and Foreign policy, from trade unions fighting for jobs, to the large arms manufacturing firms, a myriad of different players were involved in the decision-making process at different times. The process was characterised by a pattern of shifting Alliances and coalitions, depending on the issue at hand. Of all the three strands of Alliance policy considered, it was undoubtedly defence which was the most constrained by such varied forces, simply because, through the 'horizontal' Finance Ministry, questions of defence affected all other 'vertical' ministries. Once a defence budget had been allocated, however, the rules of the game changed, with the previously united elements that together made up the Ministry of Defence often finding themselves in conflict as questions of resource allocation were tackled.

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[6] N. Polsby, *Community Power and Social Theory*, New Haven Yale University Press, 1963, pg. 60. See also R. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, New Haven Yale University Press, 1961.

[7] J. Richardson and G. Jordan, *Governing under Pressure* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979, pg. 53.

It is only through a process of disaggregating the various actors involved in various decisions, that an explanation of the nature of Alliance policy can be arrived at. Thus, 'bureaucratic' models of foreign policy making, which are common in the international relations literature, fail to do justice to the complexities of interactions between governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as to the fact that the various ministries themselves are often enormously divided over specific issues.

This study of the domestic political processes that lie behind French Alliance policy has revealed that a number of distinct groups participate either directly or indirectly in policy making. Involvement takes place on the basis of the perceived interests of each group - interests which do not necessarily coincide with inter-group boundaries. Branches of the state apparatus often find themselves allied with pressure groups against other governmental departments. Simply to posit inter-departmental or governmental-societal divisions would be to oversimplify the reality. Thus:

> ....policy-making is fragmented into subsystems. and....the main boundaries are between subsystems rather than the component units of the subsystem. There is a breaking down of conceptual distinctions between government agencies and pressure groups.[8]

As a general hypothesis, where decision-making was heavily concentrated in Presidential hands, policy was more likely to respond to perceived international imperatives. Yet even in the case of the President himself, domestic consideration could play a role in foreign policy decision making: some observers claimed, for instance, that Mitterrand's obstinacy in the face of repeated demands for the construction of a mobile missile represented such a case.[9] As more and more different actors came to be involved in the decision-making process, domestic factors impinged more and more. Thus, for the Quai d'Orsay, questions of Alliance policy were directly related to a struggle for control with the Rue Saint Dominique. The *Hadès* was a means for the Land Army to retain access to nuclear weapons, and to ensure work for the arms industry.

Such rough generalisations, however, do not enable the analyst to indulge in accurate prediction of policy output. As one study has put it with regard to economic policy formulation in Britain: 'Interest groups cajole, the Bank of England warns, the civil servants guide, the back-benchers plot, the departmental ministers propose, and the Prime Minster disposes. But so often it is pure hazard

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[8] Ibid, pp. 43-44.

[9] Wiltzer interview.

which tips the scales'.[10] Although, ultimately, the President decides, whether the basis of that decision will be foreign or domestic considerations depends on the policy process, and on the success of various groups in gaining his ear. Specific constellations of forces - the armed service which holds key positions, personal chemistry, links between political elites and leading corporate figures - all add a sense of unpredictability to policy outputs. Often, as we have seen, routine decision-making processes place the President in the position of being forced into choosing the only alternative offered - witness the Rafale case - especially given the dangers inherent in opting for choices that would appear to contradict the prevailing belief system, and risk revealing the dissensus surrounding policy choices.

In order to explain policy, therefore, the analyst should be aware of the profusion of actors that became involved in decisions pertaining to Alliance policy. That no simple 'model' can be formulated to express this is emphasised by the role played in policy formulation by the existence of certain belief systems. 'Consensus', which in effect masked significant elements of dissensus meant that even if certain decisions could be arrived at without being blocked within the policy process, they were not actually made, through fear of upsetting the legitimating belief system that had been fostered around Gaullist policy options. The existence of an alleged consensus also had a profound effect on the nature of policy making, in that it imposed certain constraints on participation in the policy process. Analysts have drawn a distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' groups, characterising those which enjoy, or do not, a perceived legitimate position within the policy process.[11] Consensus provided a ready mechanism for deligitimising certain groups or individuals who questioned prevailing policy options. The ability of the defence policy community to structure its own membership to a large degree made of it a highly collusive group.

Paradoxically, therefore, although often considered as the sectors providing most scope for 'rational' policy-making, defence and foreign policy represented in many ways spheres more characterised than others by incrementalism. That this was so resulted from as combination of factors affecting both the actors and the issues involved.

The various groups involved in policy making wielded tremendous power. There existed powerful vested interests which, to coin a phrase, 'thanks to their strategic location in the socio-economic

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[10] J. Bruce-Gardyne and N. Lawson, *The Power Game* London, Macmillan, 1976, pg. 184.

[11] See the discussion of terminology in J. Hayward *The State and the Market Economy* op. cit., pp. 39-44.

system....acquire[d] a major capacity materially to help or hinder decisions by offering or withholding their cooperation or engaging in various forms of covert or overt opposition to defence old privileges enshrined in the status quo'.[12] A closed and highly collusive policy community characterised by high degrees of cross-fertilisation of personnel enjoying the facility for the exclusion of dissenters facilitated the influence of such groups. So, too, did the absence of any client group pressing vociferously for satisfaction of demands which contradicted those of policy elites (such as was the case in areas of domestic politics).[13]

The nature of the issue area itself facilitated incrementalism. Certainly, policy making in time of crisis such as the Gulf War, or the Euromissiles affair was characterised by a high degree of Presidential involvement and policy choices based on international criteria. Much of the stuff of which Alliance policy was made, however, was purely routine, with routine decision-making involving high levels of participation from groups with strong vested interests at stake. Moreover, the specific nature of the defence policy sphere in some ways exacerbated the trend towards incrementalism. The ability to employ the language of non-partisan national interest - a legitimising discourse that characterised discussions of defence policy[14] - reinforced by the importance of 'consensus', to defend specific decisions protected the defence sector from debate on policy choices. Further, the enormous secrecy which characterised defence policy making especially in France provided a further means of enshrining the influence of various domestic groups.

The dysfunctionality of policy in terms of intended objectives was therefore exacerbated, incrementalism leading to inappropriate policies, in that satisfaction of domestic interests does not in itself constitute a criteria for judging the success of external policy: 'no doubt foreign policies....are designed to divert attention from domestic problems, but they are also intended to maximise influence over the international environment, and so the policies have to be adjusted to changes in that environment.'[15]

Whilst international conditions, as perceived in Paris, certainly did have an effect on the intentions

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[12] J. Hayward *The State and the Market Economy* op. cit., pg. 43.

[13] The groups on the 'receiving end' of Alliance policy were, of course, foreign allies, rather than a domestic group such as teachers or farmers who could resort to industrial action in order to impose a 'rational' solution. Aurillac point on silence of military which had to suffer deficient equipment.

[14] Hence, Mitterrand claimed that Socialist adherence to nuclear deterrence was 'not a question of ideological choice'. Speech to Danish Parliament, 29 April, 1982, cited in *PEF*, April-June 1982, pg. 34.

[15] J. Rosenau *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* New York, Free Press, 1971, pg. 100.

of policy-makers, (witness the Bundestag speech, and the increased interest exhibited by French leaders in the idea of some form of European defence identity), as increasing numbers of actors became involved in policy making, the focus on the international decreased, and thus explanations of policy output must be sought within France rather than outside it.

The messiness of any explanation belies both the simplicity often posited by both International Relations and Political Science, and the artificial, yet often firm, distinction that is frequently drawn between the two. Certainly foreign policy is different, in that it represents a core issue of national sovereignty, and is characterised by certain specific decision-making processes, affected in turn by conditions external to France. Yet it is not free from the forces that affect policy-making in every other sphere.

This thesis has illustrated the fact that French Alliance policy, which displayed a marked degree of continuity under Mitterrand, no longer, by the beginning of the 1990s, served the purpose for which it was originally intended, and in some ways even worked against the achievement of the very goals it had traditionally been meant to fulfil. Paris by 1992 faced the real danger of a debilitating isolation from the European security debate, and appeared largely unwilling or unable to react. The explanations for the relative failure to adapt policies in line with shifting international requirements lay in the domestic sphere: the combination of institutional inertia and an unwillingness to question a policy that was perceived to - and indeed for many years did - bring its fair share of rewards to France led to a damaging degree of *immobilisme*.

Ironically, a policy intended both to rally elements of the French political spectrum to the Fifth Republic and to create institutions capable of ensuring French international independence succeeded almost too well. Thus, the 'consensus' and the institutional patterns of the Fifth Republic later conspired to render policy adaptation extremely difficult. An Alliance policy constructed on the notion of independence and hostility to the bipolar Cold War system thus became rigidified, leaving Paris unable to respond when bipolarity ended, and notional independence was becoming steadily more counterproductive.

The degree to which a middle power like France is free to define an autonomous policy with regard to Nato, then, depends in many ways on conditions within that state. Ironically, French ability to limit its independence and play a more active role in the redefining of a post Cold War European security structure was acutely limited by such conditions. Despite clear signs of rethinking of the

fundamental options of French Alliance policy by the later 1980's, Paris clung to those same options. By the early 1990s, the abiding notion of a France 'with free hands' had, in itself, limited the independence of Nato's most ambivalent ally.

Annexes

Annexe One
List of Abbreviations

ACCS	Nato Air Command and Control System
ANT	*Armament Nucléaire Tactique*, tactical nuclear weapon
ASMP	*Air-sol Moyenne portée*, French medium-range air-to ground missile
CAP	*Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision*, a planning cell in the Foreign Ministry
CATAC	*Commandement Aérien Tactique* (Tactical Air Force Command)
CEA	*Commissariat d'Énergie Atomique*
CEMA	*Chef d'État-Major des Armées* (Armed Forces Chief of Staff)
CEMAA	*Chef d'État-Major de l'Armée de l'Air* (Air Force Chief of Staff)
CEMAT	*Chef d'État-Major de l'Armée de Terre* (Land Army Chief of Staff)
CEMM	*Chef d'État-Major de la Marine* (Navy Chief of Staff)
CEMP	*Chef d'État-Major Particulier* (Chief military adviser to the President of the Republic)
CENTAG	Central Army Group (Nato)
CERES	*Centre d'Études, de recherches, et d'education socialiste*, a left-wing faction of the Socialist Party
CPE	*Centre de Prévision et d'Évaluation*, section of the Defence Ministry
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DGA	*Délégation Générale pour l'Armament*
DPC	Defence Planning Committee (Nato)
DST	*Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire*, responsible for intelligence work within France
EDC	European Defence Community
EC	European Community
EFA	European Fighter Aircraft
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ESPRIT	European Strategic Programme for Research in Information Technologies
FAR	*Force d'Action Rapide*, the French rapid reaction force
FAS	*Force Aérienne Stratégique*, comprising both air and land-based components of the French strategic nuclear force
FATAC	*Force Aérienne Tactique*, France's tactical air force
FEDN	*Fondation pour les Études de Défense Nationale*
FOST	*Force Océanique Stratégique*, France's sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent force
GIE	*Groupe d'Intéret Économique*, the industrial cartel behind the Rafale
GROUPES	*Groupe d'Études et de Planification Stratégiques*, a study group within the Defence Ministry
IFRI	*Institut Français de Relations Internationales*, the French national international relations research institute
IGC	Intergovernmental conference
IHEDN	*Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Defense Nationale*, a forum for reflections on questions of defence
INF	Intermediate Nuclear forces
LPM	*Loi de Programmation Militaire*, a military planning law
MBFR	Mutual Balanced Force Reduction

NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NADC	Nato Air Defence Committee
NADGE	Nato Air Defence Ground Environment
NATO	North Atlantic treaty Organisation
PCF	*Parti Communiste Français*, the French Communist Party
PEF	La Politique Étrangère de la France: Textes et documents
PS	*Parti Socialiste*, the French socialist party
RDP	*Regiment de Dragons Parachutists*
RPR	*Rassemblement pour la République*, the Gaullist Party, led by Jacques Chirac
RRF	Rapid Reaction Force (Nato)
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative?
SEA	Single European Act (1987) amending the Treaty of Rome
SFIO	*Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière*, the old French socialist party
SGDN	*Secretariat Général de la Défense Nationale*, body responsible for coordination of much of French defence policy
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SIRPA	*Service d'Information et de Relations Publiques des Armées*, the information service of the armed forces
SNLE	*Sous-marin Nucléaire lanceur d'engins*, ballistic missile submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons
UDF	*Union pour la Démocratie Française*, French centre-right party
UEO	Union d'Europe Occidentale (WEU)
USAF	United States Air Force
WEU	West European Union

Annexe Two
Chronology

1945-1981

September 1958	Constitution of Fifth Republic approved by referendum
September 1958	Memorandum sent by de Gaulle to President Eisenhower
January 1959	De Gaulle proclaimed President of the Fifth Republic.
April 1961	Army coup in Algeria against French government
January 1963	Élysée treaty signed between France and West Germany
March 1966	Withdrawal from Nato
November 1966-February 1967	Ailleret-Lemnitzer agreements signed
November 1967	Ailleret's address to IHEDN
March 1969	Fourquet's speech to IHEDN
April 1969	De Gaulle resigns
May 1969	Pompidou elected President
December 1970	Fourquet-Goodpaster agreements signed
May 1971	Parti Socialiste created. Mitterrand becomes First Secretary
1972	*Livre Blanc sur la Défense Nationale* published
April 1974	Death of Pompidou
May 1974	Election of Giscard d'Estaing after second ballot against Mitterrand
May 1976	Méry's speech to IHEDN
June 1976	Giscard d'Estaing's speech to IHEDN
May 1977	PCF adopts Kanapa report accepting *force de frappe*
January 1978	PS defence convention adopts motion accepting *force de frappe*

1981

20 January	Reagan inauguration.
18 February	State of Union address. Reagan proposes huge peace time defence spending.
26 April	First round of French Presidential elections.
10 May	Second round of Presidential elections. Mitterrand 51.76%, Giscard d'Estaing 48.24%.
21 May	Mauroy chosen as temporary P.M. Communists excluded from government.
27 May	Reagan at West Point attacks Soviet Union as 'evil force' aimed at destroying U.S.
17 June	TASS bitter attack on Reagan's 'militarist ideology'.
21 June	Second round of legislative elections.
22 June	Mauroy named Prime Minister.
22-3 June	Four Communists named in new government
10-11 September	6th Franco-British summit, London
18-19 October	Mitterrand meets Reagan in Williamsburg.
21 October	Reagan says any threat to Europe is threat to US.
18 November	Televised address, Reagan supports 'zero option'. Scrap INF deployment if USSR scrap SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5.
13 December	'State of War' declared in Poland

1982

23 January	France signs 25 year contract on Siberian gas.
10 February	French banks announce $140 million loan to Soviet Union to buy French equipment for pipeline.
24-25 February	Franco-German summit
12 March	Mitterrand trip to Washington
30 May	Spain formally joins Nato
10 June	Alliance summit, Bonn
18 June	US extends trade sanctions on material for pipeline to include foreign subsidiaries and licensees of US companies
7-9 July	Mitterrand visits Hungary
12-13 July	Daniel Ortega, Nicaraguan leader, visits Paris
22 July	France and West Germany denounce American sanction extension.
12 August	EEC formal protest against Reagan ban on sales for Soviet pipeline.
26 August	Reagan administration orders trade sanctions against two companies in France.
10 October	Helmut Kohl elected as German Chancellor
22-23 October	40th Franco-German summit
4-5 November	7th Franco-British summit
10 November	Brezhnev dies
12 November	Andropov becomes General Secretary of the CPSU
21 December	Andropov declares willingness to reduce medium range missiles in Europe to match combined arsenals of UK France and US. Rejected by three countries.

1984

1 January	Mitterrand announces programme to boost French nuclear forces.
20 January	Mitterrand speech to the Bundestag
28 January	France announces deployment of nine new S-3 ballistic missiles
16 February	Cheysson makes his first official visit to the Soviet Union France and Britain sign a cooperation agreement to undertaken joint studies on a new antitank missile
8 March	Reagan refers to USSR as 'evil empire' which acts as a 'focus of evil in the modern world'
11 March	France officially opposes Japanese request for Nato membership
16-17 March	41st Franco-German summit, Paris
23 March	Reagan Strategic Defence Initiative speech.
5 April	France expels 47 Soviet diplomats on charges of espionage
28-30 May	Williamsburg G7 summit
10 June	Nato Foreign Ministers meet in Paris for the first time since 1966
11 July	Mauroy visits Hungary
20-21 October	8 Franco-British summit, London
October	Start of INF deployment
November	Andropov taken ill. Soviet Union responds to INF deployment by breaking off INF talks and suspending START negotiations.
8 November	Assembly of French Roman Catholic Bishops endorsee nuclear deterrence as necessary 'service to peace' (3 May, US Catholic Bishops released pastoral letter deploring danger of nuclear war, urging followers to halt production of nuclear arms)

1984

1 January	France receives first delivery of natural gas from Soviet pipeline
16 January	Reagan speech softening criticism of USSR - calls for dialogue
1 February	Pierre Mauroy formally protests at the comments (29 January) of US Ambassador to France Evan Galbraith criticising the PCF
2-24 February	Mitterrand, in his capacity of President of the European Council, tours the capitals of all the member states
6 February	Mitterrand speech on European integration at the Hague
9 February	Death of Andropov. Chernenko replaces him
21-28 March	Mitterrand visits the United States
23 May	Mitterrand speech to the European Parliament
28-29 May	43rd Franco-German summit, Rambouillet
7-9 June	G7 summit, London
20-23 June	Mitterrand official visit to USSR. 21 June he brings up the case of Sakharov in the Kremlin
10 July	European Fighter Aircraft Agreement signed
17 July	Mauroy resigns as Prime Minister. Replaced by Fabius
15-16 October	Janos Kadar, Hungarian Head of state, visits France
23-26 October	Mitterrand official visit to Britain
26-27 October	WEU members adopt plan for relaunch of the institution
29-30 October	44th Franco-German summit, Bad-Kreuznach
6 November	Reagan landslide victory in American elections
13-14 December	North Atlantic Council meeting, Brussels
4 December	Cheysson appointed to Commission of European Communities
7 December	Roland Dumas becomes Foreign Minister

1985

7 January	Soviet and American negotiators reconvene at Geneva to discuss space-based strategic weapons and INF as 'interdependent' topics.
2-6 February	Dumas travels to Washington
28 February	45th Franco-German summit, Bonn
11 March	Gorbachev accedes to post of General Secretary of CPSU
13 March	Belgium agrees to deploy Nato Cruise missiles
26 March	Reagan proposes association with spatial defence research project to Nato allies, Japan, Australia and Israel. Gives them two months to reply
27 March	Nato defence Ministers support spatial defence research project
17 April	Mitterrand unveils Eureka project
18 April	Kohl agrees to German participation in both Eureka and American research programme
22 April	WEU Council decides to promote a reinforcement of Europe's technological capacities
1 June	Britain announces intention to participate in Eureka
10-11 June	Fabius visits GDR
1 August	France and Spain refuse to sign European Fighter Aircraft Agreement. Signed by Britain, Italy, and West Germany
31 August	Spain signs European Fighter Aircraft Agreement, leaving France isolated
2-5 October	Gorbachev visits Paris
10 October	Mitterrand visits West Berlin

October	Gorbachev accepts principle of treating INF separately from other aspects of disarmament.
1 November	Dutch government agrees to accept Nato cruise missiles
7-8 November	46 Franco-German summit, Bonn
18 November	10 Franco-British summit, London
4 December	Mitterrand receives Jaruselski

1986

15 January	Gorbachev accepts proposition of not including French or British nuclear forces in INF negotiations, as long as these forces are not modernised.
27-28 February	47th Franco-German summit
15 April	Sixty-six American planes bomb Tripoli and Benghazi. Paris refuses overflight rights
17 April	Chirac visits Bonn
15 May	Nato Ambassadors sign agreement on modernisation of American chemical weapons
19 May	Raimond visits Washington
3-4 July	Mitterrand visits US
7-10 July	Mitterrand travels to Moscow
28 July	Gorbachev announces partial Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan
October	Reykjavik summit. During this, Gorbachev approves zero option proposed by Reagan. No final breakthrough, as Soviets insist on linking the issue to a US renunciation of SDI
27-28 October	48th Franco-German summit, Frankfurt
21 November	11th Franco-British summit, Paris

1987

15 January	Mitterrand makes speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, on European construction
28 January	Gorbachev drops link between SDI and INF and proposes that negotiations should open on Euromissiles
29 March-1 April	Chirac trip to the US
14-15 May	Meeting of Nato defence minsters, Norway
8-10 June	G7 summit, Venice
11-12 June	North Atlantic Council, Reykjavik
19 June	Kohl proposes creation of a Franco-German brigade
21-22 September	*Moineau Hardi* exercises
24 September	Mitterrand announces creation of Defence Council
19-22 October	Mitterrand state visit to West Germany
27 October	WEU Platform on Security
7 December	Treaty of Washington signed by Reagan and Gorbachev. Agreement to eliminate all land-based nuclear weapons with a rage between 500 and 5000km
14 December	French and British Defence Ministers propose joint production of an air-to-ground missile

1988

7 January	Eric Honecker begins three day visit to Paris

22 January	Mitterrand and Kohl, at Franco-German summit, agree to establish Franco-German councils on defence and economic issues. Also, to set up Franco-German brigade in Germany.
29 January	12th Franco-British summit, London
8 February	Gorbachev proposes withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan over a period of 10 months, starting in May
25-26 February	Mitterrand goes on a state visit to Ireland
2-3 March	Extraordinary Nato summit in Brussels agrees on INF treaty, but fails to reach agreement on Lance
14 March	Gorbachev in Yugoslavia, rejects Brezhnev doctrine.
24-25 March	Raimond official visit to Hungary
April	Mitterrand publishes his *Lettre à Tous les Français*
24 April	First round of Presidential election
8 May	Mitterrand triumphs in second round of Presidential election, 54%, Chirac 46%
10 May	Rocard named as caretaker Prime Minister. National Assembly dissolved (14 May)
27 May	US Senate ratifies INF Treaty
29 May	Reagan in Moscow ratifies INF Treaty
12 June	Second round of legislative elections gives no clear majority. Rocard forms minority government.
19-21 June	G7 summit, Toronto
18-22 July	Rocard makes his first official visit abroad to Bonn, and holds talks with Kohl
15-17 September	Dumas trip to Czechoslovakia
20 September	Thatcher makes speech to Collège d'Europe in Brugges
10-12 October	Soviet Foreign Minister, Shevardnaze visits Paris
11 October 1988	Mitterrand speech before IHEDN
24-27 October	Kohl makes his first official visit to the Soviet Union
1 November	Mitterrand and Kohl, at Aix-la Chapelle, receive the Prix Charlemagne for their contribution to European unity
3-4 November	52nd Franco-German summit, Bonn
8 November	American Presidential election, Bush elected
17-19 November	Hungarian Prime Minister visits Paris
25-26 November	Mitterrand visits US
6 December	Gorbachev at the UN offers to unilaterally reduce Soviet forces by 500000 men, and reduce Soviet forces in Eastern Europe

1989

January 18-19	Mitterrand visits Bulgaria
20 January	George Bush inaugurated as President of the United States
20-21 February	Kohl and Thatcher meet in Frankfurt. Talks end in disagreement over the question of the Lance missiles and their modernisation - supported by Britain and the US, opposed by Germany
27 February	13th Franco-British summit, Paris
3-7 April	Chevènement visits USSR
19-20 April	53rd Franco-German summit
2 May	Hungary starts to dismantle barbed wire fence separating it from Austria. This prompts flow of refugees from East Germany.
11 May	Gorbachev announces unilateral withdrawal, by the end of 1989, of 500

	tactical nuclear warheads from Europe
18 May	Mitterrand press conference on French foreign and defence policy
19-21 May	Mitterrand visits Canada and the United States
29-30 May	Nato summit marking the 40th anniversary of the Atlantic Alliance. Summit communique calls for Nato to reach agreement on reducing conventional forces before submitting Lance to East-West negotiation. Bush proposes a reduction of between 15 and 20 per cent in the number of American troops stationed in Europe.
14-16 June	Mitterrand makes his first official visit to Poland
4-6 July	Gorbachev official visit to Paris
6 July	Gorbachev addresses Council of Europe in Strasbourg; agrees to reduce short range missiles 'without delay' if Nato agrees to make these weapons the subject of negotiations. Indicates USSR will not intervene to stop political changes in Hungary and Poland
14-16 July	G7 summit, Paris
10 September	Hungary announces suspension of agreement requiring Hungary to prevent emigration of East Germans to the West. 10,500 East Germans pass into Austria in next 36 hours.
October	Huge demonstrations in East German cities, especially Leipzig result in violence. 23 October demonstration numbered at between 200000 and 300000 in Leipzig
2 October	Franco-German brigade is officially put into place at Böblingen in the Federal Republic, to be operational at the end of 1991
18 October	Eric Honecker is replaced as head of East German Communist Party by Egon Krenz
25 October	Mitterrand addresses the European Parliament
3 November	54th Franco-German summit
9 November	East German government announces that visas are to be granted 'immediately' to all citizens
10 November	The Berlin Wall is breached
24 November	Entire Czech Politburo resign
28 November	Kohl, in front of Bundestag, outlines 10-point proposal for West and East German 'confederation'. 29 November Soviet Foreign Ministry criticises the plan
29 November	Czech Parliament removes reference to Party's 'leading role' from the constitution
1 December	East German Volksammer votes to revoke constitutional guarantee of SED's 'leading role' in society
2-3 December	Superpower summit off the coast of Malta
4 December	Bush meets Nato leaders in Brussels to report on the summit. He pledges continued US commitment to the defence of Europe
6 December	Mitterrand meets with Gorbachev in Kiev to discuss Malta summit. Says 'I am not afraid of [German] reunification'. Warns Germany not to push so hard for unification as to upset European balance of power
8-9 December	Kohl at European Council, Strasbourg, accepts EMU on condition the other 11 accept German unification
14 December	Czech Foreign Minister says agreement allowing Soviet troops to be based in Czechoslovakia is invalid
16 December	Bush and Mitterrand meet on the island of Saint-Martin
19-20 December	Kohl makes his first official visit to East Germany 20 December Mitterrand arrives in East Berlin

21 December	Mitterrand meets with Hans Modrow and calls for caution in German unification
21 December	Ceausescu falls
31 December	Mitterrand, in New Years message, calls for a European confederation

1990

10-11 January	Dumas visits Rumania
18-19 January	Mitterrand official visit to Hungary
28 January	Chancellor Kohl launches initiative in favour of European political union
31 January	Bush proposes reduction of American and soviet presence in Europe to 195000 troops
3 March	Signature of German unification treaty
9 March	Polish President and Prime Minister visit Paris. Mitterrand expresses support for them over the question of the polish-German border
14 March	Start of '2+4' conference on the future of Germany, with the four victorious powers, along with the two Germanies participating. Poland is associated with the talks
19-20 March	Visit to France by Vaclav Havel
19 April	Discussions between Mitterrand and Bush in Florida on Lithuania and the future of Nato
25-26 April	55th Franco-German summit, dealing mainly with the question of military cooperation between the two countries
3 May	Bush announces decision not to modernise Nato short-range missiles in Europe
3 May	Nato Foreign Ministers declare themselves in favour of the integration of a unified Germany in Nato
4 May	A meeting between Thatcher and Mitterrand is devoted mainly to the question of improving military cooperation between the two countries
25 May	Conversations between Mitterrand and Gorbachev in Moscow underline disagreements over a unified Germany's membership of Nato
29 May	Yeltsin elected President of the Russian Federation
30 May-3 June	Superpower summit, Washington
5-6 July	Nato summit, London. Mitterrand announces decision to withdraw French troops from Germany
9-11 July	Houston summit of 7 industrialised countries
14-16 July	Negotiation and signing of agreements on German membership of Nato between Gorbachev and Kohl in Moscow
25 July	Britain announces reductions in troop level in Germany
29 August	Start of discussion between France and Germany on departure of French troops stationed in Germany
12 September	Signing in Moscow of '2+4' Treaty
13 September	Signing in Moscow of a friendship and cooperation agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union
13-14 September	Mitterrand official visit to Czechoslovakia
17-18 September	Announcement made that half the French forces stationed in Germany will have left in two years
24 September	Mitterrand, before the United Nations, unveils a peace plan for the Gulf
1 October	Foreign Ministers of Four victorious powers sign an agreement suspending their rights in Germany and Berlin
3 October	German political unification

17 October	Creation of Franco-German brigade
19-21 November	Second CSCE meeting, held in Paris. CFE agreements signed on the 19th
22 November	Thatcher resigns
27 November	John Major becomes Prime Minister
6 December	Kohl-Mitterrand letter to Presidency of the European Council, dealing with European defence
14-15 December	Rome summit. Launch of Intergovernmental Conferences on Economic and Political Union

1991

30 January	Official visit to France of Rumanian Prime Minister
21 March	Visit by Vaclav Havel to Nato
9-11 April	Visit by Lech Walesa, Polish President, to France
14-17 April	Yeltsin visits Western Europe. Receives only a luke-warm reception in Paris, where he is met by Jean-Louis Bianco, Secretary-General of the Élysée
18-19 April	Mitterrand becomes the first western leader to pay an official visit to Rumania since the revolution
6 May	Mitterrand holds talks with Gorbachev in Moscow
29 May	At meeting of Defence Planning Committee, the Defence Ministers of the states belonging to Nato's integrated military command approve the creation of a Rapid Reaction Force
3 June	France announces its adhesion to the 1968 Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty
6-7 June	Meeting of Nato Foreign Minsters, Copenhagen. Communique accepts the idea of a European defence identity
1 July	Political structures of Warsaw Pact are dissolved
15-17 July	G7 meeting, London
18-19 July	Rumanian Prime Minister visits France
30-31 July	US and USSR sign START agreements, which foresee a reduction of 30 per cent in their strategic nuclear arsenals
18-21 August	Failure of attempted coup in Soviet Union
27 August	EC recognises Baltic states
21-30 August	Several Soviet states declare their independence
11 September	Mitterrand appeals for strict controls on nuclear weapons in the new Europe
18-20 September	Mitterrand visits *Länder* of East Germany
19 September	Mitterrand and Kohl call (unsuccessfully) for the creation of an intervention force for Yugoslavia
27 September	Bush announces a reduction in American nuclear weapons
1 October	Gorbachev announce plan to eliminate all tactical nuclear weapons
17 October	Nato announces a 80 per cent reduction in the number of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe
7-8 November	Nato summit Rome. Creation of North Atlantic Cooperation Council.
4 October	Joint British-Italian letter on European defence
14 October	Franco-German letter, proposing a European army corps
9-10 December	Maastricht summit
20 December	First meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, Foreign Ministers
25 December	Gorbachev resigns

1992

6 January	Delors in TV interview says French deterrent force should eventually be put at the disposal of the EC
10 January	Mitterrand raises hypothesis of a European nuclear force
28, 29 January	Presidents Bush and Yeltsin announce substantial unilateral weapons reductions
7 February	Treaty on European Union signed at Maastricht

Annexe Three
Key Ministers 1981 - 1992

	Prime Minister	Defence Minister	Foreign Minister
First Mauray Government, May 1981.	P. Mauroy	C. Hernu	C. Cheysson
Second Mauray Government, June 1981.	P. Mauroy	C. Hernu	C. Cheysson
Fabius Government, July 1984.	L. Fabius	C. Hernu	C. Cheysson
Replacement of Cheysson, December 1984.	L. Fabius	C. Hernu	R. Dumas
Chirac Government, March 1986.	J. Chirac	A. Giraud	J-B. Raimond
Rocard Government, June 1988.	M. Rocard	J-P. Chevènement	R. Dumas
Resignation of Chevènement, January 1991.	M. Rocard	P. Joxe	R. Dumas
Cresson Government, May 1991.	E. Cresson	P. Joxe	R. Dumas

Annexe Four
Principal European Cooperative Armaments Projects Involving France[16]

1960-1980

1. With FRG
Transall transport aircraft
Alphajet training aircraft
Hot anti-tank weapon
Milan anti-tank weapon
Roland anti-aircraft missile

2. With UK
Puma helicopter
Gazelle helicopter
Lynx helicopter
Martel missile

3. With Belgium
RITA transmissions network

4. Multilateral Cooperation
Ground-to-air Hawk missile (with Nato)
NADGE network (with Nato)
Atlantic maritime patrol aircraft (FRG, Italy, Holland)

1980-1990

1. With FRG
HAP/HAC Helicopter

2.With Italy
Future surface-to-air missile family

3.Multilateral Cooperation
NH90 Helicopter (Italy, FRG, Holland)
COBRA radar (FRG, UK)
AC3G anti-tank missile (FRG, UK)
CL 289 Drone (FRG Canada)
Helios observation satellite (Italy, Spain)
Multi function information distribution system (various Nato countries)

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[16] Source: DGA *L'Industrie Française de Défense*, Paris, DGA, 1990, pg. 25.

Annexe Five
Interviews

Paris, January-July, 1991

C. Audic	*Cabinet* of Minister of Defence
M. Aurillac	RPR Member of Parliament, former Minster of Cooperation. Specialist on defence questions
J-Y. Autexier	PS Member of Parliament
J. Berry	Political-Military officer, United States Embassy, Paris
P. Boniface	Member of the *Cabinets* of Hernu, Chevènement, and Joxe
Y. Bourges	Former Defence Minster, RPR Senator
F. Cailletau	Former Directeur Adjoint *Cabinet* of Charles Hernu, *Chef du Controle Générale des Armées*, (1989-)
A. Chandernagor	Minister for Europe 1981-1983
C. Cheysson	Foreign Minister, 1981-1984
P. Dabezies	President, *Fondation pour les Études de Défense Nationale*
J-M Daillet	Former member of National Assembly Defence Commission, former President of UDF Defence Commission, Member of Parliament since 1986
T. Dana	Quai d'Orsay, Bureau des Affaires stratégiques et des Pactes
G. Davies	Political-Military officer, United States Embassy, Paris
M. Debré	Former Prime Minster, former Foreign Minster, former Defence Minster, RPR member of Parliament, 1973-1988
O. Debouzy	Formerly of CEA, seconded to the Quai d'Orsay
M. Forget	Former commander of the FATAC
G. Fricaud-Chagnaud	Former Chief of the French Military Mission to Headquarters AFCENT, and Military liaison officer, Washington
G. Fuchs	National Secretary of PS on Europe and Security
J-L. Gergorin	Corporate Senior Vice-President, Strategy and International Development, MATRA
P. Godechot	Former assistant Permanent Representative of France to Nato, adviser on international affairs, SGDN
P. Lagorce	RPR member of Parliament, member of Assembly of WEU
H. Laval	Foreign Ministry *Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes*
Y. Leenhardt	Former Chief of Staff of the Navy
P. Lellouche	Adviser to Jacques Chirac
C. de Llamby	Former commander of the French First Army
M. Lyall Grant	First Secretary (Political-Military), British Embassy, Paris
G. Méry	Former chief military adviser to the President, former Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces
P. Messmer	Former Defence Minster, former Prime Minister, RPR member of Parliament (1968-1988)
J-Y. Pauty	Administrator, Defence Commission, National Assembly
J. Picq	Former adviser on defence questions to Jacques Chirac, 1986-1988
M. Rivasseau	Foreign Ministry, *Bureau des Affaires Stratégiques et des Pactes*
J. Roper	Director, West European Union, Institute for Security Studies
F. de Rose	French Ambassador to Nato 1969-1974
A. Sanguinetti	Former Major-General of the Navy, defence analyst
J-M. Saulnier	Former commander of the strategic nuclear forces, former Chief military adviser to the President and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces
M. Schmidt	Former Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces
M. Touraine	Adviser to Michel Rocard
M. Vanackere	Defence Ministry, *Études Générales*
J-L. Vannier	*Cabinet* of the Minister of Defence
H. Vedrine	1981-1986 technical adviser for external relations in the secretariat-general of the Presidency of the Republic. 1988-1991, adviser, and spokesman of the Élysée, 1991- Secretary-General of the Élysée
P-A. Wiltzer	Former member of Defence Commission, member of Parliament since 1986

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