

**FRENCH DEFENCE POLICY AND EUROPEAN SECURITY**  
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**TEJ PRATAP SINGH**

**CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES**  
**SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY LATE BELOVED MOTHER

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**PREFACE**

## PREFACE

France occupies a unique, but somewhat awkward place in the Atlantic Alliance. The French contribution, however, to European security seems to be significant. It acts as an autonomous center of decision making in the domain of European security. It is often surmised that France's independent stance creates confusion in the Soviet policy planning processes, particularly in relation to its position in the inter-bloc dialogue/confrontation.

It is understood that the basic framework of the French nuclear defence was laid by General de Gaulle. Though, he is no longer on the French political scene, yet policies initiated by him with minimum modifications are being followed. The two major and of course controversial decisions: withdrawal from the NATO command structure, and the creation of an independent nuclear force, taken by de Gaulle in the 1960s have over the years convinced the French political elite about their soundness. The first decision is now seen in the light of the present crisis within the NATO as more correct than it was at the time of the actual withdrawal. The French nuclear independence has since acquired a sanctity of its own in the French strategic thinking.

French defence policy under de Gaulle during the 1960s accorded a distinct priority to the exclusive protection of French territory as opposed to the collective security of the whole of Western Europe.

However, since the assumption of the Presidency by Francois Mitterrand in France in 1981, there began an intense debate on the French contribution to European collective security. The concept of 'national sanctuary' has become outdated in the changed European scenario and now there is a greater pressure on France to review its policy of nuclear strategic defence, extend it beyond its national domain, and if possible to provide cover in concert with Britain to the whole of Western Europe, particularly the FRG.

From General de Gaulle to Francois Mitterrand<sup>v</sup>, French defence policy has remained within certain well defined parameters. The concept of deterrence "by the weak of the strong" continues to be the main French strategic policy. The deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the 1970s resulted in the enhancement of French nuclear deterrence. French conventional forces would provide a first test of the enemy's intention to attack France. If the enemy pressed on with its feet of aggression, France would use tactical nuclear weapons as a last warning, failing which France would use its strategic weapons, massively.

The Socialist government of Francois Mitterrand elaborated its Five Year Defence Programme in 1982, amidst considerable political support for the idea that France should attenuate the excessive nationalistic bent of its defence policy and take steps to increase its commitment for the security of Western Europe. The Mitterrand government responded by announcing its decision to create a new

Rapid Action Force (FAR) for the forward defence of the FRG and to undertake modernization of France's nuclear forces with a view to keeping up its credibility.

The goal of European defence cooperation receives more attention in France than in any other European country. In no other country does the idea of European defence without the United States evoke as much debate and interest as it does in France. In October 1982, Franco-German Commission on Security and Defence was formed. Although the Germans have been disappointed by the French reticence in dealing with nuclear issues, the Commission was successful in helping to revive the moribund West European Union (WEU).

Against this background, this study attempts to analyse the French defence policy and its contribution in the security of Western Europe, with special reference to the Socialist President Francois Mitterrand's first term in his office, and in that context it examines various changes introduced by the Socialist government in the basic defence framework devised during the presidency of de Gaulle and their implications for the security of Western Europe.

First chapter provides introduction to the French defence policy as it has evolved since the inception of the Fifth Republic in 1958. It covers administrations of three Presidents viz., Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing.

Second chapter deals with the "Left Unity Programme" devised (in 1972) by the Socialist Party (PS) and the Communist Party (PCF)

and later on subscribed to by the Radicals, as well as its impact on the French strategic defence.

Third chapter examines in detail Francois Mitterrand's defence policy with special focus on the French strategic force, and its contribution to the security of Western Europe.

Fourth chapter deals with the French reaction to the Euro-missile debate and the INF treaty signed by Reagan and Gorbachev in December 1987. This chapter also includes the French response to the SDI programme of the US and its counter proposal of the EUREKA to cope with the threat posed by the SDI to West Europe.

Finally, in the conclusions, an attempt is made to appraise the French strategic defence as it has evolved during the Fifth Republic and its role in the security of Western Europe.

*Lingb*  
20-7-88



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To my family, especially my father, I express my affection and gratitude for their moral and material support, without which I would not have been able to undertake this work.

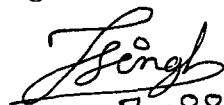
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- TEJ PRATAP SINGH



**CHAPTER ONE**

## Chapter One

### FRANCE'S APPROACH TO EUROPEAN SECURITY UNDER THE FIFTH REPUBLIC

Formally speaking, France continues to be a member of the North Atlantic Alliance even after its exit from its military apparatus in 1966. Unlike the other 15 members of the Alliance, it pursues an independent defence policy: it is this characteristic, which distinguishes it from its allies. And since the inception of the Fifth Republic, this stance has stayed as a constant in the French defence policy. Addressing the officers of the higher military academies in November 1959, de Gaulle seems to have set the operational tone of the French national defence, which has remained unchanged even during his succeeding regimes:

"In everything that constitutes a nation, and principally in what constitutes ours, nothing is more important than defence", and

"The defence of France must be French".<sup>1</sup>

After the Second World War, the French perspectives on European security changed considerably, for France had to face three times within a span of barely 70 years (1870 to 1940) German aggression, which led every time to the occupation of its territory. At the commencement of the Second World War itself, France had to succumb

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1 Charles de Gaulle, quoted in Alfred Grosser, The Western Alliance: The European-American Relations Since 1945 (New York, 1980), p.184.

to the Nazi aggression owing to disunity within its ranks and inadequate support from its Western allies.

In other words, the French dependence for its security upon its allies, which proved helpful in the First World War, proved to be ineffective in the Second World War. As such, with its bitter experiences with the allies in 1940, France, in the post-war years, had to reorientate its approach to security. And this was "self-reliance", and continuous updatedness of its national defence, to ensure its national security -- a policy of 'France First'.<sup>2</sup>

The French drive for independence had started under the Fourth Republic, but it was marred by the French engagements in the colonial wars. In 1958, when Charles de Gaulle resumed the French presidency, national defence was given prime importance. Two basically contradictory visions motivated de Gaulle's foreign and security policies. The first vision stemmed from his perception that the international system, dominated by the two super powers, was unstable. Because of their enormous strategic power and global interests, the two super powers influenced operations of almost all international conflicts. As a result, it is they which, to a great extent, shaped the balances and relationships between small and or middle powers. Security relationships in Europe, France's prime concern, were seen by de Gaulle to

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2 D. L. Hanley, A. P. Kerr and N. H. Whites, Contemporary France: Politics and Society Since 1945 (London, 1984), p.212.

depend on super power conflict or cooperation. In order to avoid this situation, Europe, according to de Gaulle, must develop its own independent security system. Either the super powers, de Gaulle feared, would clash, and their rivalry would embroil all the states of the system, whether they wished it or not, or they would unite in efforts to limit the power and influence of the other states. Both prospects were viewed as menacing to the status and political independence of France and the other European states.<sup>3</sup>

General de Gaulle's efforts were primarily directed towards transforming the existing state system in Europe and encouraging the emergence of a new Europe, that would act as a third force. He advocated the idea of "United Europe", which was to be built on French initiative and approved by a popular referendum without any reference to non-European inspiration or influence.<sup>4</sup> De Gaulle was determined to see, that France must be recognized once again as a great power with an important global role. Thus the French President tried to expand French influence in Asia and Latin America, while retaining it in Africa. But Europe remained his prime concern, so it was there that he devoted himself fully.

Beginning with the division of Europe, each half of which was

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3 Wilfrid L. Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy (Princeton, 1971), p.125.

4 H.S. Chopra, De Gaulle and European Unity (New Delhi, 1974), p.219.

dominated by the two super powers, viz., the USA and the USSR, de Gaulle sought unification of Western Europe through a loose confederal system-- a "Europe of the States" extending from "the Atlantic to the Urals". According to his design, this would be a "European" Europe independent of the super power hegemonies. Such a transformation required removal of the American military presence from Western Europe and withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. This would herald the end of any direct political influence of the super powers over European affairs, to be followed by an evolution towards liberalization and national autonomy with the consent of Moscow in Eastern Europe. In de Gaulle's view, a new system of all-European security would then emerge, which would be "balanced" by the Soviet Union in the East and France in the West, buttressed by the French nuclear force.<sup>5</sup>

The broad contours of de Gaulle's perspective on French security could be seen in his oft-quoted passage from the third volume of his war memoirs. He enunciated his policy goals as follows:

To ensure France's security in Western Europe by preventing a new Reich from menacing her again. To collaborate with the West and the East, constructing alliances with one side or the other as necessary, without ever accepting a position of dependence...To encourage the political, economic and strategic grouping of the States bordering on the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees. To establish this organization as one of the three world powers and if it should one day be necessary, the arbitrator between the Soviet and Anglo-Saxon camps. Since 1940, my every word and act has been dedicated

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5 Wilfrid L. Kohl, "France and European Security: de Gaulle and After" in William T.R. Fox and Warner R. Schilling, eds., European Security and the Atlantic System (New York, 1973), p.121.



to establishing these possibilities; now that France is on her feet again, I am going to try to realize them.<sup>6</sup>

The second vision permeating Gaullist foreign policy was his quest for French grandeur. Despite the success of socio-economic reconstruction in France by the mid-1950s, there came about a feeling of decline in political power in world affairs. Cold War not only forced France to play second fiddle to the United States by joining the NATO in 1949, but also to accept rearmament of West Germany within the NATO by 1955. Simultaneously the French empire witnessed its gradual liquidation. The shrinkage of the French influence world-wide was accentuated by the refusal of the major Western allies to treat the French colonial problems as a common concern of the Western Alliance. The French felt disappointed when their allies did not extend sufficient support to ensure the French victory and preserve its vast empire. The severe blow, however, came in 1956 during the Suez Crisis, when the US expressed its opposition to the perception of Western Europe's interests in West Asia, which led to the Anglo-French-Israeli military expedition against Egypt with damaging political consequences. As such, the French decline thus seemed to be the common will of the allies as well as the enemies of France.

De Gaulle championed the cause of French grandeur which was to be achieved by pursuing independent foreign and defence policies.

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6 Charles de Gaulle, quoted in Wilfrid L. Kohl, n.3, pp.126-7.

In Stanley Hoffmann's words:

Independence is the condition of grandeur. Grandeur itself consists of playing as active and ambitious a role in the world as the nation's position and resources allow. The substance of such a policy depends on and varies with the circumstances of the international system. In today's world, French grandeur is defined by de Gaulle as an attempt to play the role of Europe's awakener and leader.<sup>7</sup>

This was presumably what de Gaulle meant, when he wrote that France could "collaborate with the West and the East, constructing alliances with one side or the other as necessary, without ever accepting a position of dependence". De Gaulle often used to emphasize that independence is the "essential goal", and France's fundamental ambition must be the rank, the place it has to occupy as a great western nation in the global system.<sup>8</sup> For this, possession of nuclear weapons was a must. Without nuclear weapons, no state in the post-war era can be entirely independent in its security policy. De Gaulle himself said:

However terrifying these means of destruction (nuclear weapons) may be, and precisely because they are so terrifying, a great state that does not possess them, while others do, is not the master of its own destiny.<sup>9</sup>

This is why President de Gaulle in his address at the Ecole Militaire on 2 November 1959, announced that France would proceed to build an

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7 Stanley Hoffmann, "De Gaulle, Europe, and the Atlantic Alliance", International Organization, XVIII (Winter, 1964), p.2.

8 Alfred Grosser, op.cit., n.3, pp.184-85.

9 De Gaulle, quoted in Roy Macridis, ed., De Gaulle: Implacable Ally (New York, 1966), p.137.

independent national atomic force. The thrust of his speech was as follows:

France must be in a position to defend herself by herself. France will have an atomic striking force. There can be no separation between the political and the military. Military genius is at the service of a vast concept of overall strategy. Defence of the nation is national defence; allies are essential but an alliance is not a substitute for the capability of self-defence.<sup>10</sup>

General de Gaulle was carrying out the policy that he had explained in July 1958 to John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State, that the morale of the French people could suffer under the pressure of liquidation of the old empire in Africa, unless there was some corresponding sense of world mission. Algeria was decolonized and de Gaulle knew that he had to make up the loss of Algeria by something, which could keep the French sense of greatness alive. In modern times it is realized that there is no grandeur without atomic power. To offset the effects of the liquidation of the French empire in Africa, de Gaulle was determined to give the French people and army the status of an atomic power.<sup>11</sup>

De Gaulle's policy of nuclear independence was intertwined with his plan of "United Europe". Obviously his "United Europe" could not be independent, unless it had its own defence system. France, which provided the intellectual and moral inspiration for

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10 De Gaulle, cited in David Schoenbrun, The Three Lives of Charles de Gaulle (London, 1965), p.294.

11 David Schoenbrun, *ibid.*, p.295.

the creation of the European edifice, had also to develop its own nuclear defence.<sup>12</sup> Military security, de Gaulle argued, required that in the nuclear age France must have adequate nuclear weapons to deter a possible aggression, so that, while not disrupting the alliance, France could ensure that its allies did not hold its fate in their hands. Nuclear project required enormous resources, but de Gaulle claimed that this would cost no more than contributing to the NATO integrated military apparatus which, in any case, could not provide such a secure protection. Thus, de Gaulle contended, France was reaching the point where no power on earth could inflict death and destruction on it without meeting in no time the same fate; that, in his view, was the best possible guarantee of French security.

With the detonation of its first atomic device on 13 February 1960, France became the first and the only nuclear power in continental western Europe and the Fourth Nuclear World Power, thereby breaking the nuclear monopoly of the "Big Three"--the USA, the USSR and the UK. The US-UK-dominated NATO did not take kindly to the French entry into the nuclear club, because it gave a setback to the internal cohesion of the NATO and dimmed the prospects of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Nor was the French nuclear status welcome to the USSR, for the latter felt alarmed not only because the

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12 H.S. Chopra, op.cit., n.4, p.219.

French atomic power added to the Western military arsenal but also because of the fear of more clamour from China for a share in the nuclear secrets.<sup>13</sup>

The Force Nucleaire strategique Francaise (FNS) is an instrument designed principally to serve Gaullist external policy. It is a means of deterrence. It should deter a potential enemy from acts of pressure or aggression against France and it should deter other states from interfering with the course of French policy. De Gaulle believed that a national nuclear force, like a sound national economy, added to the French influence, as it enabled France to operate independently in world affairs. Addressing the officers of the higher military academies on 3 November 1959, he emphasized the need for an independent French nuclear policy in the following words:

The consequence is that clearly we must be able to provide ourselves...with a force capable of acting on our account, with what we have agreed to call "a striking force", liable to be deployed at any moment and in any place. It goes without saying that, as the basis of this force, there will be an atomic armament - whether we make it or whether we buy it - which must belong to us; and since France can possibly be destroyed from any point in the world, our force must be made to act anywhere on earth.<sup>14</sup>

Defending the necessity of nuclear weapons for France, de Gaulle argued in a Press Conference on 23 July 1964:

...the countries which do not have an atomic arsenal believe that they have to accept a strategic and consequently a political dependency in relation to that one of the two giants which is not threatening them. In these conditions, France...

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13 Ibid., p.220.

14 De Gaulle cited in Anthony Hartley, Gaullism: The Rise and Fall of a Political Movement (New York, 1971), p.198.

as soon as she was able to be herself, judged it necessary to begin the desired effort in order to become an atomic power in her turn.<sup>15</sup>

Nuclear weapons impose a strategy of deterrence in which their use is more psychological and political than military. If they were to be used in a conflict, there would be no escape from mutual destruction. Hence only when the very existence of a state is in danger could there be a real threat of nuclear war. Expressing his doubts about the reliability of the US nuclear umbrella, de Gaulle said:

And then, above and beyond everything, the deterrence is now a fact for the Russians as for the Americans, which means that, in the event of a general atomic war, there would inevitably be frightful and perhaps fatal destruction of both countries. In this situation, no one in the world, particularly no one in America, can say whether, where, when, how and to what extent the American nuclear weapons would be used to defend Europe. American nuclear power does not necessarily and immediately meet all the eventualities concerning Europe and France.<sup>16</sup>

Since the United States and the Soviet Union are in a state of nuclear balance, it is unlikely that they will use nuclear weapons in defence of their respective allies. Stressing this, de Gaulle said in his Press Conference, 23 July 1964:

Since America and Russia have both equipped themselves with such an atomic arsenal, there exists between them a kind of automatic deterrent balance. But this balance really covers

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15 De Gaulle cited in Wilfrid L. Kohl, op.cit., n.3, p.129.

16 De Gaulle's Press Conference of 14 January 1963, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conference of General Charles de Gaulle, May 1958-January 1964 (New York, 1964), p.217.

only them but not most of the other countries of the world, even when they are linked to one or the other of the two colossal powers. For the cause and integrity of each of the others might not seem to their ally to be worth the trouble of being crushed itself in crushing its rival.<sup>17</sup>

France, therefore, cannot rely upon American nuclear weapons for its defence. It must develop its own nuclear weapons to defend its vital interests. The reliability of the American deterrent came under a cloud not because of any particular event in Europe but because of the American policy stance during the Suez Crisis, unhelpful and totally negative as it was in the French eyes. The realization that France could not depend under all circumstances on the US for protection and that the US might on occasions make common cause with the Soviet Union, was used as an argument by the French leader for the creation of an independent national nuclear force.<sup>18</sup>

The French nuclear planning is based on anti-city strategy. The French deterrent is and will remain too small for anti-force strategy. The unbearable damages de Gaulle had in his mind could be inflicted only on enemy cities. The anti-city strategy indicates only defensive use of nuclear weapons. Obviously, any first strike on the part of France against the USSR is unthinkable, for it could mean only its committing suicide. Any retaliation on the part of the USSR could

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17 De Gaulle cited in W. E. Kulski, De Gaulle and the World: The Foreign Policy of the Fifth French Republic (New York, 1966), p.97.

18 Wolf Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, 1945-1969 (London, 1970), p. 79.

obliterate France from the map of Europe. The French Minister of Information, Alain Peyrefitte, said:

We are satisfied with the building a force much smaller (than the American or the Soviet)...but a force sufficiently formidable to dissuade an adversary from attacking us, because the risk which he would run would be much greater than the stake which we might represent for him. This force is not, therefore, a striking force but a deterrent force.<sup>19</sup>

For many years, the basic assumption underlying the French strategy was that the French force would strengthen the overall western deterrence, because it might serve, in case of an extreme provocation against France or Western Europe, as a "trigger" of the American nuclear arsenal. Later, with the advent of detente and the consequent decline of the Soviet threat of aggression, plus the shift in focus of active super power rivalry in the Third World, the notion of triggering became less relevant. France's concern shifted to avoid being dragged into any super power hostilities in Europe, which might spill over from a Soviet-American confrontation elsewhere, for example in Vietnam.

Haunted by the spectre of a Soviet-American confrontation enveloping the whole world, and later by the possibility of a Soviet-American political deal on a European settlement as the Cold War diminished, de Gaulle asserted that France, in equipping itself with an atomic force, was promoting world equilibrium by according

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19 Alain Peyrefitte, cited in W.W. Kulski, op.cit., n.17, p.99.



Europe once again the means for its own security and an independent political role. Justifying the French atomic force soon after the historic announcement of France's withdrawal from the NATO military command in 1966, de Gaulle said:

The world situation in which two super-states would alone have the weapons capable of annihilating every other country...this situation, over the long run, could only paralyze and sterilize the rest of the world by placing it either under the blow of crushing competition, or under the yoke of a double hegemony that would be agreed upon between the two rivals.<sup>20</sup>

In a conference at Lake Como held on 6 September 1960, the idea of a multilateral force (MLF) was floated, with the backing of the United States. In December 1962, the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, secured the same rights for France as for Britain under the terms of the Nassau Agreement. If France participated in the MLF its submarines would remain under the French command. They would, moreover, have Polaris missiles with French warheads, and could be withdrawn in the event of a supreme national danger. For various reasons, the French Government rejected the MLF, arguing that it merely camouflaged the American monopoly of nuclear strategy in Western Europe. The MLF would not enhance the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee, because it would only subjugate the European nuclear forces to the American strategic direction. It would also undermine the credibility of national nuclear forces.

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20 De Gaulle cited in W.L. Kohl, op.cit., n.3, p.130.

The large number of tactical nuclear weapons at the disposal of both sides raised the spectre of a limited nuclear war in Europe, which would ravage the continent, leaving however the United States and the Soviet Union almost unaffected. It seemed to France that the US was not only prepared to fight a limited nuclear war on the continent but was also planning to sacrifice Europe at the altar of its own global strategy. In support of this thesis, the French theorists cited the American doctrine of flexible response. Furthermore, the scale of the American nuclear armament and the context of the American global strategy indicated that the worst danger of a nuclear war in Europe came from the American side, for the US would be least able to sustain a conventional war and so would be most tempted to resort to nuclear weapons.<sup>21</sup>

The French nuclear strategy was based on the instantaneous and total use of the national nuclear armoury once a serious aggression had been identified. The adoption of the doctrine of "massive retaliation"--purer in its implications associated with John Foster Dulles--was slightly modified later by the plans for producing French tactical nuclear weapons. It was agreed that such weapons would allow a delay between the identification of aggression and the use of strategic weapons directed against the opponent's cities. The deployment of conventional forces, backed by the tactical nuclear weapons, might "force the invader to pause and think in face of this earnest of

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21 Wolf Mendl, op.cit., n.18, p.32.

French intentions".<sup>22</sup>

Because of several developments such as the Suez Crisis, the defeat of France in Indo-China, and the American indifference to the French preoccupation in North Africa, particularly Algeria, the French became sceptical and began to feel that their vital national interests could never be safe in their dependence upon the US-UK-dominated NATO defence system, which Michel Debre characterized as "the instrument of American security in the hands of the Anglo-American directorate".<sup>23</sup>

In September 1958, de Gaulle proposed a three-nation directorate to the US President Eisenhower and the British Prime Minister Macmillan, for the NATO decisions on security have global implications. The memorandum of 17 September 1958 sent to President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan, in which de Gaulle suggested the creation of a three-power directorate (according to Alfred Grosser) "shows one of the possible goals of French ambition: Complete equality with Great Britain and even with the United States, with the Big Three of the Atlantic Alliance forming a special entity".<sup>24</sup> De Gaulle in his memorandum proposed:

It is not the view of France that NATO in its present form can do justice either to the security requirements of the free world, or to its own. It, therefore, seems to France that an organization comprising the United States, Great Britain and France should be created and function

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22 Ibid.

23 Michel Debre cited in H.S. Chopra, op.cit., n.4, p.231.

24 Alfred Grosser, op.cit., n.1, p.186.

on a world-wide political and strategic level. This organization would make joint decisions on all political questions affecting global security and would also draw up and, if necessary, implement strategic action plans, especially as regards the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>25</sup>

De Gaulle's proposal of a three-power directorate, however, was rejected because of the Anglo-Saxon fear of French hegemony in Europe. This is evident from President Eisenhower's reply to de Gaulle's memorandum of 17 September 1958:

We cannot afford to adopt any system which would give to our other Allies, or other Free World countries, the impression that basic decisions affecting their own vital interests are being made without their participation.<sup>26</sup>

De Gaulle's demand for a three-nation directorate sparked off a bitter controversy regarding the original motive of France. Professor H.S. Chopra is, however, of the opinion that de Gaulle's idea of a three-nation directorate was "designed to modify the NATO defence system to suit the needs of the 1958-Europe". This is indeed a charitable view. The stark reality is that de Gaulle's proposal was "misinterpreted in the West as his ambition to attain hegemony in Western Europe".<sup>27</sup>

For de Gaulle, an integrated alliance spelled subordination. It offered nothing but insecurity in the unlikely event of a Soviet aggression in Europe. But in the far more likely event of a Sino-American war, such an alliance risked involvement. Such

25 De Gaulle's Memorandum, cited in Alfred Grosser, op.cit., n.1, p.137.

26 Eisenhower's letter to De Gaulle, cited in Alfred Grosser, ibid., p.188.

27 H.S. Chopra, op.cit., n.4, p.231.

were the arguments he used as he "moved from dissociation to withdrawal".<sup>28</sup> By mid-1960s, in de Gaulle's view, the Soviet threat to Europe had subsided and the Soviet threat to the United States had made America's intervention in Europe almost impossible. Thereupon, de Gaulle evoked the danger of being dragged into a war. His motive was to put an end to the integration of French forces and installations with a military system under the American command. He said:

The wars that America is waging 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 in NATO is that of the United States, would automatically be involved in a struggle not of its choosing.<sup>29</sup>

France wanted to be the master of its own destiny; it was in a position to assume broad political and strategic responsibilities because of its nuclear weapons. It intended "to continue to modify the current arrangements" with an eye to "re-establishing a more normal situation, that of its sovereignty".<sup>30</sup> On 7 March 1966, de Gaulle sent a personal message to President Johnson of the US, announcing France's desire of "modifying the form but not the basis of our Alliance".

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28 Guy de Carmoy, The Foreign Policies of France: 1944-1968 translated by Elaine F. Halperin (Chicago, 1970), p.314.

29 De Gaulle, cited in Guy de Carmoy, *ibid.*, p.315.

30 *Ibid.*, pp.315-26.

France in 1969 and thereafter will be resolved as always to fight alongside her allies should anyone of them be the victim of unprovoked aggression.. (On the other hand), France expects to recover her full sovereignty over her own territory which, at the moment, is encumbered by the permanent presence of allied military forces, and by the use that is being made of her skies. France will also cease to participate in an integrated command and will no longer make her forces available to NATO.<sup>31</sup>

In this way, de Gaulle retained the pledge of mutual assistance but underlined the requisite condition of "unprovoked aggression". At the same time, he withdrew from the permanent military organization. France was willing, however, to study with the NATO allies the links, which it might be necessary to establish between the French and the NATO command. This stand notwithstanding, France continued to station its troops in Germany in accordance with the agreements of 23 October 1954. Furthermore, it expressed its willingness to discuss the practical questions connected with the application of these measures.

De Gaulle, thus, made a fine distinction between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Alliance. He fully subscribed to the North Atlantic Alliance, in which each ally was supposed to enjoy complete equality without subordinating its national defence policy even to that of the mightiest ally overriding

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31 De Gaulle's Memorandum, cited in Guy de Carmoy, *ibid.*, p.316.

the Alliance.<sup>32</sup> In a Press Conference addressed by him on 14 January 1963, he declared:

To have allies goes without saying for us in the historic period we are in. But also for a great people to have the free disposition of itself and the means to struggle to preserve it is an absolute imperative, for alliances have no absolute virtues, whatever may be the sentiments on which they are based.<sup>33</sup>

The French withdrawal from the NATO-integrated structure struck at the very root of the Alliance. The structure of the Alliance was rejected by a member state of prime importance in Western Europe; France's role was important because of its politico-economic as well as its strategic global position. The uneasiness in the Alliance developed into a major crisis. This in turn precipitated a public debate, which centred upon the reasons for de Gaulle's decision and its consequences. The main reason for withdrawal was thought to be independence, which must be the supreme aim of the foreign policy of a power such as France.

The French strategic doctrine was the "massive retaliation", but General Ailleret's article, "Defense 'Dirigee' ou Defense Tous Azimuts", published in the Revue de Defense Nationale of December 1967, provoked a new public controversy inside and outside France about a new departure in the French strategic doctrine. According

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32 H.S. Chopra, op.cit., n.4, p.235.

33 De Gaulle cited in H.S. Chopra, ibid.

to General Ailleret, France has always had a "favourite enemy". That role has fallen successively on Britain, Germany and Russia. Now that the threat from the Soviet Union had almost disappeared, there was no specific enemy. Even then, because of sophistication in weapons technology, a threat in the future might come from any direction in the world. In spite of its peaceful intentions, France might be invaded by nations, which are at war with other states, with a view to controlling the French territory and resources or denying them to its opponent. Therefore the choice before France was between falling under the control of one of the super powers and ~~or of~~ <sup>developing</sup> developing an alliance system dominated by it and ~~supported by~~ <sup>supported</sup> its own national deterrent. Obviously, the second option was preferable, so France plumped for "a nuclear striking force which was not only azimuthal but which could eventually be deployed in space once it became technically feasible to do so".<sup>34</sup>

In an address delivered at the Institut des Hautes Etudes de Defense Nationale in March 1969, Ailleret's successor as Chief of Staff of the armed forces, General M. Fourquet, rejected the doctrine of massive retaliation, described as "tout ou rien", as well as the US strategy of meeting aggression in force at all levels. He advocated instead a strategy of "graduated response" in which tactical nuclear weapons would play their part independently

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34 General Ailleret, cited in Wolf Mendl, op.cit., n.18, p.83.



of the strategic nuclear force and thus raise the threshold beyond which the latter would come into play.<sup>35</sup> However, the more important was the implicit abandonment of the concept of *tous Azimuts* which was evident by the stress on meeting an invasion from the east in coordination with the allied forces. General Hourquet repeated, of course, the argument against integration and for the ultimate autonomy of national defence but he considered independent action as only a remote possibility.

The reference to the threat from the east; the linking of military action to that of allies; and the emphasis on graduated deterrence were all significant changes wrought in the year before General de Gaulle's resignation. They were caused by the economic constraints, which threatened to postpone development of a French ICBM system. They also manifested French anxiety over the Soviet activities in Czechoslovakia and the Mediterranean.

De Gaulle's security policy can be viewed in "four phases".<sup>36</sup>

Starting in 1958, the first phase of Gaullist European-Atlantic policy hovered around the tripartite proposal to extend the scope of NATO and elevate France's role and status in the Alliance. This phase also saw the first reduction in France's NATO contribution, when these demands were rejected.

35 Wolf Mendl, *ibid.*, p.84.

36 W.L. Kohl, *op.cit.*, n.3, p.131.



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The second phase began about 1961 and centred upon de Gaulle's efforts to construct an independent confederal grouping of states in Western Europe on the model of the Fouchet plans. During this period, France opposed by all possible means the alternative American plan for an Atlantic-oriented Europe, linked closely with the US, and increased its attacks against the NATO.

The third phase began in 1965 with widespread feeling of a much reduced Soviet threat to Western Europe. De Gaulle, therefore, turned his attention to his Eastern policy of detente and rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the other states of Eastern bloc with a view to achieving eventually the formation of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" and a system of pan-European security. To attain the aforesaid objective, he withdrew France from NATO's integrated structure in 1966.

The fourth and final phase, which began in 1968 and lasted till the resignation of General de Gaulle, witnessed radical changes in de Gaulle's security policy. This change was caused by many factors, notably the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which resulted in the postponement of de Gaulle's pan-European design.

By 1960, de Gaulle had begun to speak of his design for a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals". In his view, a strong grouping of states in Western Europe was a prerequisite for a new

all-European equilibrium that would consist of the states in both the blocs--Western and Eastern--of Europe. This concept led him to promote the creation of a political union in Western Europe on the model of the Fouchet plans. After the Fouchet negotiations failed in April 1962, when Belgium and the Netherlands declined further discussion until Britain was admitted to the European Economic Community (EEC), de Gaulle's response was to make a start towards West European organization on a more modest scale on the basis of the Franco-German Treaty of January 1963, which was the "Fouchet Plan writ small".

As part of his plan for a West European grouping of states, de Gaulle urged the creation of a European defence system around the nucleus of the French nuclear force. The French Government implied that the French nuclear weapons would be placed at the disposal of Western Europe, when the required degree of political cooperation was achieved, and on this basis de Gaulle tried to woo the Federal Republic of Germany and the other European allies away from close defence ties with the United States. However, no indication was ever given by France of its willingness to share control of the force de frappe with European neighbours. The French nuclear armament made out by it as the core of a future West European defence independent of American control. It was also meant for eventual French disengagement from the NATO and the creation of an independent West European and later all-European security system. The Gaullist

France had concluded that the US "flexible response strategy", which became the de facto strategy of NATO, not only contained grave risks in its stress on conventional forces as the first counter to invasion in Europe and American monopoly of nuclear weapons but also condemned Europe to a secondary strategic role.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the French preoccupation with colonial wars, Europe continued to dominate the French defence policy in the post-Second World War era. In this sphere, two related fears were uppermost in the French minds. The first was the fear that France would be called upon to be "the cannon-fodder for the Anglo-Saxon powers".<sup>38</sup> The second was the fear that, in the case of a war, "Britain and the United States would withdraw behind the seas",<sup>38</sup> and France would be ravaged, as in the historical past, by the invaders. At the root of these lurking anxieties and criticism lay the deep-embedded French wish to see America and Britain firmly committed to the defence of Europe. Even the Brussels Treaty of 1948 and the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 could not remove the suspicion that when it came to a military show-down on the continent, the Anglo-Saxons would quickly retreat to the safety of their homelands, leaving the French to fend for themselves in the face of aggression.<sup>39</sup> In a televised broadcast of 27 April 1965,

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37 W.L. Kohl, *ibid.*, p.138.

38 Wolf Mendl, *op.cit.*, n.18, p.92.

39 *Ibid.*, p.93.

de Gaulle argued that, although the Americans had been disconcerted by French self-assertion, a time would come when they would appreciate the valuable friendship of a France able to stand on its own feet.<sup>40</sup>

The French withdrawal from the NATO military structure was a prerequisite for France's pursuit of a pan-European policy that included among its aims the creation of an all-European security system. This was facilitated by the reduction of tension between the two antagonistic blocs. This made de Gaulle say, "the western world is no longer threatened today as it was at the time when the American protectorate was set up in Europe under the cover of NATO".<sup>41</sup> Moreover, France was becoming an atomic power, so it was but natural that it began to assume the very extensive strategic and political responsibilities that this capacity involves".<sup>42</sup>

France's expansion of contacts with the East European states, aimed at breaking down the blocs, was also an important factor in the development of East-West detente politics. In several respects, the Gaullist initiatives helped pave the way for the 'Ostpolitik' launched by the Willy Brandt government in the late 'sixties as well as for President Johnson's policy of "bridge building". Disappointed by the United States and the United Kingdom, de Gaulle turned to the Soviet Union. In December 1944, during his discussion with Stalin, de Gaulle,

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40 D.L. Hanley, A.P. Kerr and N.H. Waites, op.cit., n.2, p.215.

41 De Gaulle, cited in W.W. Kulski, op.cit., n.17, p.304.

42 De Gaulle, cited in W.L. Kohl, op.cit., n.5, p.131.

with a view to enhancing French prestige in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon powers, outlined his concept of European defence, which, he claimed, could be organized in three stages. The first stage of the European defence must be completed by the two continental powers-- France and the Soviet Union--united in the common pursuit of containing German adventurism, of which both of them had been frequent victims in the past. Moreover, unlike Britain, France and the USSR being continental powers habitually maintained large armies. Thus, united in the common task of containing German militarism and also united by necessity in maintaining large armed forces, de Gaulle considered the Franco-Soviet alliance as of prime importance. He rejected Churchill's proposal for a tripartite Franco-Soviet-British alliance, because Britain's insular position had always been the root of its initial hesitation to join the First as well as the Second World War. However, he placed Britain and the United States at the second and the third stage, respectively, of his European defence strategy.<sup>43</sup>

The Gaullist vision of a Europe of the States extending from "the Atlantic to the Urals" suffered from several inconsistencies and contradictions. First, it was not clear where the Soviet Union stood in this new European framework. De Gaulle often spoke of a European Europe independent of the super powers. In this sort of system, the Soviet Union would have to be excluded just as the United States, so that the new European grouping could strike an

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43 H.S. Chopra, op.cit., n.4, p.237.

independent stance. On the other hand, if this Europe were to extend to the Urals, the Soviet Union would necessarily be there.<sup>44</sup>

The Gaullist European vision and the hope, that, through it France would achieve a special European and global role, were upset by two events in 1968. First, the politico-economic crisis, caused by the industrial strike and the student unrest, seriously impaired the stability of the Gaullist regime and undermined France's international prestige and hence its claim to leadership on the continent. Second, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 dealt a severe blow to de Gaulle's all-European design. It proved beyond doubt that de Gaulle's European vision was premature and based at best on an overoptimistic assessment of the Soviet policy vis-a-vis the East European countries. These two developments caused several shifts in the French positions towards Europe and the Atlantic. Among the most significant changes were the postponement of the Gaullist pan-European design, a reassessment of France's relations with its European allies, and a tilt in the French policy towards the NATO and the United States.

The Franco-American relations were further strengthened with the advent of a new administration in the USA under President Nixon-- an admirer of General de Gaulle. Mutual respect and understanding

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44 W.L. Kohl, op.cit., n.5, p.134.

between these two men was renewed during Nixon's cordial visit to Paris soon after his assuming office. The American policy appeared to be shifting towards a new tolerance of independent West European identity. Nixon admitted that he shared the General's view "that Europe should have an independent position in its own right". The US, he remarked, no longer needed to be the dominant partner in the Atlantic alliance.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, during the last year of General de Gaulle's presidency, the French defence policy seemed to be gradually tilting towards the United States, and aggressive French resentment against Anglo-Saxon domination of Western defence system seemed to be gradually waning, for France was becoming more and more cooperative with the NATO. This created a congenial atmosphere for the successors of de Gaulle to adopt a more conciliatory policy vis-a-vis the US and NATO.

After de Gaulle's resignation, Georges Pompidou assumed Presidency in 1969, but he lacked his predecessor's sweeping foreign policy designs. During his term, he cautiously scaled down France's global objectives and defined for his country a more modest conception of national interest, which was in greater harmony with France's resources and capabilities. He said:

With a population 15 times smaller than that of China... smaller than that of Bangladesh...how can we preserve in the long term the place in the world to which we were

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45 President Nixon's press conference, New York Times, March 5, 1969.



restored by General de Gaulle through his personal prestige?<sup>46</sup>

Several reasons were responsible for this change. First, Pompidou did not enjoy de Gaulle's immense personal prestige and respect. Moreover, France is a country with serious domestic problems, which forced even de Gaulle to retreat and modify his policies before his retirement. Also to reckon with were a vastly different background and personal style of Pompidou, "an intellectual and technocrat turned politician, a man used to the procedure of pragmatic negotiation".<sup>47</sup>

Pompidou's policy was characterized by a contraction of global aspirations and concentration on a carving out an active middle-power role for France in two key areas: Europe and the Mediterranean. Pompidou's greatest departure from the traditional Gaullist ideas is manifested in his approach to Europe. De Gaulle's vision of a Europe of States from "the Atlantic to the Urals" seemed utopian to Pompidou. Instead of pressing for reconciliation of the two halves of Europe, Pompidou assigned top priority to the organization and strengthening of Western Europe, so that it could resist any invasion from the East. His avowed goal was a West European confederation, to be achieved on a pragmatic step-by-step basis. He envisaged an independent Western Europe that could find its own place in the world. Like de Gaulle,

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46 Georges Pompidou quoted in Arshiya Bawa's Dissertation, Socialist France and European Security (New Delhi, 1984), p.27.

47 W.L. Kohl, op.cit., n.5, p.145.

Pompidou was, of course, cautious about preserving the identity and sovereignty of France. He once said:

If you ask me about NATO, I should like to say: Collaboration with our allies is as natural and important for us as the fact that we do not wish to be in an integrated organization, that we wish to preserve what General de Gaulle called our independence, which means our freedom of decision. It is by our free choice that we are allies, not by compulsion.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, we find, Pompidou opted for "continuity and change" as the guiding principle of his foreign and defence policies. In an interview to a correspondent of New York Times, Pompidou said:

In the first place, France being France, our basic needs remain necessarily the same. General de Gaulle's policy was not unnatural. It was imposed by the needs and the fundamental interests of France.<sup>49</sup>

If, on the one hand, the Pompidou administration stressed continuity of General de Gaulle's policy, then, on the other hand, it also emphasized change. Security was no longer the prime concern of the French Government as it was during de Gaulle's presidency. Replying to a question regarding his policy in the "domaine reserve", Pompidou said to Raymond Tournoux:

There is a tradition...which I uphold that the President of the Republic attaches special importance to foreign policy and national defence. But how can we ignore the other areas of policy? The wellbeing of the French nation is important, but so is the individual Frenchman.<sup>50</sup>

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48 Georges Pompidou, quoted in Alfred Grosser, op.cit., n.1, p.265.

49 Pompidou's interview with C.L. Sulzberger, New York Times (City Edition), 15 February 1970.

50 Quoted in Jean Chariot, The Gaullist Phenomena (London, 1971), p.177.

The devaluation of the Franc constitutes a significant example of the different approaches of de Gaulle and Pompidou. De Gaulle had rejected it on grounds of prestige, while Pompidou considered it an economic necessity.<sup>51</sup>

Pompidou did not abandon the Gaullist policy of detente and cooperation with the East, aimed at demolishing the walls of division created by the Cold War. But unlike de Gaulle, Pompidou had no precise blueprint for an all-European political or security framework and the role, which France should play in it. Speaking in Gaullist tone, Pompidou reiterated in a Press Conference held on 2 July 1970, de Gaulle's stand on the East-West relations:

The entire policy of France centres on breaking down this curtain...to establish the closest possible relations...cooperation and understanding in every field between all the countries of the West, and all the countries of the East. That is why...Europe can only be built under these conditions (otherwise)...France would refuse to have anything to do with it.<sup>52</sup>

While France worked on a European security system, it accepted that there is no defence but national defence, even within the alliance. Even under Pompidou, national defence was emphasized in the typically Gaullist fashion. It was argued that defence being a function of nation's patriotism, can only be national. Pompidou also affirmed that the national character of France's nuclear armament, the basis of its independent defence, is at the heart of its political freedom. However, unlike de Gaulle, Pompidou vigorously defended the presence

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51 William Safran, The French Polity (New York, 1977), p.275.

52 Pompidou's Press Conference reported in Le Monde, 3 July, 1970.

of the American troops in Europe, which he regarded essential for the security of Western Europe.

About the nuclear defence of Europe, Pompidou said:

The future of a common European nuclear defence policy lies in an agreement between France and Great Britain. I am quite ready to talk to the United Kingdom about such an agreement, which might become a European agreement. But it will take time and Europe must first develop a political conscience.<sup>53</sup>

France was suspicious of super power detente. It, along with other European countries, feared that there might be a move to establish a condominium of super powers. Voicing European concern, Pompidou said in his Press Conference of 27 September 1973:

The law of politics and the life of states require one to consider all eventualities and therefore to see the dangers which this rapprochement might also entail if it were to lead to a kind of condominium, or to a kind of neutralization of Europe.<sup>54</sup>

European fears, in general, and French, in particular, were further reinforced by the US-USSR agreement on the prevention of nuclear war, which in itself undermined the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee.

France wanted that the progress achieved on the road to detente and entente should appear first in the political and economic fields.

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53 Pompidou, quoted in Paul C. Davis, "A European Nuclear Force Utility and Prospects", Orbis, (Philadelphia), vol. 17, no. 1, Spring 1973, pp. 123-24.

54 Pompidou, Document No. D/10/73, Ambassade de France en Inde, New Delhi.

It considered efforts leading towards reduction of tension in the military field to be desirable in themselves but fruitful only after the successful conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). That is why, the Pompidou Government extended support to the Soviet Union's proposal of a security conference of Europe. However, France argued that before settling security issues, less contentious economic and political issues should be settled. That, it felt, would pave the way for resolving security problems.

In brief, the French security policy under Pompidou was based on a more modest conception of France's role in Europe and the world. Pompidou was fully aware of the limitations of France. His principal objective was to promote France's status and enhance its security in Europe by increasing cooperation with its western allies, especially in the European community. France's relations with the United States improved and though France did not rejoin the NATO, yet it remained a member of the Atlantic Alliance. Like de Gaulle, Pompidou cautiously guarded the French independence and sovereignty. The Gaullist vision of an all-European security system was given up because of its unfeasibility. Thus, Pompidou pursued a realistic policy in accordance with his country's capacity.

Pompidou was succeeded by Giscard d'Estaing in 1974, who also, by and large, followed the policies initiated by his predecessors, General de Gaulle and Pompidou. Giscard regularly proclaimed his adherence to the Gaullist principles, chief among them being retaining

France as the dominant power in western Europe.<sup>54</sup> However, the realities of international relations and the paucity of economic resources made Giscard question the assumption that France was capable of defending itself without any help from the US. Consequently, the old rivalries to the Anglo-Saxons were muted and a greater tolerance towards the US developed. De Gaulle and Pompidou had stressed the role of the US as an obstacle to detente and as a challenger to Europe's economic modernization.<sup>55</sup> Under Giscard, this view of the US was given up and the US was no longer branded as a Cold War monger by the French leaders. In view of the USA's own economic difficulties, the United States was not in a position to threaten the West European economic system. Consequently, the French rediscovered America as a protector.<sup>55</sup>

Giscard was of the view that irrespective of whether or not a formal alliance system existed, it was in the American interest to help France in the event of a Soviet invasion.<sup>56</sup> All this notwithstanding, the Franco-American relations were not that cordial, Giscard differed with the Carter Government, among other things, over the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and the US obsession with human rights which, Giscard felt, jeopardized detente.

Despite shifting closer to the US, the French continued to distrust the Americans. The distrust was based on the uncertainty about the American commitment to the security of Europe.<sup>57</sup> This

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55 William Safran, op.cit., n.51, p.279.

uncertainty did not relate only to the defence of Europe but it also included, whether the US would share its oil resources with Europe in the event of another Middle East crisis and embargo on oil supply to the Western world. Thus, despite Giscard's overt friendliness towards the US, he pursued a nationalistic foreign policy so as to safeguard the French economic interests.

President Giscard along with his Chief of Staff, General Guy Mery, felt the need of a review of the French defence policy in order to make it up-to-date. Giscard said as early as in 1974, just after the assumption of President's office: "Our major strategic decisions were made in 1960, fourteen years ago...in an entirely different world".<sup>56</sup> Obviously, Giscard meant that the defence policy of the past had become outdated, so it must be modified in accordance with the new realities of the international relations. Nevertheless, despite his occasional remarks indicating a pro-US stance, Giscard remained within the Gaullist paradigm saying: "France must secure its defence independently. This naturally entails control over the necessary means as well as over the decision as to the conditions and contingencies under which they are to be used".<sup>57</sup>

Despite his adoption of the Gaullist position, Giscard set a certain tone for change in France's defence policy with greater stress on conventional weapons since early 1975. Speaking on French Tele-

56 Giscard d'Estaing, quoted in Richard Vojka, "The Process of Change in French Defence Policy", Aussenpolitik, vol.28, no.1, January 1977, p.5.

57 Le Monde, 27 March 1975.

vision, he remarked:

It must be realized that our problem lies in the fact that we must simultaneously, and with all means at our disposal, prevent an attack on France, and with the consequent feeling of security, impart the awareness of a certain amount of French power. It must not be permitted that in case of incidents that may occur, or in case of threats, the French people should have the feeling of being a weak community. But, in order to impart the feeling of security and power, France must have a certain number of conventional means of defence at its disposal.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the nuclear aspect, which was solely promoted earlier, was consigned to relative unimportance. The French Government became aware of the fact that the "all or nothing" strategy, announced in the 1972 White Paper, was no longer relevant, because the great European continental war was no longer the only form of threat to the nation. This realization resulted in a cutback in the originally envisaged programme, so that expenditure on the conventional armament was now enhanced at the cost of the nuclear weapons.

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58 Giscard d'Estaing, quoted in Richard Woykes, n.56, p.7.



Development of Defence Expenditure, 1977-1982 (in million French Francs)<sup>59</sup>

	Fourth Military Programme						Total
	Year						
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	
Total Expenditures	58,000	66,460	76,155	87,260	99,990	114,575	502,440
Military Research and Strategic Forces	11,670	13,145	14,795	16,470	18,465	20,570	95,115
Army	18,400	21,080	24,025	27,280	30,975	35,170	156,930
Navy	09,780	11,355	13,200	15,450	17,975	20,955	88,715
Air Force	12,225	14,150	16,490	19,405	22,670	26,880	111,820
Gendarmerie (Police)	5,925	6,730	7,645	8,655	9,875	11,000	49,830

According to the above mentioned fourth programme, the defence budget was to rise from 17 to 20 per cent of the overall national budget and this increase made defence expenditure the biggest item in the national budget. The main reason for this increase was the Soviet Union's spurt in arms build-up to which France had to react correspondingly. The other reasons were the lack of faith on the part of France in the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks at Vienna and General Disarmament talks. The French Government viewed the MBFR negotiations

59 Le Monde, 7 May 1976.

(Vienna) as detrimental to detente and believed that should they prove successful they would shift the already existing imbalance in Europe further in favour of the Eastern Bloc. The Fourth programme, therefore, gave importance to the organization and development of conventional forces the budget for which was raised from 54.4 to 58.1 per cent of the national defence expenditure.<sup>60</sup>

When the Chief-of-Staff General Mery's ideas on the French defence doctrine were made public in the military journal, Revue de Defense Nationale, many a political observers saw in them a break with the Gaullist doctrine. Although General Mery's thesis did not mark a complete change in France's defence doctrine, there was nevertheless a departure from the rigid Gaullist doctrine. These changes were in the following areas:

1. The relativization of the importance of strategic nuclear weapons.
2. Cooperation with allies, especially in the so-called enlarged security area (sanctuarization elargie)
3. The possibility of a European defence.<sup>61</sup>

The 1972 White Paper stressed that 'proportional deterrence' was purely national and could protect only France. But Mery's reference to sanctuarization elargie implied that France's deterrent protection might extend beyond the French borders to its neighbouring allies in Western Europe.<sup>62</sup>

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60 Ibid.

61 Richard Woyke, n.56, p.10.

62 David S. Yost, "The French Defence Debate", Survival (London), vol.23, no.1, January-February 1981, p.19.

However, the declarations made in the White Paper of 1972 were rather vague and contradictory, with emphasis on France's national sanctuary concept and independent national deterrent manoeuvre frequently juxtaposed with a vague extension of deterrence to France's allies, either in Western Europe as a whole or in the adjoining areas:

Deterrence is exclusively national...nuclear risk can not be shared...if deterrence is reserved for the protection of our vital interest, the limits of the latter are necessarily somewhat hazy... France lives in a network of interests which go beyond her borders. She 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. Strategy covers this geographic zone.<sup>63</sup>

Despite these ambiguities, many French political observers interpreted the 1972 White Paper and other official policy statements as a charter of independence through strategic nuclear forces and an option of non-belligerency. But the official statements made in 1975 and 1976, which portended fundamental change seemed to be confusing. The 1976 statements by President Giscard d' Estang and Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Guy Mery aroused controversy in several areas. Mery's phrase Sanctuarization elargie was, for instance, assumed to imply a clear step in the direction of offering a deterrent guarantee to France's allies. Tactical nuclear weapons were assigned a European rather than purely French role and were seen as possible instruments of battle rather than as only warning shots. Whereas the 1972 White Paper held that the American guarantee

63 Quoted in David S. Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe", Part-1: Capabilities and Doctrine", Adelphi Papers, no.194 (London), p.6.

was unreliable and irrelevant to the European security, because national deterrent forces protect national sanctuaries alone, the 1976 statements implied that France had an interest in the continued credibility of that guarantee, at least for the security of its neighbouring allies.

Perhaps the most disputed of the 1976 modification in the defence doctrine was the obvious abandonment of the two battles concept. Mery envisaged the possibility by suggesting that France's independence of decision would not necessarily lead to freedom in action, adding that participation in the forward battle could be necessary for France's own security:

it would be extremely dangerous for our country to deliberately hold herself aloof from this first battle, in the course of which our own security would in fact already be at stake. This does not exclude the idea of a battle on the frontiers; for we could be forced into this if the forward defence collapsed too quickly, or if our movements were hindered by enemy action...This leads us to envisage a second-echelon participation in the first battle, which could simultaneously assure an indirect cover of our national territory.<sup>64</sup>

The 1972 White Paper had postulated the potential occurrence of two battles in the event of war. The first battle would be the 'forward battle' in defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, in which France might choose to take part with conventional forces

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64 General Guy Mery, quoted in David S. Yost, *ibid.*, p.2.

or abstain, depending upon political decisions to be made at the time of the outbreak of war by the French President. The second battle would consist of the implementation of France's national deterrent manoeuvre, should the NATO happen to lose the first battle. But Giscard discarded the 'two battles' concept by referring to 'one single space' in which any European war in the future would be fought.<sup>65</sup> Giscard d'Estaing was more uncompromising than General Mery in rejecting the Gaullist vision of 'two battles' but yet implied that France could be exempt from invasion due to its strategic nuclear deterrent:

Some people reason that any conflict taking place outside France would completely spare the national territory from battle. This would create two zones: the battle zone, somewhere between Czechoslovakia and the Rhine, and the territory of France, entirely peaceful, where the sole concern would be to support the distant action of the combatants. This concept is not realistic. In fact, in the event of conflict, there would be only one zone because of the speed of transportation and communications, especially by the air, and from the outset French national territory would be included in this generalized battle area... For this reason there must be only one military system in this zone, since there will only be one battle zone.<sup>66</sup>

Giscard's phrase, "Only one military system", in a single war zone was defined to mean functional reintegration in NATO by the Gaullists, Communists and Socialists, who advocated a more vigorous portrayal of France's independent posture. The situation was further aggravated by Giscard's efforts to strengthen France's conventional forces. The Government was accused of undermining the French independence, compromising its security and subordinating France to the

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65 David S. Yost, n.62, p.20.

66 Giscard d'Estaing, quoted in David S. Yost, n.63, p.8.

NATO. The Government was forced to retreat into denials of change in its defence policy and took shelter behind political ambiguities.

Defending the French Government's defence policy, Defence Minister Yvon Bourges pointed out that many of the 'innovations' for which the Giscard Government had been lambasted could, in fact, be traced to the 1972 White Paper, which not only refers to our formal acceptance to act, if necessary, in the framework of an alliance' but also states that:

It would be illusory to claim to ensure the security of our territory without being interested in the realities which surround it...a narrow and erroneous view of defence...would eventually cause us to withdraw into ourselves and would doom us to a neutralism... though deterrence is reserved for the protection of our vital interests, the limits of the latter are necessarily somewhat hazy... France lives in a network of interests, which go beyond her borders. She is not isolated. Therefore, western Europe as a whole cannot fail to benefit indirectly from French strategy...<sup>67</sup>

The preamble of the 1976 military loi de programmation obviously written by President Giscard d'Estaing himself, declared:

It would indeed be illusory to hope that France could maintain more than a reduced sovereignty, if her neighbours had been occupied by a hostile power or were simply under its control. The security of Western Europe as a whole is therefore essential for France.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, Giscard defended the extension of the French strategic policy to include France's immediate neighbours. Nevertheless, these obvious

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67 Quoted in David S. Yost, n.62, pp.20-21.

68 Ibid., p.20.<sup>3</sup>

deviations from the Gaullist policy provoked Pierre Messmer, once Prime Minister under Pompidou, to declare that they were indeed 'a leap backward of ten years in French military thought'.<sup>69</sup>

Ambiguity can be said to be the hallmark of the Giscardian defence policy. If, on the one hand, Defence Minister Yvon Bourges denied that Giscard d'Estaing had suggested that tactical nuclear weapons could be an "instrument of battle",<sup>70</sup> then, on the other hand, General Mery spoke in a diametrically different vein:

As far as our allies are concerned, do not expect from me a rigid scheme of our projected actions, we have not the least intention of letting ourselves be limited by plans made in advance...one can envisage all kinds of scenarios, from close participation in a forward battle to isolated combat on the heights of our frontiers.' It would be very adventurous to fix what might happen in rigid plans. And, at the risk of disappointing you, I will tell you that that would also be a question of expediency.<sup>71</sup>

The White Paper of 1972 assigned tactical nuclear weapons two functions limited to the execution of the national deterrent manoeuvre. First, tactical nuclear weapons were to strengthen the conventional forces meant for testing the intentions of an enemy. Second, by command of the French President, they were to be used to fire warning shots to convince the enemy of the seriousness of the French resolve. The logic

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69 Ibid.

70 Bourges cited in Atlantic News, no.84, 23 June 1976, p.3.

71 General Guy Mery quoted in David S. Yost, n.63, p.9.

of 'proportional deterrence' would thus become unmistakably obvious to the enemy, who would not then dare to invade France. But the statements of Chirac and Giscard confused this doctrine. They clearly indicated that the French tactical nuclear weapons had a European role and they would act as an instrument of battle and not just of warning shots.

Thus, the official French policy declarations have been so much laden with ambiguities and contradictions that it is very difficult to specify on their basis the French policy for European security with precision. President Giscard, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac and Armed Forces Chief General Guy Mery made a number of often contradictory statements that were widely interpreted as portending basic changes in the defence policy outlined in the 1972 White Paper, which was prepared by the Gaullist Defence Minister Michel Debre during the presidency of Georges Pompidou.

Despite the wide range of policy declarations and ambiguities and contradictions in them, the Giscardian regime insisted that its policies were but an elongation of the Gaullist era. Nevertheless the Giscardian regime represented a change in attitude, a greater concern about the security of France's West European allies and a greater willingness to prepare for possible action, in conjunction with the NATO, in the event of a war than any French regime heretofore. Simultaneously, some Gaullist principles are sacrosanct and therefore inviolable, for instance,



the continued development of France's strategic nuclear force and maintaining not only its total autonomy but also French military decision-making. The Giscard administration did not deviate from these sacred Gaullist principles. The same can be said about the Mitterrand Government, which succeeded the Giscardian Government in 1981.

**CHAPTER TWO**

## Chapter Two

### "LEFT UNITY PROGRAMME" AND THE FRENCH NATIONAL DEFENCE

In April 1969, when General de Gaulle departed from the political scene, French military policy, was fairly clear. In early 1960s, with the settlement of the Algerian conflict, the military had been gradually reorganized according to the new priorities of national nuclear deterrence. The French political debate, which upto that point placed in opposition rigidly distinct concepts - the "Gaullist" and all the others - gradually evolved, leading to the realization of an apparent consensus, as for example the Left Unity "Common Programme"; yet differences remained between and within each group.<sup>1</sup>

The events in France in May 1968, brought significant changes in the French party system. The new parliamentary elections which brought to an end this crisis resulted in a disastrous defeat for the Left, and the ruling parties won almost 75 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly. The losses suffered by the Leftists were partly due to lack of unity in their ranks, as it became manifest in the Presidential elections held scarcely a year later when the split in the Left became obvious to everyone because of the four Leftist candidates. There was only one option for the Left: The elimination

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1 Pierre Dabozies, "French Political Parties and Defence Policy: Divergences and Consensus", Armed Forces and Society, vol.8, no.2, Winter 1982, p.239.

of this discord and an effort to achieve Left unity, which would go beyond simply making agreements for the second ballot.<sup>2</sup>

The non-communist Left, which was represented principally by the SFIO (Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere), had for a long time been attempting to assume a new form and make French socialism more attractive. The result was dissolution of the old party and the formation of a new Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste) on 12 July 1969, with new political leadership. "As a consequence of the May disturbances and as a result of pressure exercised by the unionized members of the party's executive board, the party congress came out against any further alliance with bourgeois parties and advocated the starting of comprehensive negotiations with the Communist Party".<sup>3</sup> The new Socialist Party was consolidated, and after Francois Mitterrand went over to the party in 1971 and became its Chairman, establishment of an active alliance with the Communists was only a question of time because Mitterrand had already made commitment before the election that the Socialists would work together with the Communists beyond the scope of electoral adjustments.

The year 1969 also marked the beginning of a fundamental change for the French Communist Party (Parti Communiste Francais, P.C.F.).

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2     Richard Woyke, "France's Party System on the Eve of Elections", Aussen Politik, vol.29, no.1, 1st Quarter 1978, p.5.

3     Udo Kempf quoted in Richard Woyke, *ibid.*, p.5.

It adopted a new programme in October 1971 which was designed in particular:

- to demonstrate its political transformation with its increased social acceptability.
- to provide a forum for entering into negotiations with the socialists; and
- to keep the political initiative on the side of the Communists.<sup>4</sup>

For the Socialists there was no other option but to go along with the decision of their 1969 party congress. Their objective was to open up to the left and thereby attempt to become the strongest force in the "Union of the Left", i.e., to outweigh the PCF. The programme for governing which they adopted in 1971 was designed to achieve this goal.

This process of rapprochement between Communists and Socialists finally resulted in the programme for government of the two parties in July 1972. This programme not only marked a milestone in the history of Socialism in France, but it also affected the entire party system because it meant that for the first time there was a plausible alternative to the Gaullist presidential majority in the Fifth Republic. Both the Communists and the Socialists had to deviate from the party programmes they had

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4      Wichard Woyke, *ibid.*, pp.5-6.

previously prepared as bases for negotiations on important points. Compromises were achieved in that the Communists substantially accepted the positions of the Socialists in the areas dealing with the constitution, political institutions and foreign policy including defence, whereas the Socialists yielded to the Communists with respect to the questions of nationalization and approach to European integration. The significance of the common programme lay not so much in its content as in its effect. The attractiveness of this programme was seen both on the Right and on the Left. The Radical Socialists, who for a long time had been threatened with destruction because of the process of consolidation of the leftists and the trend in the direction of bipolarization in the party system, were split. One section under Robert Fabre signed the Common Programme which was a sign that the "Union of the Left" had opened up to the centre. This made it clear that the position of the Socialist Party had become stronger in relation to the PCF as a result of the expansion of the "Union of the Left" because the Radicals were further to the right than the PCF and the Socialist Party. Similarly, the Unified Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Unifie; PSU), a party to the left of the PCF, started to show signs of splitting, which ultimately led to the merger of a PSU group around Gilles Martinet with the Socialist Party in 1972.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Ibid., pp.6-7.

The most significant factor for the formation of a popular "left front" was the revival of the Socialist Party at the Congress of Epinay in 1971 under the leadership of Francois Mitterrand. Shortly after change in the leadership of the PCF with Georges Marchais taking over from the ailing Waldeck-Rochet, marked the final point of the rapprochement begun in 1964. The communist acceptance of pluralism led the party to accept Francois Mitterrand as the common candidate of the left in the presidential elections of 1965. This modest beginning was stalled again after the disturbances of May 1968.

On 9 October 1971, the Central Committee of the PCF adopted a voluminous document entitled Changer de Cap (changing the direction), which set out the guidelines for a democratic government of popular united front. In itself, this new programme contained few new ideas; it simply took up all the favourite demands of the PCF since the end of the fifties, such as active participation in arms control talks and signing existing treaties--Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty--which France had hitherto refused to sign. Such a new government also would abandon the nuclear weapons programme undertaken by France and would liquidate the existing nuclear stockpiles. As for reorganization of the national defence system, the programme indicated that compulsory military service for men would be maintained, but that the duration of service would be reduced by half, from twelve to six months. On European security matters, the text was relatively brief and noncommittal, taking up the old 1954

Soviet idea of the creation of a pan-European security system.

These guidelines for a new government prompted negotiations of the subsequent common programme adopted by the PCF and the Socialist party on 27 June 1972. In the defence and foreign policy fields there existed strong similarities of views of the two parties. This common programme was, however, more detailed than the PCF blueprint entitled Changer de Cap. A stronger Socialist concern with continental affairs led the draftsmen to introduce a new sub-chapter in which the intentions of the leftist government in the field of arms control were elaborated. First, the projected CSCE was to continue its activities in order to elaborate a treaty on European security embodying a new organization of security. Second, steps were to be taken "in favour of partial measures of disarmament in Europe: creation of denuclearized zones, freeze of armaments in Central Europe, controlled and balanced reduction of forces and armaments in Europe".<sup>6</sup>

On the one hand, the impact of the East was obvious-denuclearization of Central Europe according to the proposals mooted by Rapacki and Gomulka, 1957-1958; but on the other hand, the Socialist negotiators managed to stress the balanced character of troop reductions and the necessity of the verification of conclusions eventually reached. The programme asserted that "the progressive development of these measures will contribute to the creation of a climate of confidence and will favour the overcoming of antagonistic blocs".<sup>7</sup> This concession is

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6 Lawrence L. Whetten, New International Communism (Lexington Books, 1982), p.84.

7 *Ibid.*, pp.84-85.



significant since the USSR had not, until October 1972, expressed its desire to consider positively the NATO's proposal put forward in the MBFR guidelines. Thus in this specific field, the PCF went beyond the Soviet position by committing a future French government of the left to work for balanced force reduction in the disarmament talks of the East and the West. The common programme accepted the basic proposals of the PCF in matters of national security: duration of six months for military service, democratization of the armed forces, and their strong parliamentary control. Likewise, arms transfers to foreign countries were to be strictly controlled, and totally banned in the case of colonialist and racialist regimes.<sup>8</sup>

Another PCF concession was in the crucial field of Alliance policy. For the PCF, this was a most important matter, as is evident by the refusal of the PCF to join any military bloc stated in the 1971 Changer de Cap programme. The basic principle of an independent and sovereign France was stressed: "The new government will undertake measures with the aim of disengaging France from the Atlantic Pact, a political-military organization with aggressive purposes and dominated by the United States."<sup>9</sup> This was obviously unacceptable to the new Socialist party. The old Socialist party

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8 James P. McGregor, "The 1976 European Communist Parties Conference", Studies in Comparative Communism, Winter 1978, pp.339-40.

9 Lawrence L. Whetten, op.cit., n.6, p.85.

had strongly criticised General de Gaulle's decision to withdraw from the integrated military structure of NATO, and the majority of its members still rejected any move that would further impair the French relations with the Atlantic Alliance. The NATO problem was thus major obstacle and the PCF was obliged to compromise on this issue. In the Common Programme, the agreed principle was:

"The government will base its national defence--on the respect of the alliances (of France)--The government, in its declaration of intent, will express the will to practice a policy of independence vis-a-vis the military blocs and this under any circumstances and by respecting the current alliances of France".<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the bitter pill of the acceptance of continued adherence to the North Atlantic Treaty was sweetened by the rhetoric of the nonalignment to military blocs. In the draft of the Common Programme NATO itself is mentioned only twice and that also in a negative sense. As a matter of fact, the "Union of the Left" adopted the Gaullist distinction between the North Atlantic Treaty, on the one hand, and the Organization of the Alliance (NATO), on the other, and it opted for the status quo introduced by General de Gaulle in 1966 by reiterating the refusal to reintegrate the French forces into the NATO. The continued adherence to the Alliance was further weakened by a series of reservations: "the right of the new government to conclude defensive alliances and nonaggression treaties and the

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10 Ibid.

declaration of intent to seek the simultaneous abrogation of the North Atlantic Treaty and the Warsaw Treaty."<sup>11</sup> This was the point of no return to the integrated military system of NATO and was reinforced by the statement that the new government would "define a military strategy in order to be able to face any possible aggressor, whoever he may be". This latter formula partially contradicted the provisions of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty of 1949, stipulating common action in case of aggression against any of the members of the Alliance, but what is important in this respect is that the common programme already in 1972 contained a hint that the French strategy should be omnidirectional, tous azimuts.

Adherence to the North Atlantic Treaty, nonetheless, constituted a significant shift in Communist policies. The question here is, can such a fundamental change be reconciled with the Soviet position or is there any serious break with the Moscow leadership? According to a PCF spokesman, the evolution of the Soviet position since 1969 suggests that actual acceptance of the military status quo in Europe did not disturb the Soviet leadership to a great extent. After all, the USSR, by entering into the SALT process and MBFR talks and by agreeing that the two North American allies of NATO, viz., USA and Canada, take part in the European Conference on Security and Cooperation, had tacitly accepted the idea that arms control talks should be carried out on the basis of the two existing alliance systems.

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11 Ibid., p.86.

The PS and PCF signed the common programme in 1972 in anticipation of being elected as a coalition in power. Confronted with the right's unbroken electoral and governmental dominance since 1958, the left - Communists, Socialists and Radicals - had no option but to unite if they ever were to come to power. At first, move in this direction was made for reasons of electoral tactics in November 1962 when, for the first time since his party had split with the Communists in May 1947, Guy Mollet, General Secretary of the S.F.I.O., announced on the eve of the Parliamentary elections that, where there was a straight fight between a Gaullist and a Communist, he would be calling upon socialists to vote for the Communist. However, the Socialists made sure to explain that this was no attempt to revive the Front Populaire of 1936, that the "deep-seated and lasting reasons for the division of the left" subsisted, in short that their sole purpose was to deal with the immediate problem at hand, to meet the Gaullist danger which, under the conditions prevailing, was greater than the Communist danger.<sup>12</sup> But the success of this tactic (the communists won 41 seats compared with 10 in 1958, the socialists 66 compared with 44) laid the foundations for further developments. In December 1965, at the time of the presidential elections, the PCF, the SFIO and the Radicals agreed that, as from the first ballot, they would all support a joint candidate, Francois Mitterrand, who was then leader of a small group, the Convention des Institutions Republicaines (C.I.R.). Following

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12 Le Populaire, 26 November 1962, cited in Jean Charlot, The Political Parties in France, (Paris, 1986), p.10.

this campaign, the Federation de la Gauche Democratique et Socialiste (F.G.D.S.) - formed in September 1965 by the political friends of Mitterrand, the Socialists and Radicals - entered upon negotiations with the PCF which culminated, on 20 December 1966, in a formal agreement to the effect that each side would withdraw in favour of the other in the second ballot of the general election to be held in March 1967. Between 1962 and 1966, therefore, the leaders of the non-communist left had progressed from an adhoc electoral alliance with the PCF to a negotiated formal electoral alliance. The left's relative success in the March 1967 general election - the Communists won 73 seats compared with 41 in 1962, the F.G.D.S. 121 compared with 105 - provided the impetus for a further stage in the progress towards the Union of the Left; efforts to draw up a minimum joint programme. On 24 February 1968 the PCF and the FGDS published a joint statement enumerating the points on which they were in agreement, which were mainly in the area of domestic policy, and those on which they differed, foreign policy and defence policy issues for the most part.<sup>13</sup>

However, the crisis of May 1968 put the Union of the Left in jeopardy. The FGDS was unable to survive as a united force after the Gaullist landslide victory in the June 1968 general election, and the left went into the first ballot of the presidential elections in

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13 Jean Charlot, The Political Parties in France, (Paris, 1986), p.10.

June 1969 with 4 candidates. Consequently, the left was eliminated from the second ballot, for which only Georges Pompidou and Alain Poher had qualified in the first ballot, in which they had come first and second respectively. Nevertheless, the movement towards a Union of the Left began to gather strength again from 1969-71. At the Epinay Congress, held in June 1971, Francois Mitterrand, an ardent supporter of the Union strategy, assumed the leadership of the PS. On 27 June 1972 the PS and the PCF signed the Programme Commun du Gouvernement (Joint Programme of Government), to which the Radicaux de Gauche subscribed the following month. The three parties of the Left - the PCF, the PS and the MRG - undertook to implement this programme if they came to power. In the general election of March 1973 the PS made substantial gains while support for the PCF remained stagnant; the result was a change in the balance between the opposition parties in favour of the non-communist left, opening up the prospects of drawing support away from the centre among voters attracted by the left but scared of the communists. This made l'alternance a realistic possibility.<sup>14</sup> It very nearly materialized in the 1974 Presidential elections, in which Francois Mitterrand was the sole candidate of the Left, as in 1965, and lost to Valery Giscard d'Estaing, in the second ballot, by a very narrow margin. The left was expected to win the next general election, in March 1978. But there was another split, in September 1977, over the updating of the 1972 joint programme of

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14 Ibid., p.11.

government. The Socialists and Radicals on the one hand and the Communists on the other were unable to reach agreement, one of the main issues dividing them being the scale of nationalizations to be undertaken on coming to power. The right was again victorious, to general surprise.

The left's aspiration of coming to power was not realized for nearly a decade after the signing of the common unity programme in 1972. But even then the left gained in importance and gained adequate attention of the media and people. Actually the Left shot in prominence the world over in the seventies, as a result of the stagnation which followed the 'Oil Crunch' of 1973.<sup>15</sup>

The French Left had always felt that it must have an established national security policy, but such a policy invariably got saturated with nationalistic colouring. The Left was never able to break away from the intensely patriotic tradition created by de Gaulle. Therefore, both main parties of the left - PS and PCF - developed their defence, and alliance, perspectives out of the Gaullist framework of independence which has attained the status of a broad national consensus. For those on the left, the most important aspect of the debate involved the consequences of integration within an American dominated Western system.

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15 William E. Griffith, "The Left in France, Italy and Spain" in W. E. Griffith, ed., The European Left: Italy, France and Spain (Massachusetts, 1979), p.1.

Intra-Left disagreements have essentially arisen from different perceptions of the need to make international compromises and concessions in order to manage external pressures while gaining maximum leverage to secure socialist goals.<sup>16</sup>

Since the left failed narrowly to gain the parliamentary majority in the March 1973 general elections and the situation at home and abroad had meanwhile undergone fundamental changes, the need arose from 1976 on to update the common programme of 1972. The PCF took the initiative, with the socialist partner showing signs of hesitation, since the latter was major beneficiary of the existing arrangement. The communist party however, in a dramatic move proposed a major a and for the PCF revolutionary - shift in the defence posture in favour of the acceptance of the national nuclear force. The PCF spokesman for defence policy, Louis Baillot indicated that the national nuclear force took on an ever increasing importance as the main guarantee of national independence, given the tendency of President Giscard d'Estaing to realign the French doctrine with NATO concepts.<sup>17</sup> He then suggested to the liaison committee that the three parties of the left, including the Radicals, had established in 1973, a general revision of the section of the common programme banning the nuclear force. At that time, the socialist leadership was unprepared for a major shift. The subject was taken up

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16 Michael M. Harrison, "The Socialist Party, the Union of the Left, and French National Security", in Simon Serfaty, ed., The Foreign Policies of the French Left (Colorado, 1979), p.23.

17 Le Monde, 18 April 1976.



in November 1976, when the socialist party executive organized a special conference on defence and security which agreed in principle to accept the nuclear facts of life.

The acceptance of the force de frappe by the PCF was officially announced only in May 1977 in a speech by Jean Kanapa, member of the politburo and party secretary for international relations, to the members of the central committee. The new line was formulated in detail two months later in the liaison committee when Jean Kanapa submitted on 22 July 1977 a working paper containing the changes that the PCF wanted to introduce into the original (1972) version of the common programme. The PCF draft proposed:

1. Maintenance of the nuclear armament at the level required for the security and independence of the country;
2. Adoption of a deterrence strategy in the strict sense, in order to prevent the outbreak of any conflict;
3. Maintenance of tactical nuclear armaments on national territory;
4. Acquisition of the necessary independent means of aerial reconnaissance;
5. Collegial decision making on the use of the nuclear weapons; and
6. Nondesignation by the new government of a potential adversary and preservation of an omnidirectional military strategy (tous azimuts) in order to face any possible aggressor.<sup>18</sup>

While the socialists expressed their willingness to discuss the first four points, they declined to consider the two others. Differences also remained over the nuclear arsenal. The PCF argued that a modest expansion of the ballistic missile submarine force should be

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18 Lawrence L. Whetten, op.cit., n.6, p.88.

allowed. The new communist doctrine was close to the Gaullist concept of total sanctuarization of the French territory and of an un-equivocal refusal to extend the deterrence to cover France's NATO allies. The third point was obviously a reference to the necessity not to station the Pluton tactical missile system outside France, specifically on the territory of the FRG. The fourth point stressed that, in order to make the nuclear deterrent effective, France would have to possess its own means of early warning and reconnaissance - in other words, it would have to build military satellites. These PCF proposals reflected a basic acceptance of the current nuclear doctrine and the countervalue, or anti-city, deterrence posture. But the remaining proposals were clearly aimed at undermining the existing nuclear policy. Collegial decision making on nuclear use would in reality paralyze the whole system. It was also assumed that the PCF would delegate its own representatives to the envisaged supreme council on nuclear defence, possibly with a right of veto. The Socialists were prepared only to submit the question of force de frappe to a popular referendum, but this idea was also given up because it was incompatible with the Common Programme.

The main hurdle to an agreement, however, was the communist demand to reintroduce the strategy of tousazimuts which meant refusal to recognize any country in advance as a hostile power. Finally, there was some evidence that the PCF tried to go back on the concession granted in 1972 on continued alliance membership; the

paragraph on the refusal to reintegrate NATO was expanded by a passage stating that France "would put an end to the measures of reinsertion into that military organization undertaken by the government in past periods and that France would also decline to take part in the setting up of any new integrated military organization."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, there were considerable differences over the updating of the common programme, but even then these differences were not a major cause of the rupture of September 1977. By the end of August, the sub-committee on defence and security of the liaison committee had finished its discussions on the understanding that only the four agreed points should be taken up for consideration. Jean Kanapa accepted this procedure for final talks among the left union members. It is, therefore, wrong to infer that these matters prevented the updating of the 1972 common programme, since the PCF seemed willing to compromise. Nevertheless, the party leadership, published the Kanapa draft shortly before the March elections with the clear intention of putting all the onus on the socialists for the rupture of partnership. In their turn, the socialist leaders had to demonstrate, after the break, that they had not yielded on essential points to the communists. Hence, they stressed the main points of divergence, which concerned the PCF position vis-a-vis NATO.

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19 Ibid., p.89.

In September 1977 the PCF withdrew from the Union of the Left, on the breakdown of the negotiations on updating the joint programme of government. In May 1979, at its 23rd Congress, the PCF expressed a "generally positive" view of the socialist countries' record. In January 1980 Georges Marchais spoke in defence of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, live from Moscow on French television. Despite the explanations and arguments on points of detail offered by the leadership of the PCF, this realignment with Moscow provoked a grave crisis within the party and precipitated its decline.<sup>20</sup>

The PCF had hoped that after its withdrawal from the Union with the PS it would regain its autonomy on the left, and that that might restore its lost electoral support. At the National Conference held in January 1978 Georges Marchais set the party the target of polling 25 per cent of the popular vote. The trend since then, however, has been in the reverse direction, with a sharp fall in electoral support - coinciding with the increasing popularity of the PS - 21.2 per cent of the votes cast in the March 1978 general election, 20.6 per cent in the elections to the European Parliament in June 1979, 15.5 per cent in the April 1981 presidential elections, 16.1 per cent in the June 1981 general election, and 11.2 per cent in the June 1984 European elections.<sup>21</sup> The PCF was ultimately forced, under pressure from its own supporters, to associate itself with the Socialists' victory in 1981, in the second ballot of the Presidential elections and then in the ensuing

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20 Jean Charlot, op.cit., n.13, p.26.

21 Ibid.

general election. It had to agree to join the Governments led by the Socialist Pierre Mauroy from 1981 to 1984, on the Socialists' terms and conditions and with very limited responsibilities - only 4 ministerial portfolios in the Government.<sup>22</sup> Having become increasingly critical of the action taken following the first austerity programme - June 1982 - and especially after the second - March 1983 - the PCF quit the government in July 1984, when the Fabius Government was formed, hoping, as in 1977, that its refound autonomy would enable it to arrest the decline of its popularity, which seems to be irreversible.

The assumption underlying the United Left strategy had been that within the United Left the PCF would be a dominant force. This assumption must have been seriously questioned within the PCF leadership from the autumn of 1974, and finally abandoned in September 1977 when the PS refused to update the common programme. It was by then obvious that the programme as it stood was inapplicable to the circumstances of the late 1970s, and that the PS wanted to keep its hands free to revise the programme in a reformist direction once in office, while the PCF's role would be confined to delivering working-class support. The PCF leaders were not willing to play this role. They accepted that their priority must now be to re-establish their own party's hegemony of the Left - and this meant demolishing the powerful Socialist Party which they themselves, by their United Left strategy, had unintentionally

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22 Ibid., p.27.

helped to create. They now admit that, by signing the Common Programme of 1972, they gave the PS a kind of undeserved certificate of proletarian legitimacy, and thereby contributed to the revival of that social democracy which earlier generations of communists had recognized as their most dangerous rival.<sup>23</sup>

The approaches to national security by Communists and Socialists in France are important not only because of their impact on the internal politics of France, but also because of the actual and potential military consequences for the effectiveness of the Atlantic Alliance. In opposition, Communist and Socialist positions on defence and foreign policy have acted as restraint on government policies. It was feared, however, that if the parties of the Left were to come into power, their policy positions would directly influence the defence and foreign policies of France and would raise some critical questions about East-West political and military relations in Europe and adjoining regions and about relations between the United States and other members of the Atlantic Alliance.

French Communist and Socialists have varied positions on national defence, civil-military affairs, as well as on NATO. Their positions on defence and foreign policies diverge for understandable reasons. As a well-known specialist opines, they "engage in a dialectic of agreement and qualification with regard to the national defence policies of other West European countries".<sup>24</sup> In the case of Socialists, there

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23 Edward Mortimer, Jonathan Story and Paolo Filo Della Torre, "Whatever Happened to 'Euro Communism'?", International Affairs, (London), vol.55, n14, October 1979, p.579.

24 Ciro Elliott Zoppo, "The Left and European Security: France, Italy and Spain", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.24, no.2, Summer 1980, p.290.

there are at times nearly irreconcilable positions among different factions of the Party such as the "Pacifist", "Atlanticist" and "Gaullist", which remain at loggerheads with each other. The Socialist Party, for instance, officially adopted nuclear weapons policy at a special convention in January 1978. On that occasion, at least three distinct factions supported the nuclear line - albeit for politically incompatible reasons - while a fourth vociferously argued in favour of continuing the party's traditional disapproval of all nuclear system.<sup>25</sup>

The 'Atlanticists' (led at that time by Robert Pontillon and supported by Jacques Hantzinger) abandoned their earlier hostility because, among other reasons, they felt that the French dissociation from the NATO, and or its own bomb had not led to the disintegration of the NATO, as it was feared earlier. By 1978, they were sure that it was both electorally popular and diplomatically compatible with the Alliance's goals. The CERES (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Socialistes) group, on the other hand (led by Jean-Pierre Chevenement) favoured nuclear weapons for precisely the opposite reason. These socialist politicologues of the left believed that only through the possession of nuclear weapons could a socialist France contain the hegemonial American and NATO pressures to conform to the social,

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25 Jalyon Howorth, "Consensus of Silence: The French Socialist Party and Defence Policy Under Francois Mitterrand", International Affairs (London), vol.60, no.4, August 1984, p.582.

economic and political norms of liberal democracy. The third well-known pro-nuclear group within the PS is the 'Jacobin-nationalist' or 'Jaures-Gaullist' faction. The defence minister, Charles Hernu, was its political chief. This group bears proximity to the classical Gaullism in spirit. In 1978, the Jacobins appeared to support the two contradictory positions, desired to 'go nuclear' for reasons of national independence, but despite well-pronounced 'anti-Americanism', in no hurry to leave NATO. Finally, there was Mitterrand himself. It is impossible to classify the President: all through his political career he had been effecting balance among different factions and policies, which may apparently be mutually contradictory. Mitterrand, as an expert believer seems to have resigned himself reluctantly to the inevitability of a nuclear defence for reasons connected with the presently/<sup>prevailing</sup>objective political reality in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

However, opposition to nuclear weapons came from a heterogenous cohort of ethical and political sensitivities. Mavericks like Jean-Pierre Worms or Charles Josselin joined forces with the former members of the Parti Socialiste Unifie (PSU) or Catholic activists like Clause Manceron, Jean Le Garrec and Patrick Viveret, and were tacitly supported by residual Atlanticists who still saw the French bomb as an obstacle to the solidarity of the Alliance.<sup>27</sup> Thus, we find that the PS is a faction ridden party and even if different factions have arrived at a consensus

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26 Ibid., pp.583-84.

27 Ibid., p.584.



on any issue, they are because of just-opposite and incompatible reasons, as is evident, from the aforesaid different reasons given by different factions for supporting the French nuclear policy.

There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that Marxist orientation to European and international politics has tended to influence perceptions of the French Socialists and Communists, particularly regarding roles of the Soviet Union and the US in international security. More important, however, on the concrete aspects of European security and western defence differences between Communists and Socialists have been, until recently, barely discernible. This has been the result of an almost exclusively ideological approach to defence by the Left in France - an approach primarily determined by considerations of party politics and internal politics.<sup>28</sup>

An analysis of the positions on national defence of the parties of the Left in France reveals that the basic factor, which has determined their perceptions about European security and about the possible security threats to their nations is communist ideology. This ideology has forged unity in the Left on the relationship between the global policies of the United States and its role in the Atlantic Alliance. It has also made possible common approaches to the appraisal of the interactions between Soviet military capabilities and the Soviet Union's

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28    Ciro Elliott Zoppo, op. cit., n.24, p.291.

political intentions vis-a-vis Western Europe.

Then, of late, it has been noticed that the main thrust in defence and security policy of the left in France has been to adapt to the Gaullist model established under the Fifth Republic. For both the Socialists and the Communists, it is evident that Gaullist policies and postures furnished adequate scope to reconcile the often divergent and clashing interests of the various groupings. Intra-left disagreements on defence do reflect contradictory goals or interpretations of domestic and international issues, but it is noteworthy that explanations or justifications have increasingly resorted to the Gaullist security model as a guideline, or natural point of reference. The Lefts' adoption of the Fifth Republics' security policy in the Common Programme is not surprising, for in this sphere de Gaulle himself represented attitudes and views widely shared by the French elites and which in the 1960s were often characterized as of a Left variety.



CHAPTER THREE

## Chapter Three

### FRANCE'S NUCLEAR DEFENCE UNDER FRANCOIS MITTERRAND AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

France's defence policy relies upon the unity of its people. Such policy is based upon three principles: the affirmation of national independence, fidelity to international engagements, and the will to act. Before the people opt for these commitments, however, they must consider the resulting responsibilities: to have at France's disposal a strictly national nuclear armament and to be fully aware of its alliances, agreements, and the solidarity that ties it to other countries.<sup>1</sup>

The current defence policy pursued by the Socialist government owes heavily to the defence principles initiated by General de Gaulle during 1960s. De Gaulle during the 1960s accorded a distinct priority to the exclusive protection of French territory. The two features of French defence policy most associated with Gaullism are the independent nuclear deterrent and the withdrawal from the NATO's integrated military structure. These two fulfilled six broad objectives that still guide French security policy. Three of these

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1 Press Release No.7, 2 September 1987, Embassy of France: Press and Information Service, New Delhi, pp.1-2.

objectives are purely political. The French expresses near unanimous consensus with the view that a nuclear arsenal brings uncontested prestige to France across the world. Preservation of France's international rank, power and prestige has been a fundamental foreign policy goal of all French governments. An independent nuclear force is also a prerequisite for national independence. Finally, American dominance of the integrated NATO structure placed France in an unacceptable subordinate position vis-a-vis the United States. The two Gaullist defence initiatives also fulfilled three military goals. First, the French saw their own deterrent force as the best means of safeguarding their territory and national sovereignty. Secondly, de Gaulle viewed integrated military forces as portending potential disaster for France in a war. Lastly, an independent security policy meant that France had to avoid becoming engaged in armed conflict without making a deliberate and thoroughly considered decision to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Since assuming power in the spring of 1981, the Socialists have confirmed the support for Fifth Republic defence policy that they developed during the 1970s, and have even moved toward the most classic kind of Gaullist posture in reaction to some deviations under Giscard d'Estaing. The Socialists have also followed de Gaulle's tactic of holding out a European defence option as an alternative to

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2 Robert Grant, "French Defence Policy and European Security", Political Science Quarterly, vol.100, no.3, Fall 1985, pp.411-12.

Western Europe's perpetual dependence on an American-dominated NATO.<sup>3</sup>

The Socialists inherited a triad of nuclear weapons system on the original Gaullist design of the 1960s. The oldest component is some 36 aging Mirage-IV aircrafts dispersed over seven bases. The second component of the FNS consists of 18 S-2 IRBMs grouped in two squadrons at the Plateau d'Albion in Haute-Provence. The third and most important part, designated as the Force Oceanique Strategique, are the five missile-launching nuclear submarines. A submarine is equipped with sixteen missiles, each with a range of 3,300 kms. and armed with a one-megaton thermonuclear warhead.<sup>4</sup> French land and air forces are also equipped with the pluton tactical nuclear weapons, due to be replaced in the early 1990s with the more advanced long-range Hades system.

The French strategic force consists of the strategic and the prestrategic or tactical nuclear forces. The strategic airborne forces (EAS) stationed on the Albion plateau, include the piloted bombers, Mirage-IV (refuelled by KC 135), and 18 surface-to-surface ballistic strategic submarines (SSBS) equipped with S-3 missiles. The Oceanic Strategic Force (FOST) has at its disposal six nuclear submarine engine launchers (SNLE): five launchers of 16 MSBS M-20

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3 Michael M. Harrison, "Mitterrand's France in the Atlantic System: A Foreign Policy of Accommodation", Political Science Quarterly (New York), vol.99, no.2, Summer 1984, p.232.

4 Ibid.

monochrome missiles and one launcher of 16 MSBS M-4 missiles with multiple charges. Likewise, tactical nuclear weapons which French designate as the prestrategic nuclear forces can also be divided into three parts - airborne, maritime and land component. The airborne component includes two Mirage III E squadrons and three Jaguar Squadrons rendered operational by the tactical airborne force (FATAC). Equipped with nuclear charges of 25 KT, it is capable of destroying operational objectives assigned to it deep within the enemy territory. The maritime component includes two assault airbase flotillas, the super-Étendards, loaded on the Foch and Clemenceau aircraft carriers. The land component includes five regiments of surface-to-surface pluton nuclear artillery.<sup>5</sup>

The Socialists have also confirmed Giscard government's plans for modernizing and expanding France's nuclear armoury and have shifted force development plans to favour nuclear over conventional forces. One of Mitterrand's earliest decisions as President was to approve the construction of a seventh missile-launching submarine to enter service by 1994. Mitterrand also decided to go ahead with plans initiated under Giscard to create a mobile land-based IRBM force, to proceed with development of the Hades tactical nuclear weapon, and, instead of scuttling the Mirage-IV force, to keep fifteen planes in service after 1985 and equip them with advanced air-to-ground medium-range nuclear missiles enhancing the penetration

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5 Embassy of France: Press Release (Press & Information Service, New Delhi), no.7, 2 September 1987, pp.3-4.



capability of this attack system. The Socialist attention to defence and military security was also reflected in the government's first defence budget for 1982 which increased defence spending by 17.63 per cent over 1981. Defence was to account for 3.39 per cent of France's Gross National Product (GNP) in 1982.<sup>6</sup> The total 1987 budget for defence spending amounts to 169.2 billion francs, representing an increase of approximately 6.35 per cent since 1986. Moreover, the defence budget accounts for 3.79 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.<sup>7</sup>

French independence is most explicitly affirmed, as it has been since 1958, in the area of defence policy. One of de Gaulle's most enduring successes was not only to build the independent French nuclear force but to convince the French public that by doing so he had ended their security reliance on the United States.<sup>8</sup> Since then, France had adhered - with almost religious fervour - to the Gaullist principle of national independence. The Gaullist strategy is based on the theory of "proportional deterrence" whereby France's nuclear arsenal would defend the national sanctuary by threatening a potential aggressor with losses much greater than any conceivable gain from such an attack. The French are thus the last true believers in a massive retaliation, anti-cities doctrine and reject the NATO strategy

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6 Michael M. Harrison, op.cit., n.3, pp.232-3.

7 Embassy of France: Press Release, op.cit., n.1, p.1.

8 A. W. De Porte, "France's New Realism", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.63, no.1, Fall 1984, p.150.

of flexible response as untenable.<sup>9</sup> But renewed tensions between the super powers and the technological growth in nuclear weapons have rendered Gaullist doctrines obsolete, which needed modification in changed international security scenario. It took the arrival of a leftist government, after twenty-three years of conservative rule, to accept this view and introduce modifications. Unlike their predecessors, moreover, Mitterrand and his advisers do not carry the doctrinal burden of having to defend all the Gaullist precepts. This has enabled them to undertake a comprehensive reassessment of French strategy and they have embarked on a dual strategy: first, to modernize the strategic nuclear deterrent; and, second, to expand the level of cooperation with NATO.

Rank and independence have been enduring preoccupations of successive French governments and the socialist government of Mitterrand is not an exception to it. The former French Defence Minister Charles Hernu has described France as the 'world's third military power',<sup>10</sup> and has reconfirmed long-standing Gaullist principles that portray France as capable of 'assuring totally her own security'.<sup>11</sup> This capability is derived from France's strategic nuclear deterrent posture. Francois Mitterrand clarifying French strategic policy of his government said:

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9 Robert S. Rudney, "Mitterrand's New Atlanticism: Evolving French Attitudes Toward NATO", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.28, no.1, Spring 1984, p.34.

10 Le Monde, 25 February 1982, p.12.

11 Le Monde, 10 October 1981, p.12.

In the current state of the Alliance, it is impossible for France to do anything but assure the defence of her own territory through nuclear deterrence. Any step outside would fundamentally contradict this strategy, involve us in conflicts we could no longer control, and make us return into a system where we would lose our autonomy of decision. But this withdrawal may at length lead the French to a sort of neutralism regarding the affairs of the world, and particularly with respect to our closest friends. If we were to refuse all solidarity with them, how could we expect theirs? There is today a contradiction between the strategy based on defence of the national sanctuary alone and the strategy based on the Alliance -- but if this doctrine (of independent deterrence) is sufficient in itself, why the Alliance? It would be more honest to tell our neighbours that they cannot count on us if they are attacked. More honest to tell the French that they cannot count on others in case of danger. Neither of these situations, I must say, is satisfactory. Does autonomy of decision exclude solidarity? Does solidarity exclude independence?<sup>12</sup>

French leaders, thus, generally identify the political purpose of nuclear weapons as the defence of French territory or, at best, of France's "vital interests". But external pressures are making it necessary for France to provide a more explicit definition of the role of French nuclear weapons in the West European security system. This is a "basic strategic dilemma for France".<sup>13</sup> The main problem in French strategic doctrine revolves around the stress on defending the national sanctuary with nuclear weapons and the increasing acceptance of the need to include French

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12 Francois Mitterrand, quoted in David G. Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe Part I: Capabilities and Doctrine", Adelphi Papers (London), no.194, Winter 1984, p.1.

13 Robbin F. Laird, "The French Strategic Dilemma", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.28, no.2, Summer 1984, p.307.

neighbouring allies - especially Federal Republic of Germany - in the French security system.

The continuity in defence policy that Mitterrand has supported since his election as President means that most of the essential ambiguities and contradictions of French policy for European security, which he criticized in opposition, continue under his leadership. President Mitterrand himself admitted reversal in his own thinking, while addressing the Danish Parliament on 29 April 1982:

It is now a quarter of a century since this choice (nuclear weapons) was made, against my judgement, but the fact is that, for a quarter of a century, the defence of France has been based on this kind of weapon. If it disappeared, nothing would be left of my country's means of defence -- Even though the choice of weapons was not my choice, I am now accountable for the security of my country and I take care to see that my country's weapons remain above the level below which their ability to deter would be destroyed. It must therefore be understood that there is no ideological choice involved here.<sup>14</sup>

Like his predecessors, Francois Mitterrand pursues, within the Atlantic Alliance, a discreet cooperation with NATO's military organization, but there is no question of returning to its integrated military structure. The deterrent force is not something which can be available to others and France must continue to take the decisions, as President Mitterrand asserted in an address to the Ubersee Club of Hamburg, on 14 May 1982: "We cannot allow the security, the voice of France, to depend on considerations arrived at 5,000 kilometres away from us".<sup>15</sup> If on the one hand, Mitterrand strongly defended

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14 Francois Mitterrand, quoted in Marie-Claude Smoits, "The External Policy of Francois Mitterrand", International Affairs (London), vol. 59, no. 2, Spring 1983, pp. 158-9.

15 Ibid., p. 159.

independent French security policy then on the other hand he also assured Alliance partners - especially the USA and the FRG - of the firm French support in the event of any invasion on them. Even before coming to power in January 1978, Mitterrand affirmed: "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".<sup>16</sup> After assuming power Mitterrand reaffirmed this stance, while addressing the Institut des hautes etudes de defense nationale on 14 September 1981.

France's powerful nuclear deterrent force makes an important contribution to the common defence of the Alliance, to which we belong, and which we respect, despite the fact that we are, and must remain, masters of our own decisions".<sup>17</sup>

France's deterrent posture, devised by de Gaulle in the early 1960s, still remains intact. But de Gaulle devised this strategy at a time when the US had nuclear superiority and despite Gaullist criticism could assure West Germany in particular of a credible security guarantee. This enabled de Gaulle to institute a defence system in which nuclear weapons were held to 'sanctuarize' France. France's commitments to the Atlantic Alliance remained in force after the 1966 withdrawal from NATO's integrated military structure, but its leaders described France as an independent power with an option of non-

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16 Le Monde, 10 January 1978.

17 Francois Mitterrand, quoted in Lord Saint Brides, "Foreign Policy of Socialist France", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.26, no.1, Spring 1982.

belligerency<sup>18</sup> - a power that could choose not to participate in a possible East-West conflict.

French nuclear strategy, whether in its Gaullist, Giscardian, or Mitterrand modes, depends critically on the second-strike capability of the force de dissuasion. Since its inception, the French nuclear force has been rationalized in terms of proportional deterrence. There has been no effort to match the super powers in delivery systems, warheads or payloads. Since such an effort is beyond France's technological and economic resources, successive Fifth Republic regimes have concentrated on building a counter-value system to deter aggression against France. The French call their deterrent posture the deterrence of "weak against the strong" and they rely for its credibility and effectiveness as much on military preparedness as on steadfast political leadership in order finally to manipulate the essentially psychological determinants of deterrence.<sup>19</sup>

Roughly speaking, there are two schools of thought: the first one, represented by General Gallois, continues to advocate "deterrence through terror" along the lines of the US massive retaliation doctrine of the 1950s. The second school argues that such theory has become obsolete and that it should be modified and even replaced by "deterrence through defence". In France, considerable effort has been made by the

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18 David S. Yost, "Radical Change in French Defence Policy", Survival (London), vol.28, no.1, January-February 1986, p.55.

19 Edward A. Kolodziej, "French Security Policy: Decisions and Dilemmas", Armed Forces and Society (London), vol.8, no.2, Winter 1982, p.189.

protagonists of the massive retaliation theory to rationalize this concept. They believe that nuclear terrorism, i.e. counter-city strategy, is more than enough to deter an opponent from any hostile action against France. Besides, on the European continent, the French "nuclear resolve" is supposed by them to offer some substitute for the American "nuclear shyness" exemplified in the early sixties by President Kennedy's strategy of flexible response or "delayed nuclear response". The French course of establishing a local nuclear trigger on the Continent has been and still is undoubtedly a positive contribution to general deterrence for the whole of the West. But the rationale behind "deterrence through terror" has been pushed awfully too far by its protagonists.<sup>20</sup> However, despite the vehement criticism of the classical concept of "deterrence through terror", it still continues to be the cornerstone of the official French strategy.

The proponents of the second school of thought question the virtues of "strategic terror", which in their view may have been useful to deter war two decades ago, but since then has been eroded by the massive Soviet build-up in delivery systems and civil defence. In addition, the pace of technological progress in the area of accuracy of delivery systems paves the way for a "counterforce"

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20 - Marc Geneste, "Deterrence Through Terror or Deterrence Through Defence: The Emerging Nuclear Debate", Armed Forces and Society, (London), vol.8, no.2, Winter 1982, pp.225-6.

first strike against fixed targets such as airfields or MRBM silos. A breakthrough in ABMs might also some day nullify the SALT-1 Agreement banning such defences, and this would seriously reduce the deterrent value of submarine launched ballistic missiles still out of reach of a first strike. All in all, modern technology gradually tends to downgrade the effect of countercity retaliation and to severely alter the balance of terror to such an extent that the aggressor might think that his strategic superiority would prevent his victim from any strategic reaction, or that this reaction, should it occur anyway, would not hurt him too badly.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the scholars of the second school believe that the strategy of deterrence through terror is no longer sufficient to ensure France's security.

The deployment of the Soviet SS-20 IRBMs and the Backfire bomber, supplemented by Soviet strategic forces and anti-submarine warfare capacity, question the very survivability of French forces after a Soviet first-strike. The credibility of French nuclear land-based forces has never been more problematic. Mirage-1V and IRBM forces are highly vulnerable to a first-strike attack. The deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles, armed with three 150-kiloton warheads, and of Backfire bombers with a load capacity of 17,500 pounds spearhead Soviet theatre nuclear forces in Europe. These are supplemented by 1,400 ICBMS (with MIRVed warheads), 60 SS-5 IRBMs, over 1000 SLBMs, over 600 sea-

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21 Ibid., p.227.



launched cruise missiles, and 2,000 strike aircraft.<sup>22</sup> While most of the Soviet Union's estimated 6,000 overall warhead total are aimed at U.S. forces, enough capacity exists to target French land-based forces.<sup>23</sup> Even if some should survive an attack, their reliability or survivability in a hostile environment is doubtful.

French strategists speak of the IRBM force, in a changed security scenario, as "a lightning rod which, when struck by enemy forces, would justify a massive retaliatory attack by France's sea-launched missiles".<sup>24</sup> The destruction of the French IRBMs would violate the French sanctuary and clearly reveal enemy intentions of an invasion against French territory. The sea-launched segment of the French triad, while less vulnerable than the land-based systems, can by no means assure a minimum assured destruction (MAD) capability. Modernization of French nuclear forces will also not change the existing situation. A Sixth SSN, "the inflexible", has been introduced into French arsenals. Carrying 16 M-4 missiles, it represents a half-way point between the "Redoubtable" class and a new class of nuclear submarines. "The Inflexible" has an improved navigation system, dives deeper, runs more quietly, and fires its missiles more rapidly than any other French submarine. Each M-4 missile carries six 150-kiloton warheads.<sup>25</sup> French striking power has, thus, been significantly

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22 See International Institute for Strategic Studies, Military Balance: 1980-81 (London, 1980), pp.89-91.

23 Ibid., p.4.

24 Jean Klein, "French Military Policy in the 1980s", International Security Review, vol.5, no.4, Winter 1981, p.467.

25 Edward A. Kolodziej, op.cit., n.19, p.192.

increased, but yet the problem of protecting the submarine as a launch platform remains.

Apart from an increase in the submarine fleet, several other possible means are also being explored to modernize and strengthen French nuclear forces. These include follow-on sea-launched missiles of greater payload, range, and penetrability, a new mobile IRBM, cruise missiles, and possible use of the Mirage 2000 or the twin engine Mirage 4000 as a bomb carrier or launch platform for an air-to-ground strategic missile. All of these systems have several problems. For a country of France's size and population density, it will be difficult to find enough convenient space to deploy and constantly move an IRBM force, even if all of the technical problems of delivery and reliability can be resolved. On the other hand, to be effective, large numbers of cruise missiles would be needed to minimize the possibility that the force would be destroyed in a surprise attack and, more significantly, to assure its penetration of alerted enemy air defence systems. A cruise missile system would be a costly option for France, since large sums would have to be spent perfecting guidance mechanisms, electronic components for flight and fire and counter-radar to escape enemy detection. These negative factors make the proposal for a mobile IRBM or the Mirage 4000 as possible nuclear carriers, whatever their shortcomings, more attractive.<sup>26</sup>

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26 Ibid., p.193.

Table-1: French Nuclear Forces, 1987<sup>27</sup>

Weapon System		Warheads				
Type	No. deployed	Year deployed	Range (Km)	Warhead x yield	Type	No. in stock-pile
<u>Aircraft</u>						
Mirage IVP/ASMP	18	1986	1500	1x300 kt	TN-80	18
Jaguar A	45	1974	750	1x6-8/30 kt.	ANT-52	50
Mirage IIIE	30	1972	600	1x6-8/30 kt.	ANT-52	35
<u>Refuelling Aircraft</u>						
C-135F/FR	11	1965	--	--	--	--
<u>Land-based Missiles</u>						
S 3D	18	1980	3500	1x1 Mt.	TN-61	18
Pluton	44	1974	120	1x10/25 kt.	ANT-51	70
<u>Submarine-based Missiles</u>						
M-20	64	1977	3000	1x1 Mt.	TN-61	64
M-4A	16	1985	4000-5000	6x150 kt. (MIRV)	TN-70	96
M-4 (modified)	16	1987	6000	1x6x150 kt. (MIRV)	TN-71	96
<u>Carrier Aircraft</u>						
Super Etendard	36	1978	650	1x6-8/30 kt.	ANT-52	40

27 See, SIPRI Yearbook 1987: World Armaments and Disarmament (Stockholm, 1987), p.30.

The Hades tactical missile programme remains on schedule to be deployed in 1992, with a neutron warhead. On many occasions France has declared that it has mastered the complexities of the neutron bomb and has tested it several times. A decision to produce the warhead may be made as the Hades deployment date approaches. The total number of launchers is still unclear but is believed to be between 90 and 120.<sup>28</sup> Following a meeting with West German Chancellor Kohl in February 1986, President Mitterrand stated, for the first time, that France would be willing to use tactical nuclear weapons to defend the Federal Republic.

Like NATO, France believes in coupling the use of conventional forces with the threat of resorting to nuclear weapons. France intends to deliver a nuclear warning to a potential aggressor "at a place and time that will depend on the way the conflict develops". This "nuclear warning" will be designed not only to send an unequivocal sign to the aggressor but also to 'check the momentum of the aggressor', and will be 'diversified and graduated in strength'.<sup>29</sup> The nuclear hardware available for this 'unequivocal sign' includes 70 Pluton warheads (to be replaced by several hundred enhanced radiation warheads as part of the Hades missile programme) as well as some 125 warheads assigned to aircraft of the tactical air force (EATAC) and the naval air arm.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ibid., p.29.

29 See "Speech of M. Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister, at the Institute of High National Defence Studies (IHEDN)", 12 September 1986, translated in Speeches and Statements, Sp. St/LON/126186, by the French Embassy in London, p.5.

30 SIPRI Year Book 1987, op.cit., n.27, p.29.

The present French tactical nuclear forces are composed of several elements. First, approximately 60 Mirage III and Jaguar fighter-bombers are equipped to carry a single 10-15-kiloton tactical nuclear bomb to target. Second, there are Pluton nuclear artillery regiments, composed of three batteries, each with two missile ramps, for a total of 70 Pluton missiles. Mounted on the chassis of an AMX 30 armoured vehicle, the Pluton has a range of approximately 75 miles and delivers a 15-25 kiloton charge. The Navy's Super-Standard has also been fitted with AN-52 nuclear bombs with a charge of 10-15 kilotons. In the offing is the Hades system, with the double the range of Pluton, which it replaces. There are also plans to provide the Mirage 2000 with a short-range air-to-ground missile.<sup>31</sup>

France is upgrading two of its three long-range nuclear weapon arms: its SLBMs and strategic submarines and its nuclear aircraft. France first introduced its new MIRVed M-4 SLBMs on one of its submarines in April 1985, thus doubling the number of warheads in the submarine force in one step. France is the first country outside the super powers to have MIRVed SLBMs. France plans to have five submarines carry the M-4 by 1993, which will mean a sixfold increase in submarine warheads, from 80 to 480. In addition to its submarine forces, France maintains a fleet of nuclear-armed aircraft capable of striking targets in the USSR. France is building several new models nuclear - capable aircraft as replacements for its older Jaguar and Mirage variants. Some 110 nuclear aircrafts are now

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31 Edward A. Kolodziej, op.cit., n.19, p.203.

deployed from land and 36 nuclear-capable super Etendard aircraft are based aboard France's two aircraft-carriers. France has also developed a new air-to-surface nuclear missile, the ASMP, which is expected to equip more than 150 modern French aircraft by the end of the 1980s.<sup>32</sup>

Although France maintains 18 S-3 land-based intermediate range ballistic missiles it appears that plans to modernize this force may be overshadowed by the submarine programmes. In deciding to build MIRVed SLBMs, France also chose to reorient its targeting strategy from Soviet cities to harder military targets like missile sites.<sup>33</sup> The five-year defence programme for 1987-91, announced in November 1987, called for a 7% increase in defence spending for 1987 and funding for a number of new procurement programmes, including France's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier - the Richelieu - a new main battle tank, a fighter - expected to be the Dassault Rafale - and airborne early-warning aircraft. The nuclear programme represented a victory for President Mitterrand in the priority he attached to modernizing the nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missiles - beginning with the M-4 six-warhead missile, to be followed by the M-5 with 9-10 warheads - while deferring replacement of the land-based missiles until the mid-1990s.<sup>34</sup>

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32 M. Arkin, A. S. Burrows and others, "Nuclear Weapons 1986" in Marek Thee ed., Arms and Disarmament: SIPRI Findings (Stockholm, 1986), p.87.

33 Ibid.

34 See Strategic Survey: 1986-1987 (London, 99SS, 1987), pp.104-5.

In the 1990s the French are expected to have a triad of nuclear forces composed of six nuclear submarines, 18 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), and (until 1992-94), 15 Mirage-IV aircraft. Five of the six submarines will carry 16 M-4 missiles, armed with six warheads of approximately 150 kilotons each. The sixth submarine, carrying 16 M-20 missiles, each with a one-megaton charge, is scheduled for retirement in the late 1990s. The 13 IRBMs on the Albion Plateau are expected to be operative through this century.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the submarine force which is near invulnerable, the IRBM squadrons are susceptible to destruction by Soviet theatre forces, principally the SS-20s. The declared objective of the IRBMs has, therefore, shifted from deterrence to a trigger of France's nuclear forces. If implemented, the force de dissuasion (deterrent force) would become a force de frappe (striking force).

The French remain convinced that the threat of nuclear war is the only certain deterrent. They do not believe that a conventional strategy is sufficient, nor do they worry much about whether or not nuclear deterrence, based on threats aimed at the other side's nuclear forces or command centers, becomes provocative rather than deterring. Crisis instability, or launch-on-warning nightmares, do not seem to trouble them. Right or wrong, they believe that the

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35 Edward A. Kolodziej, "Modernization of British and French Nuclear Forces: Arms Control and Security Dimensions" in Carl G. Jacobsen ed. The Uncertain Course: New Weapons, Strategies and Mind-sets (Stockholm, SIPRI, 1987), p.246.

combination of nuclear weapons of any kind and a will to use them if needed, ensures restraint on the part of the potential aggressor.<sup>36</sup>

France's independent posture, reaffirmed repeatedly by the successive governments of Fifth Republic, poses several problems for adversaries and allies as well. The French insist on the principles of national autonomy in threatening or using nuclear weapons. Any integration, operational coordination or cooperation in planning with allies is unequivocally ruled out. At a meeting in the Kremlin, Socialist President Francois Mitterrand asserted, "We know in all certitude that our fate, our independence, our very survival, depends on our autonomy".<sup>37</sup> The question arises, under what conditions, for what purpose, in response to what provocation, and in what form might French nuclear forces be used? On these vital questions French government's policy is contradictory and ambiguous. First, there is the question of what is to be protected. Is it only the French territory? Or does modern warfare, necessarily expand a nation's effective line of defence beyond its territorial borders?<sup>38</sup> French opinion remains divided on this vital question. After much debate, dominant thinking is now in favour of extending French security network to cover its allies, especially West Germany. This

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36 Stanley Hoffmann, "Mitterrand's Foreign Policy, or Gaullism by any other Name" in George Ross, Stanley Hoffmann and Sylvia Malzacher eds., The Mitterrand Experiment: Continuity and Change in Modern France, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), p.300.

37 Francois Mitterrand cited in Edward A. Kolodziej, op.cit., n.35, p.247.

38 Edward A. Kolodziej, ibid.



means that French security extends to the Elbe River and preventing a Soviet conquest of West Germany is a vital French interest. Does this policy mean, as was suggested by the former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in a speech on 28 June 1984, that France should provide a nuclear guarantee to West Germany in order to prevent a conventional defeat of NATO on its soil. French policy makers rule out this possibility for in their view, even modernized French nuclear force would not be credible for such a role, and such an advance commitment would violate French autonomy. The growing French tactical nuclear arsenal might be used during the battle for West Germany but mainly for the protection of the French troops stationed in the FRG, and to deter an attack on France. Furthermore, West German suggestions about the need for at least a "nonexplicit" West German "right of say" on French nuclear weapons situated on or aimed at West German soil were also not well received in Paris.<sup>39</sup>

The French claim that the credibility of their nuclear force is greatest only against the least likely Soviet threat and that in an age of nuclear plenty and parity, deterrence in Europe requires combining the residual risk of a conflict becoming nuclear with conventional forces strong enough to deny a quick victory to the Soviets. What West Germany wants from France is not a nuclear guarantee - because if the US guarantee is no longer credible, how

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39 Stanley Hoffmann, op.cit., n.36, p.303.

credible would France's be? Instead, West Germany wants an effort in the conventional realm.<sup>40</sup> The French have acknowledged this sentiment and are creating a non-nuclear Rapid Action Force (FAR), that could be sent quickly to the battlefield in Central Europe.

Mitterrand has made Franco-German military cooperation a major new policy objective. Herein lies the mystery of FAR. The new French rapid deployment force is the carbon copy of the new American strategic doctrine commonly known as the 'Rogers Plan'. The Plan is extremely ambiguous. When the FAR was first mooted, Charles Hernu, denounced it in strongest terms as an updated version of flexible response. But yet FAR has been created and will be integrated into NATO strategic planning and has even been assigned a specific function in the event of hostilities in Central Europe.<sup>41</sup> Hernu, later on himself admitted this fact during a parliamentary debate on FAR.

As stated earlier, the main plank in France's current defence programme is the formation of a Force d'Action Rapide (FAR) of 47,000 men, which is in some ways the center-piece of the 1984-88 White Paper. The strategic and military functions of this force remain shrouded in ambiguity and speculation. Some officials, anxious to avoid charges that FAR represents a reintegration into NATO, have stressed that the

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40 Ibid., p.304.

41 Jolyon Howarth, "Consensus of Silence: The French Socialist Party and Defence Policy Under Francois Mitterrand", International Affairs (London), vol.60, no.4, Autumn 1984, p.595.

new conventional strike force will be directly tied into the logic of the strategic deterrent, that it will be another 'trip-wire' in the structure of which Pluton is currently a part.<sup>42</sup> Hermu in an interview to *Le Monde* said in an ambiguous tone:

I should like to make it clear that it would be absolutely contrary to the intentions of France to see in FAR some sort of reintegration in NATO. On the contrary, the very fact that the intervention of FAR remains at the sole discretion of the French government means that its arrival in a certain area could actually deter an aggressor.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, the commitment to the FAR represents a major shift in French strategy. Before this, the French commitment to Germany centered on three First Army divisions stationed just east of the Rhine. This deployment meant that France would, at most, contribute to the NATO second-echelon reserve, but would not engage in the forward battle. By comparison, the FAR's mobility and tank-killing capacities are designed for front-line combat. According to General Etienne Doussau, one of the FAR's commanders, the new force could be targeted against the adversary's second-echelon elements and would thereby fit neatly into General Bernard Rogers' plans for a NATO conventional counter-attack aimed at Warsaw Pact lines of communication and reinforcement. Yet such tactics would require a high degree of cooperation and coordination with allied units for success.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Ibid., p.593.

43 See Hermu interview in *Le Monde*, 18 June 1983.

44 Robert S. Rodney, *op.cit.*, no.9, p.90.

The central element of the French approach to nuclear weapons is to see them as fundamentally different from conventional weapons in that they pose the gravest questions of life and death. The destructive nature of these weapons make them usable only when the survival of a nation is endangered. It would be difficult for a nation, even the United States, to risk its ultimate survival for the sake of its allies, therefore, France felt a need to develop an independent nuclear force in order to defend itself in the nuclear age.<sup>45</sup>

Among the Europeans, the French have most vigorously cast doubt on U.S. willingness to use its nuclear weapons to defend its European allies. General de Gaulle giving vent to the French concern said in the mid-1960s, "The Americans would not be willing to trade New York for Hamburg in a nuclear war with the Soviet Union".<sup>46</sup> The French have severely castigated the US concept of "flexible response" since its inception. They regard this concept as proof of the US unwillingness to use nuclear weapons against Soviet Union in view of Soviet assured destruction capability against the United States. The French stress on the centrality of political will to deterrence rather than solely on the presence of a strategic weapons balance. Even though the US continues to have strategic parity with the Soviets, Americans might not have the will to use nuclear weapons in a European war limited to the European theater. To the Soviets, France, with its national survival at stake in a European war, would appear more likely to

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45 Robbin F. Laird, op.cit., n.13, p.307.

46 Charles de Gaulle, quoted in Robbin F. Laird, ibid., p.308.

have the political will to use nuclear weapons. The Soviets are thereby deterred, in part, by having a nuclear decision making centre in the West which is an alternative to the U.S. The French cite NATO's Ottawa Declaration of 1974<sup>47</sup> as proof of U.S. recognition of their claim that alternative decision making centre enhance the credibility of the Western deterrent.

General Lucien Poirier, prominent French strategic thinker, has conceptualized the French security situation as consisting of three circles. Nuclear weapons protect the "national sanctuary", i.e., the first circle. The second circle encompasses the defence of France's immediate periphery. The third is the defence of France's interests in Africa and the Third World. In Poirier's scheme, nuclear weapons are inextricably intertwined with the defence of the first circle but related only ambiguously to the defence of the second circle.<sup>48</sup> In spite of the autonomy of French nuclear forces, their credibility as a deterrent depends on their ability to operate behind U.S. nuclear forces. The preoccupation the Soviets must have with U.S. forces provides a significant "force multiplier" to the French forces.<sup>49</sup>

Despite repeated affirmations of her ability to assure her own security independently, France's security in fact ultimately depends on her international environment - above all, on the development of

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47 In the Ottawa Declaration of 1974, the NATO allies acknowledged the contribution to Western deterrence made by the French and British nuclear forces.

48 Lucien Poirier cited in Robbin F. Laird, *op.cit.*, n.13, p.308.

49 Robbin F. Laird, *ibid.*, p.309.

East-West relations generally and the military policies of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Gaullist policies which seek to assure France's security are still pursued with undertones of armed neutrality. At the same time, it is realized that these Gaullist policies might prove inadequate if ever tested in an East-West conflict. However in the recent past France has taken some initiatives aimed at strengthening Western cohesion and capabilities, and at improving her abilities to contribute to Western security.<sup>50</sup>

For political, economic, technological, military and cultural reasons, France cannot delink itself from Europe. Nowhere is this clearer than on the security front. Yet the stumbling blocks remain enormous. Perhaps the major problem remains the role of France's independent nuclear deterrent. The Socialist government is fully aware that West Germany is less than enthusiastic at the prospect of being brought under a French nuclear umbrella, even though the holes in the American one are growing wider every day.<sup>51</sup> This is perhaps the reason that the West Germans generally ask for the stationing of more French troops in Germany rather than the deployment of French nuclear weapons on their soil.

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50 David S. Yost, op.cit., n.12, p.2.

51 Jolyon Howorth, "Of Budgets and Strategic Choices: Defence Policy Under Francois Mitterrand" in George Ross, Stanley Hoffmann and Sylvia Malzacher eds. The Mitterrand Experiment: Continuity and Change in Modern France (Cambridge, 1987), p.319.

The goal of European defence cooperation receives greater attention in France than in any other major European country. In no other country does the idea of European defence without the United States evoke as much debate and interest. However, despite this, most French analysts perceive an independent European defence as a Utopian goal for the near and medium-term period.<sup>52</sup> Western Europe must, therefore, refrain from any initiative that may weaken the NATO alliance. Debate in France consequently centers on how to strengthen the "European pillar" of the alliance. Important shifts in the international context have prompted the Mitterrand government to alter some basic policies in a comparatively 'Atlanticist' direction, in order to strengthen the much talked about the "European pillar" of the NATO.

Apparent ambiguities in the socialist defence policy are the result of a dichotomy in political attitudes to European security policy in France in recent years. On the one hand, since 1978 all the major political parties have joined in a national consensus regarding the primacy of nuclear deterrence and France's critical but restricted role within the Atlantic Alliance. On the other hand, some of the experts have opined that this national consensus is fragile and ambiguous. And that the strategic concepts supported by the

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52 Robert Grant, op.cit., n.2, p.421.

national consensus could not but be inadequate, for Gaullist strategic concepts were formulated in the 1960s,<sup>53</sup> which may no longer be valid in the changed international scenario of the 1980s.

Although Mitterrand has not drifted from the gaullist pattern of reliance on a national nuclear force and limited military cooperation with the Atlantic Alliance, all Fifth Republic leaders have also entertained various options, as alternatives to this most practical and accessible security policy.<sup>54</sup> French leaders generally used to propose either a general revision of the entire Alliance framework or the creation of a West European independent defence system. Francois Mitterrand is no exception to it. He too toyed with this idea during the mid-1970s, but since his assumption of the French Presidency in 1981 he seems to have abandoned it completely. Now it is clear that the French Socialists had never had any clear idea of how to reactivate the Alliance, and, moreover, their preoccupation with economic problems guaranteed that no effort would be forthcoming for the creation of an independent West European defence system.<sup>55</sup>

Owing to the tense international situation consideration is once again being given to the strengthening of the Western European Union so as to maximize European defence efforts, in the face of growing

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53 David S. Yost, op.cit., n.12, p.2.

54 Michael M. Harrison, op.cit., n.3, p.235.

55 Ibid., p.236.



pacifism and neutralism.<sup>56</sup> Some of the recent innovations in the French defence policy could be partly attributed to these considerations. To illustrate, the role of the FAR is intended to encourage some measure of German confidence in French protection, while avoiding any firm commitment to concerted action with other allies in a conflict situation.<sup>57</sup>

But these new policy attributes may perhaps be outweighed by repeated French assertions that the French nuclear force guarantees protection of only their own vital interests - to be defined by the French President in given circumstances - and that non-nuclear allies, particularly the FRG, must look for security guarantees to NATO and the United States. Former Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy said that a European defence system which presupposes a European political authority, is presumably out of the question. Foreign Minister Cheysson derided the prospects for a common European foreign policy, and said that sharing responsibility for the use of nuclear weapons is unthinkable. Defence Minister Charles Hernu warned in Bonn that any effort to devise a French or a Franco-British nuclear umbrella for Western Europe could encourage the U.S. withdrawal and decoupling from Europe, which might leave things worse than they are at present.<sup>58</sup>

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56 A. W. De Porte, "France's New Realism", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 63, no. 1, Fall 1984, p. 156.

57 Ibid., pp. 156-57.

58 Ibid., p. 157.

Ambiguity hangs over the real purpose of the French strategic force and over its role in European defence. Officially, the strategic doctrine continues to be that of a 'sanctuary'. Nonetheless, strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance and keeping the FRG tied to it continue to be a prime concern of the French ruling elite. Keeping this idea in mind, Mitterrand declared in Copenhagen:

Though we possess, to ensure our survival, an autonomous deterrent capability designed to preserve the national sanctuary, we consider also that we have obligations towards others and that it would be most vain or most imprudent to desire the help and friendship of the other countries of the West, of which we are a part, if we are to neglect our duties towards them.<sup>59</sup>

The former Socialist Prime Minister, M. Pierre Mauroy, in a more precise (and somewhat Giscardian) tone observed in September 1981:

Isolation is out of the question. We must draw the consequences of this in particular when we examine the defence of our frontiers and of the approaches to them. Aggression against France does not begin when the enemy penetrates national territory.<sup>60</sup>

Without doubt, the new French socialist leadership made it abundantly clear to the West Germans that their security interests are mutually intertwined, and therefore "the crossing of the Elbe by the Red Army would obviously threaten French security".<sup>61</sup>

Since February 1982, joint consideration of the problems of defence has been undertaken by France and the FRG. The Franco-

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59 Francois Mitterrand quoted in Marie-Claude Smouts, op.cit., n.14, pp.159-60.

60 M. Pierre Mauroy, quoted in Marie-Claude Smouts, ibid., p.160.

61 David S. Yost, op.cit., n.18, p.60.

German summit in Bonn held on 21-22 October 1982 gave new impetus to their consultations in the security and strategic field. A joint commission has been set up. It meets every three months and has several specialized study groups, including a nuclear group. This boost to military and strategic consultation between the two countries came at a time when, on the one hand, the European allies of the NATO were being asked by General Rogers to strengthen the conventional deterrent forces to take part in a 'forward defence' of Europe and, on the other hand, France because of economic constraints had been forced to review its future weapons modernization programmes. Nonetheless, it can be said that "at the conceptual level, thinking about French defence forms part of a diplomatic perspective which takes account of the European dimension and is no longer limited to the defence of the national territory alone".<sup>62</sup> Despite the increased level of Franco-German cooperation in the realm of security, both the countries are at one in the belief that there is not yet any alternative to the American presence in Europe.

The focal point in the French security policy ever since the end of the Second World War has been its relationship with the United States and or NATO. What the French-US relationship is at any particular time may largely determine French policy on East-West issues and relations with the Soviet Union. French Atlantic policy under the Socialists has been characterized primarily by accommodation and

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62 Marie-Claude Smouts, op.cit., n.14, p.160.

adjustment.<sup>63</sup> General Lacaze, Mitterrand's Chief of Staff of the Combined Armies, outlining French steps for increased cooperation with NATO said that the French forces would participate beside the Alliance, without signifying in any way, a return to the integrated structure or the responsibility in peacetime. The General admitted the apparent contradiction between an interventionist and an independent strategic doctrine, but he asserted that French doctrine ultimately endorses the effectiveness of NATO deterrence. He explained that:

"the possibility of our participation would signify for the adversary that henceforth he takes the risk of encountering very early the forces of a nuclear country which, on the other hand, maintains the independence of its decisions".<sup>64</sup>

Evidently, France cannot remain aloof in a crisis situation in Europe, because of its geographic location. Any pure national sanctuary doctrine could permit an enemy to carry his aggression right upto the French borders without having to fear French nuclear riposte. The "vital interests" of France, therefore, have to be broader interpretation to include the security and sovereignty of its neighbouring allies, especially West Germany. Lacaze's remarks give further evidence of the French intention to support its allies in the event of conventional attack, as well as an admission of the impossibility of its hiding behind a nuclear Maginot Line.<sup>65</sup> It is difficult to imagine how the French could remain out of a battle in Germany,

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63 Michael M. Harrison, op.cit., n.3, p.227.

64 General Lacaze cited in Robert S. Rudney, op.cit., n.9, p.91.

65 Robert S. Rudney, ibid.

especially when 50,000 French troops are stationed east of the Rhine.

The doctrine on the use of French tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) in a way complicates France's strategic outlook. The French Socialist government remained firm against the U.S.-NATO strategy, (as well as Giscardian doctrine) by declining to allow TNWs to be considered potential instruments of battle used separately from strategic weapons. French TNWs can now be used only as a sudden massive political signal, and not as part of an extended conventional-tactical nuclear graduated response scenario favoured by American and NATO plans.<sup>66</sup> This was perhaps the rationale behind the Socialist decision to develop a neutron bomb, which Mitterrand had opined would not drag France into a "forward battle" philosophy, but rather could serve to keep France in the forefront of military technology and help to counter the Soviet arms advantage in Europe.<sup>67</sup>

In the recent past, some French strategic experts have called for the abandonment of the national sanctuary system and the organization of a European nuclear defence. They contend that France does not have the financial means to compete in a nuclear weapons race with the Super Powers. Only in cooperation with its European allies can France guarantee its security and ensure against U.S. linkage. The subject of European defence cooperation is a controversial one

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66 Michael M. Harrison, op.cit., n.3, p.235.

67 See Mitterrand's Press Conference of 9 June 1982, in Le Monde, 11 June 1982.

and many schemes have been devised to encourage it but most of them have foundered on the question of command and control of nuclear weapons. For example, who would have the authority to fire such weapons? Would the French be willing to risk the destruction of Paris in order to save Hamburg? Would the West Germans be willing to renounce U.S. nuclear guarantees in exchange for much weaker French guarantees? Would Britain agree to pool its nuclear forces with those of France to form the core of the European deterrent? The proponents of a European defence organization have no answers to these questions.<sup>68</sup> Efforts by the French government to revive the Western European Union (WEU) have been largely unsuccessful, as "the partners of France, at first reticent, suspected a desire either to resurrect a form of the European Defence Community or to detach Europe from its American ally".<sup>69</sup> For all these reasons, of late, France has begun to acclaim the benefits of the Atlantic Alliance.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric about the advantages of a European defence organization, French policy makers realize that they do not have the means to engage in such an ambitious programme. For better or for worse, France cannot escape the Atlantic system. Writing in the "Wall Street Journal", Claude Cheysson, the former French Foreign

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68 Robert S. Rodney, op.cit., n.9, p.93.

69 Le Monde, 21 May 1982.

Minister, "the European countries can not by themselves secure the defence of their 'space'" and that "the guarantee of European territories that do not have nuclear weapons therefore can come only from the integrated command of NATO, that is to say, in fact, the U.S."<sup>70</sup> These views of Cheysson reflect the unreality of the so-called Europeanist defence and reinforces the necessity of the U.S. deterrent for the security of Western Europe. As such, the French strategic force, in no circumstances, could be a substitute for the U.S. nuclear protection.

According to Pascal Krop of Le Matin, the Socialist government has pursued a double objective in reasserting France's commitment to the Alliance, namely, "to reassure the allies by assuring them of French support in case of conflict and, on the other hand, to develop a true European defence in case the Americans ultimately disengage themselves from Europe".<sup>71</sup> The main dilemma in French defence policy revolves around stress on the primacy of its independence, defined as protecting the national "sanctuary" with nuclear weapons, and the growing need to involve France in West German security context. France's relationship with FRG is, thereby, at the heart of French doctrinal problems. The Mitterrand regime also seems to have clearly identified the security of FRG as a "vital interest" for France.

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70 See Claude Cheysson, "French Defence Policy and the U.S.", Wall Street Journal, 25 February 1983.

71 Pascal Krop quoted in Robbin F. Laird, op.cit., n.13, p.311.

The identification of West German security with France was necessitated by the fact that if any progress of any European alternative to U.S. dominance of the alliance was to be made then France has to identify clearly its nuclear weapons with the defence of an "enlarged sanctuary".

During the 1980s there has been a broad degree of national consensus among the non-communist French political circles that old Pascal assumptions about the European security environment were no longer valid. This resulted in defence policy innovations. The assumptions that have come to dominate French views of the 1980s indicate serious difficulties in the security field. A perception of the Soviet Union as a significant politico-military threat predominates within the three main non-communist French political parties: the Socialist Party, the Gaullist RPR and UDF - an alliance of three small parties. The breakup of the Union of the Left in 1977 started an anti-Soviet evolution within the Socialist Party that was spurred on by the growth of Soviet military power and the series of military interventions by the Soviet Union and her allies in Africa and Afghanistan.<sup>72</sup>

The rapid growth in Soviet military technology endangers the very core of French strategic doctrine - independence, proportional deterrence, and countervalue. Independence could be compromised by

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72 See Robert Grant, op.cit., n.2, pp.415-6.



the growing need to cooperate with the United States or the United Kingdom in developing various aspects of strategic weapons technology. Proportional deterrence could be undermined by dramatic improvements in Soviet strategic defence capabilities. The countervalue strategy especially could be seriously impaired by a significant expansion of Soviet Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capabilities.<sup>73</sup> The French position is also challenged to a lesser extent by its allies, especially the United States and West Germany.

The Americans challenge the French position in two major ways. First, in developing its own military technology, the US stimulates Soviet deployments, which in turn are undermining French deterrent capability.<sup>74</sup> For instance, if the Americans deploy BMD systems to protect their ICBMs, similar Soviet deployment will necessarily follow, which in turn will jeopardize the credibility of the French deterrent. Secondly, the strong French belief in the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence results in a general suspicion of any American-sponsored efforts to raise NATO's nuclear threshold. The French fear that American policy is evolving towards elimination of the last vestiges of a credible extended nuclear deterrent. The tendency in France is to equate the "no first use" option with the proposals put forward by General Bernard Rogers. The formulation may be

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73 Robbin F. Laird, op.cit., n.13, pp.316-7.

74 Ibid., p.317.

different but the practical outcome is seen to be identical. Charles Hernu has warned that the Rogers' proposals would "excessively raise the nuclear threshold" and that they "ignore nuclear deterrence to the greatest possible extent". The Soviet Union might thus come to believe that a European war could remain limited to the conventional level for a protracted period, a situation in which the costs to Moscow of an aggression might not outweigh the gains.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the French perceive their nuclear deterrence as being undermined from "below" (the Rogers' proposals) and from "above" (SDI).

The West Germans challenge the French position in several ways. First, some political parties in the FRG, particularly the SPD, are favouring inclusion of French intermediate nuclear forces in the Geneva arms control talks. Secondly, FRG wants France to contribute more fully and publicly to its forward defence with conventional forces. Thirdly, FRG will continue to press France to clarify its intentions regarding the role of France's tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>76</sup> FRG has always been uneasy with the notion that French tactical nuclear weapons are to be used simply as a "last warning shot". FRG is genuinely concerned that this French "last warning shot" if ever used will provoke Soviet nuclear reprisal against NATO forces mainly on German territory.

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75 Robert Grant, op.cit., n.2, p.417.

76 Robbin F. Laird, op.cit., n.13, p.318.

Despite these problems France and West Germany are having continuous dialogue on security matters and since October 1982, this has been institutionalized with the formation of a Joint Defence Committee. Nonetheless, both are pursuing divergent policies. For instance, for the Germans, only U.S. nuclear forces provide the ultimate deterrent of Soviet forces in Europe and the French can only play a subsidiary role. On the contrary for the French, cooperation of the Germans is at the heart of any Europeanization of the alliance. France seeks a European role within the alliance, not a revitalization of U.S. leadership over Europe by means of the alliance. It is difficult to resolve the basic tension between German and French objectives because if the former is seeking to strengthen French ties to the US-led alliance then the latter is aspiring to strengthen European pillar of the alliance with the German cooperation.<sup>77</sup>

The Socialist government elaborated its Five Year Defence Programme-1984-1988--amidst considerable political backing for the idea that France should attenuate the nationalistic bent of her defence posture and take steps to manifest greater military solidarity with its allies. The response of Mitterrand government centred around a restructuring of French conventional forces (FAR) and a modernization of France's tactical nuclear weapons (Hades and ASMP). Major purpose of the FAR is to eliminate all ambiguity concerning the ability of

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77 Ibid., pp.319-20.

French conventional forces to contribute to West European defence. The tactical missile modernization will increase Soviet uncertainty as to when France might cross the nuclear threshold. Heron has noted that because of the FAR and the ANT modernization, the Soviet Union, in launching an attack in Central Europe, would immediately run the risk of confronting at a "more or less brief delay the conventional forces and/or the nuclear forces of the only independent nuclear power of the Continent".<sup>78</sup> The insistence of ANT-FNS coupling that is underscored by the use of the term pre-strategic, combined with hints that the French government is moving toward a doctrine of earlier ANT use and greater French nuclear coverage of FRG, strongly implies a greater willingness to consider the defence of the FRG a vital interest for France.<sup>79</sup>

The creation of the FAR and the tactical nuclear modernization, however, have not substantially diminished pressures for France to increase its contribution to allied defence. West Germans continue to express dissatisfaction with French defence policy and their perception that French nuclear forces almost exclusively serve French interests has not changed. Some French strategists have suggested an explicit extension of British and French deterrence to their allies and the creation of a European nuclear planning group that would provide a framework for joint discussion of nuclear targetting and for an eventual European financial contribution to the modernization of French and British nuclear forces. In his speech of 28 June 1984

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78 Charles Heron cited in Robert Grant, op.cit., n.2, p.419.

79 Robert Grant, ibid.

to the Bundestag, former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt proposed a joint Franco-German defence initiative that would combine the extension of French deterrence to include Germany with a sufficient upgrading of German and French reserves to enable the two countries to deploy thirty fully-equipped land divisions in the event of mobilization.<sup>80</sup> Schmidt proposal, however, failed to evoke any response from France.

Because of the several difficulties, medium-term European cooperation in the nuclear arena will, if it occurs at all, center on tactical weapons. The French government once flirted with the idea of stationing some French ANT in FRG under a dual key system.<sup>81</sup> But the government now seems to have dropped the idea because any stationing of French ANT in FRG would require extensive Franco-German consultation and significant German influence on targeting policy. French are obviously not in favour of any such close nuclear collaboration with West Germany.<sup>82</sup> This means ambiguity over future French policy on ANT will continue. French adherence to a nuclear use doctrine of "political signalling only", however, could enable

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80 See William Drozdiak, "Schmidt Proposes Defence Merger by France and West Germany", Washington Post, 29 June 1984.

81 See Roland Evans and Robert Novak, "Mitterrand Looks to Germany", Washington Post, 16 December 1983.

82 See William Drozdiak, "Bonn Seeks More Influence on French Nuclear Targeting", Washington Post, 20 April 1984.

French nuclear weapons to escape the war-fighting label attached to American ones.<sup>83</sup>

European defence cooperation efforts are at the moment focussed on defence policy formulation and on weapons development and procurement. The French government tried hard to reactivate the Western European Union (WEU) as a forum for discussion in these two areas,<sup>84</sup> and has also played a key role in efforts to include security issues and arms collaboration within the framework of European Economic Community (EEC) political cooperation.<sup>85</sup> Former Socialist Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy in his address to the Institut des Hautes Etudes de Defense Nationale in Paris in September 1983, eulogizing WEU said:

Western European Union is the only European organization competent to deal with questions relating to defence and security. The WEU provides a unique forum for consultation and is, moreover, consistent with our wider commitments, because all its members also belong to the Atlantic Alliance and to the European Community and only European states are members.<sup>86</sup>

The WEU and EEC initiatives were preceded by the formation in late 1982 of the Franco-German Commission on Security and Defence. Although the Germans have been frustrated by French reticence in dealing with nuclear issues, the work of the Commission was instrumental to the success of two important 1984 initiatives, the WEU revival and an agreement to produce a Franco-German combat helicopter.

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83 See Gregory Flynn, "Public Opinion and Atlantic Defence", NATO Review, (Washington, D.C.), vol.31, no.5, October 1983, pp.7-11.

84 France was instrumental in obtaining the abrogation of the remaining restrictions on German conventional armament imposed by the WEU treaty of 1954. This reform was a German condition for reactivating the WEU.

85 See William Wallace, "European Defence Cooperation: The Reopening Debate", Survival, (London), vol.26, no.6, November/December 1984, pp.260-261.

If the Europeans can succeed in defence policy coordination and in collaborative arms production, it will establish the confidence and mutual trust needed to set the stage for more far reaching cooperation in the difficult nuclear arena. The evolution of French policy depends on many factors. Developments in the United States, the Soviet Union and West Germany will obviously play the key role in the determination of French security policy. France is, however, still attracted to the construction of a strong European pillar of the alliance. French proposals for the development of European military space systems (Eureka) testify to the appeal for a France of "grand designs" in European defence cooperation. It is possible, however, that only progress in European defence cooperation can provide the necessary impetus to any French government to overcome the obstacle in the way of continuing to modify gradually the Gaullist doctrinal principles which still give French defence policy its strongly nationalistic character. Nevertheless, ultimate French unwillingness to alter the defence dogmas of uncertainty, freedom of decision and national sanctuary rules out any prospects of dramatic improvements in European defence cooperation.

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86 Pierre Mauroy, "France and West European Security", NATO Review (Washington, D.C.), vol.31, no.5, October 1983, p.24.

**CHAPTER FOUR**



## Chapter Four

### THE FRENCH RESPONSE TO THE US-USSR DEBATE ON THE INF & THE SDI

#### INF

On 12 December 1979, NATO took 'dual track' decision of missile deployment in case of failure of negotiations to dismantle SS-20s by the Soviet Union, which in view of the NATO had disturbed delicate nuclear parity in Europe. This policy of deployment and negotiation is known as dual or two track policy of NATO. This decision of NATO sparked off an unprecedented controversy in the whole of Western Europe as a result were organised powerful peace movements throughout the continent with intensity varying in different countries. They were aimed at resisting deployment of Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in different West European countries and to force NATO countries particularly the United States to accept the peace proposals offered by the Soviet Union. Europe never saw such a strong movement in its history but surprisingly France was by and large free from peace movement. This was mainly because in France there exists a consensus on defence issues and more importantly, missiles were not to be deployed in France. Therefore the French reaction was different from the other members of the Western bloc to the INF debate. With the exception of a few large demonstrations, there was no such thing as a genuine French "peace movement" analogous to those in West Germany, Holland or the United States.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Pierre Lellouche, "France and the Euromissiles: The Limits of Immunity", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 52, no. 2, Winter 1983-84, p. 318.

President Mitterrand argued that the imbalance created by the huge Soviet arms build-up must be corrected that "either the Russians must give up their SS-20s, or there must be nuclear theatre forces in NATO", that the balance of capabilities between the two super powers must be global and verifiable and must be established at the lowest possible level.<sup>1</sup> Mitterrand's prompt support for NATO's Euro-missile deployment, unless substantial reductions in Soviet theatre weapons could be negotiated, had been of major assistance to Chancellor Schmidt in the latter's efforts to defend NATO's 1979 decision against critics in his own party.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to the ambiguous position of Giscard d'Estaing, Mitterrand, as soon as he came to power, made his position clear on the installation of the American 'Euro-missiles'.<sup>1</sup> The former was of the view that if he took a clear position on INF, it would facilitate Soviet attempts at rallying the Western public opinion to the view that there was justification in counting the French nuclear forces along with those of the United States in arms control negotiations.<sup>3</sup> Mitterrand on the other hand argued:

"If I condemn neutralism, it is because I believe that peace is linked to the balance of forces in the world. The deployment of the Soviet SS-20s and Backfires breaks this balance in Europe. I do not accept it and I agree that it is necessary to increase our armed strength in order to restore the balance".

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2 Saint Brides, "Foreign Policy of Socialist France", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.26, no.1, Spring 1982, p.36.

3 David S. Yost, "Radical Change in French Defence Policy", Survival (London), vol.28, no.1, January/February 1986, p.56.

But at the same time, he insisted that the two Super Powers must start negotiations, he approved of the discussions on intermediate range missiles which began in Geneva on 30 November 1981, and urged the negotiators to come rapidly to a conclusion.<sup>4</sup> He also reaffirmed his position on what he meant by 'the zero option': "There must be neither SS-20s nor Pershing-2s".<sup>4</sup>

The Giscard government did not lay out any official policy on this issue, for he considered it unnecessary. His contention was that France was not a member of the Alliance's military arm and, as an independent nuclear power, it should not advise others about their nuclear weapons policies. Mitterrand, on the other hand, denounced the Soviet military build-up in Europe even before he took office. Peace, he said, depends not on pacifism but on the balance of forces. The East-West military balance had to be restored in Europe by the deployment of the planned missiles, globally by the American military build up. Mitterrand continued to stress his view to the point of intervening in the West German election campaign <sup>during</sup> ~~doing~~ his visit to the FRG in January 1983 where <sup>he</sup> ~~^~~ urged the voters in effect to reject the Social Democratic Party and choose a government that would go forward with the INF deployments.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Marie-Claude Smouts, "The External Policy of Francois Mitterrand", International Affairs (London), vol.59, no.2, Spring 1983, p.158.

5 A. W. Deporte, "France's New Realism", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.63, no.1, Fall 1984, p.147.

The need for a Western military buildup had been much more insistent, even obsessive, than with Mitterrand than arms control. The Socialist France did not facilitate European nuclear arms agreement by offering to let its own nuclear forces be included into the negotiations, as the Soviet Union had asked for.<sup>7</sup> One reason for Mitterrand's belated establishment of contact with the Soviet leadership probably was to make sure that they understood the French position on the Geneva INF negotiations.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviet Union had insisted that French nuclear systems be explicitly recognized in the INF negotiations as a component of the Western deterrent, and added that French and British systems should be included while computing the strategic balance.<sup>7</sup> The French resisted the Soviet claim for many reasons.<sup>7</sup> First, the overall Soviet military threat is not covered in negotiations limited to intermediate nuclear forces only. Second, the French argue that their strategic force constitutes a minimal deterrence of the weak against strong, and is vitally necessary for its own defence. When the French support the US view that with the deployment of SS-20s, balance of power has tilted in favour of the Soviet Union, it means that the latter has succeeded in upsetting the parity and gained superiority. Third, the French do not wish to recognize a broader role for their nuclear weapons than what is required for defence of their national

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6 Ibid.

"vital interests".<sup>7</sup>

The strong Socialist stand against the deployment of SS-20 missiles in the Western USSR dates from late 1979, when the Socialists remained aloof from a PCF sponsored motion in the French National Assembly censuring the NATO decision to deploy 108 Pershing-2 missiles and 464 Cruise missiles after 1983. Although Mitterrand refused to support a NATO decision that did not openly involve France, he was critical of the Soviets and noted: "It seems to me that the United States has been able to preserve a worldwide military superiority but, in Europe, Soviet superiority is established". After taking office, Mitterrand and his ministers adopted one of the firmest allied positions and urged the West to deploy its weapons unless the Soviets agreed to withdraw theirs. This stand was, in view of Michael Harrison, clearly in France's national interest as well as in the interest of the United States and NATO, because SS-20 precision and multiple warhead capability directly threatened French strategic and industrial targets along with those in the rest of Western Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Mitterrand's decision to take sides openly in favour of the INF decision, was not politically without costs for France. As realism forced France to move away from the comfortable ambiguity of the past, France also paid the political price of her more

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7 Robbin F. Laird, "The French Strategic Dilemma", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.28, no.2, Summer 1984, p.317.

8 Michael M. Harrison, "Mitterrand's France in the Atlantic System: A Foreign Policy of Accommodation", Political Science Quarterly (New York), vol.99, no.2, Summer 1984, p.228.

European security policy, both diplomatically (in the arms control area, in particular) as well as perhaps domestically (in terms of her own internal "consensus" on defence). On the defence side, however, despite severe criticism from the PCF, the government was able to prevent any major disruption of the domestic consensus on security. The government's success on this account became possible owing to two reasons: First in moving toward greater European and NATO solidarity, the government was able to count on the support of the Gaullist party. This was a new development because until 1980-81, the Gaullists including Jacques Chirac himself vehemently opposed any departure from a strictly national deterrence posture. Second, the government was extremely careful in redefining its posture vis-a-vis an eventual participation of French forces in the battle in Central Europe.<sup>9</sup>

With the persistent demand of the USSR to include French and British nuclear forces in the INF talks, pressure increased considerably in the arms control area. This pressure grew further when a large body of West European public opinion particularly of the left wing parties started openly supporting the Soviet position. This in turn triggered an important political debate in France focussing on Mitterrand's 1981 decision to support the NATO decision to deploy the Euromissiles. The former French President, Giscard d'Estaing,

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9 Pierre Lellouche, op.cit., n.1, pp.328-29.

his former prime minister, Raymond Barre, and his diplomatic adviser, Gabriel Robin, strongly criticized Mitterrand's action on the ground that, by supporting the 1979 decision, the new President made it inevitable for the Soviets to demand the inclusion of the French nuclear deterrent at the INF negotiations. Expressing his reservations on Mitterrand's support to NATO's INF decision, the former French President said, "we cannot say at the same time: deterrent system is totally national and totally independent, and intervene in the decisions that others have to take in this domain".<sup>10</sup>

This controversy, in the view of Pierre Lellouche, focussed on the wrong issue and was based on two fundamentally wrong assumptions, namely that: (a) France had the choice of neutrality in this instance, and (b) the Soviets would have exchanged this French "neutrality" for non-inclusion of French forces in INF. In reality, France never had the option of neutrality in this case, given the centrality of the issue for the future military and political order of Europe as a whole.<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact, it was Giscard himself who convened the four-power summit (comprising the Heads of State/Government of the US, the UK, FRG and France) at Guadeloupe in January 1979, during which the INF decision, with its two-track approach, was actually drawn up. Although he refrained from making official statement on this issue, Giscard did maintain toward the Allies a policy of discreet diplomatic support. Thus, France was never "neutral" toward INF in any formal

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10 Giscard d'Estaing quoted in David S. Yost, op.cit., n.3, p.67.

11 Pierre Lellouche, op.cit., n.1, p.329.

sense.

Whatever position France might have taken, the Soviets would in any case have insisted upon the inclusion of the French and British systems in the Geneva talks. Including these systems was their best negotiating position given their underlying goal, which was from the very beginning to prevent any American deployment. This inclusion also provided Soviet Union an opportunity to prevent or control future modernization of French and British deterrent forces - a central Soviet objective since 1969 with the beginning of the SALT process. Far from being a tactical negotiating gimmick, the effort to include French and British forces was aimed at achieving what the Soviets view as a fundamental component of their long-term strategic relationship with the West, namely, an overall intercontinental balance with the United States and a separate "European balance", decoupled from the USA. Finally, by including French and British systems, the Soviets also hoped probably to drive a wedge, not just between Americans and Europeans, but also between Europeans themselves - i.e., between the two nuclear powers and the rest of non-nuclear Europe.<sup>12</sup>

Because of all these reasons, France opposed vehemently any move to include French nuclear forces in the Geneva talks. In a speech to the Institute des Hautes Etudes de Defense Nationale in Paris in

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.330.



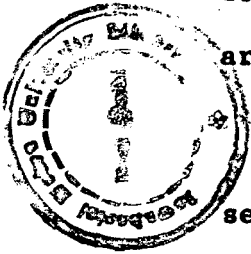
September 1983, the then French Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy argued that the Soviet Union's claim that our forces should be included and counted in with those of the United States is contrary to both the strategic and political reality. Such an inclusion would amount to setting the French and British nuclear forces against the Soviet intermediate forces alone, and this would be absurd because the purpose of our forces is to deter all systems capable of threatening us.<sup>13</sup>

The notion of INF balance, in view of Jolyon Howarth, raised problems from the outset in that it implied that there could be such a thing as a 'regional balance' separate and distinct from the 'global balance'. In Mitterrand's very first Presidential statement on this issue (quoted earlier), he fused the two notions by saying: "The reason why I condemn neutralism is that I believe peace to be linked to the balance of forces in the world." Deployment of the SS-20s and the Backfires has destroyed that balance in Europe". This statement of Mitterrand triggered off a new controversy, not only in France but also within his own party. Socialist critics from various factions within the P.S. pointed to the assignment to NATO's European theatre of Poseidon submarines with a total of some 400-500 warheads which in range, precision and numbers are comparable to the

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13 Pierre Mauroy, "France and Western Security", NATO Review (Brussels), vol.31, no.5, 1983, p.24.

SS-20s. In addition, Socialist critics also pointed to the problem of differentiating between those strategic systems of each super power which are targeted on the other super power and those which are targeted on super power allies. They opined that the very concept of strategic nuclear balance in Europe is militarily meaningless and arithmetically unquantifiable.<sup>14</sup>



Moreover, the view that Cruise and Pershing II missiles can be seen as a 'balancing' response to the SS-20s was vigorously rejected in several quarters. Admiral Sanguinetti argued that neither politically nor militarily--in terms of range and precision--could they be considered a response to the SS-20. CERES was, from the outset, hostile to the 'two-track' decision, and they continued to reject the alarmist interpretation of the SS-20s 'surgical' strike' capabilities. Pierre Chevenement, a leading member of the CERES faction of the Socialist party argued that, on the contrary, the 'two track' course offers offensive and even first strike capability to the US through Pershing-<sup>15</sup> II. Mitterrand himself drew attention to the qualitatively enhanced threat which Pershing- II posed to the Soviet Union.

The 'libertarians', on the other hand, accepted more or less at face value the government's concept of INF balance. They considered the SS-20 to be a counterforce weapon, and rejected any suggestion that NATO possessed an equivalent system prior to the deployment of Pershing II. For reasons, almost exclusively political, they considered

14 Jolyon Howarth, "Consensus of Silence: The French Socialist Party and Defence Policy Under Francois Mitterrand", International Affairs (London), vol.60, no.4, Autumn 1984, p.589.

15 Ibid., p.590.

Pershing IIs to be a proper response to the SS-20s. However, it was the political and not military approach to INF which explained the basic reason for France's welcoming the Euromissiles. That reason had to do with the vulnerability of the French nuclear forces in the global strategic situation.<sup>16</sup>

The real dilemma for France, in view of Pierre Lellouche, was not whether she could support NATO's INF decision; in either case, this was a no-win situation. By keeping silent, France would have projected an image of neutrality and would have only encouraged the neutralist drift at work among <sup>its</sup> her neighbours, without even obtaining the non-inclusion <sup>it</sup> she was seeking from Moscow. But by taking sides on the issue in favour of NATO, the French not only seemed to justify the Soviet demand for inclusion, but they were also putting themselves in a position where they were increasingly perceived as the selfish nuclear power which constituted the sole obstacle to a rapid and fair deal in Geneva. Here again, the end result was deepening discord among the European themselves. Given this no-win situation, Lellouche further argues that Mitterrand did take the right and courageous decision.<sup>17</sup> And to some extent, the entry of France into the debate since May 1981 helped things a great deal in some of the deployment countries - namely, West Germany and Italy, as <sup>it became clear from</sup> the results of the elections in those countries.

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16 Ibid.

17 Pierre Lellouche, op.cit., n.1, pp.330-31.

On 8 December 1987, during the Washington Summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, the two leaders signed the INF Treaty, thereby putting an end to the Euromissile controversy. This treaty involves the removal of 470 long range INF missiles (SS-20s and SS-4s) and 387 short range INF missiles (SS-12s, SS-22s and SS-23s) deployed by the Soviet Union, as well as 429 US Pershing IIs and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles.<sup>18</sup> But if on the one hand, it ended a controversy then on the other it triggered off another controversy and this time within the Alliance itself. The European allies (including France) have not wholeheartedly supported the INF treaty.

Most of the West European countries have adopted ambivalent attitude vis-a-vis on the INF treaty, for the elimination of those missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kms.<sup>19</sup> Public opinion o in the West European countries is also divided over the issue itself. There are those who speak of the enormous progress marked by the fact that for the first time, whole categories of nuclear weapons are to be dismantled. Others fear that crucial elements of military equilibrium which has so far precluded the possibility of an East-West war in the European theatre might thus be taken away.<sup>20</sup> West European

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18 David Mellor, "The INF Agreement: Is It a Good Deal for the West?", NATO Review, (Brussels), vol.35, no.6, December 1987, p.1.

19 Gerhard Wetting, "Europe After the INF Treaty", Aussenpolitik (Hamburg), vol.39, no.1, 1st Quarter 1988, p.24.

20 Ibid.

countries including France have expressed doubts about INF treaty on three grounds: that the systems which NATO will lose are essential for deterrence, whatever the nature of the Soviet threat; that the agreement will in some way decouple the United States from the defence of Europe; and that it will lead in time to the complete denuclearisation of European continent.<sup>21</sup>

European leaders including French are arguing that they had invested considerable political capital in accepting the American missiles. They had withstood domestic opposition by arguing that the missiles were necessary to assure "coupling" between America's nuclear forces and its defence of NATO. It would be awkward to justify the removal of all the US missiles, even as part of a deal that eliminated the threat of the SS-20s. NATO strategy, in view of Europeans, still required an American nuclear "trip wire" to deter a Soviet conventional attack.<sup>22</sup> Not only Europeans but some Americans are also opposed to the INF treaty. For instance, Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig expressing his reservations against INF treaty said that the elimination of Euromissiles will heighten the Soviet's overwhelming advantage in conventional forces; that denuclearization of Western Europe could weaken the NATO alliance; that the treaty fails to address the need for cuts in the Soviet's arsenal of ICBMs.<sup>23</sup>

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21 David Mellor, op.cit., n.18, pp.4-5.

22 Storbe Talbott, "The Road to Zero", Time (New York), December 14, 1987, p.14.

23 Ibid., p.16.

Proponents of the INF treaty, however, argue that deterrence worked perfectly well in Europe prior to the introduction of the SS-20s, the Pershings and the Cruise missiles.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it will continue to work perfectly well when they are gone. Americans argue that what links them to Europe is not one or other variant of nuclear philosophy, it is the flesh and blood of 320,000 US troops based in Europe, which couples the United States with Europe and who share the same risks as their European counterpart. As to fears of denuclearization, supporters of the INF treaty, argue that NATO will still have some 4,000 nuclear weapons in Europe even after the elimination of the INF Missiles.<sup>24</sup> Thus, we find that though treaty has been signed to eliminate Intermediate Nuclear Forces from Europe by both the super powers but yet the Euro-missile controversy is far from over, it will continue to preoccupy the minds of security policy makers of all West European countries including France-though not directly involved in the controversy but yet she cannot be indifferent to the East-West security issues.

#### SDI & France

The French are traditionally a very liberal and fiercely independent society. This French spirit often is reflected in France's national politics as is the case in regard to the SDI. The French belief in matching with the US through combined European efforts,

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24 David Mellor, op.cit., n.18, p.5.

differing views of different sub-sections of its populace on SDI, its unique political system, its desire to maintain an independent nuclear deterrent, and its view of its position in the world have been some of the elements of the matrix that has shaped France's response to the SDI.

The initial response of the French was one of "skepticism, bewilderment and a mild dose of embarrassment". The scepticism arose from the fact that few if any believed in Reagan's plan of making a fool proof Ballistic Missile Defence. Questioning the concept of deterrence based on MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) was not viewed sympathetically by the French. The SDI programme also infringes upon the sacrosanct ABM (Anti-Ballistic missiles) Treaty of 1972, which the French consider necessary for peace in Europe. It is possible and also less expensive to develop an offensive weapon capable of 'tricking' any supposedly foolproof BMD (Ballistic Missile Defence) system. They were 'bewildered' because the US had not consulted the allies and at a time when controversy on 'Euromissile Crisis' was raging throughout Europe. They were embarrassed because the Americans had taken their European allies for granted and presumed that the European allies would adopt the same logic as that used by the US to evaluate and justify the SDI.

The first French response to SDI debate can be seen in President Francois Mitterrand's speech to the UN General Assembly in September

1983. Mitterrand reiterated the French stand on disarmament and drew attention of the audience to the militarisation of space, which could be interpreted as a criticism, although subtle, of the SDI. In the early 1984 the US President had proposed that the allies should join the US in establishing a manned space station. Not wanting to barter its autonomy for political and economic gains, Mitterrand proposed an entirely European manned space station when he spoke at the Hague in February 1984.

In June 1984, the French made another notable move in connection with the SDI at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva. A few days later Mitterrand proposed to Gorbachev:

1. Anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) restrictions especially concerning high orbits;
2. A ban on the development of Directed Energy weapons (DEW) for an initial period of five years;
3. Strengthening of the registration and verification provisions of June 1975 UN Convention on Outer Space Objects;
4. Extension of bilateral United States-Soviet Union agreement on the inviolability of reconnaissance satellites to include other nations' satellites.<sup>25</sup>

This proposal pleased the Soviet Union so much that two weeks later it proposed immediate negotiations with the US on the 'demilitarization of outer space'.

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25 John Fenske, "France and the Strategic Defence Initiative Speeding up or Putting on the Brakes?", International Affairs (London), vol.62, no.2, Spring 1986, p.233.



In the context of intra-alliance relations, 1985 was the year of the SDI in France, much as 1983 had been the 'fateful year' of Pershing and Cruise missiles.<sup>26</sup> In January 1985, Shultz and Gromyko met in Geneva to explore the basis for further arms control talks. The resumption of talks, which were to include SDI, and the wording of the communique - "preventing an arms race in space", confirmed the rationale of French position adopted in June 1984. Paul Nitze and Robert McFarlane, came to Paris immediately after the Geneva Summit to brief the French leaders about the results of the Summit. France was by and large satisfied with the US stand at Geneva Summit and this led to the softening of French attitude on the SDI.

France was concerned about the technological, scientific and economic threat posed by the SDI. Vague offers by the US of cooperation between the Strategic Defence Initiative Organization (SDIO) and Europe were perceived by France as intended to paralyse critical reflection on the SDI.<sup>27</sup> France had intended to encourage Britain and West Germany to examine in a spirit of scepticism the fruits to be gathered from cooperating with the United States on high technology projects. But before this intra-European reflection could produce results, the US Defence Secretary Weinberger wrote his famous letter of 26 March 1985, offering explicit participation in SDI projects to members of the alliance, and asking for a response

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26 President Mitterrand called 1983 the 'fateful year' when speaking of Pershing and Cruise deployment before the German Parliament in January 1983.

27 Le Monde, 22 March 1985, p.1.

within sixty days.' This triggered off a controversy but Weinberger, realizing his grave mistake, immediately clarified that the 'sixty days' were not meant to be an ultimatum and later also removed the deadline. Nonetheless, his representatives also explained that the Pentagon wished to deal bilaterally with individual governments, even with individual firms, not with a common European position. Simultaneously, American companies involved in SDI work began contacting European firms capable of contributing to the SDI Project.<sup>28</sup> This cavalier attitude of the US towards the allies was viewed disapprovingly in France.

Thus, after an initial negative reaction to Reagan's announcement of SDI in March 1983, several major themes have emerged in the official policies of France. The French government under President Francois Mitterrand declined to endorse SDI as a strategic concept or to give political support to the United States in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Nevertheless, it allowed French defence firms to bid for SDI contracts because of concern about a growing technological lag between the US and France. "Cohabitation" has had little impact on France's policy towards the SDI. While Jacques Chirac and his supporters criticised Mitterrand for his stand on SDI, it was more against the tone of his rhetoric than the substance of his position to which they objected.<sup>29</sup>

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28 John Fenske, op.cit., n.25, p.235.

29 Michael B. Froman and others, "Strategic Implication of SDI for France and West Germany" RUSI Journal, vol.132, no.2, June 1987, p.51.

Within a month of Weinberger's letter of March 1985 regarding European allies participation in the SDI project, France proposed an alternative EDI (European Defence Initiative) to counter the American SDI. The French logic for such a proposal flows from its fiercely independent outlook that wants to ensure French nuclear deterrent potentialities and also the competitiveness of the high technology industries of Western Europe. EDI was presented in the name of Eureka, which is a near acronym for European Research Coordination Agency. While it took time to establish just what the agency would do and with whom, it was clear from the outset that Paris wanted to raise European consciousness about the 'takeover bid' that the US offer on SDI represented for Europe's best scientific and industrial talent. The list of interest areas initially selected for Eureka closely resembles the fundamental research objective of the SDI: Optical electronics, new materials, super computers, lasers and particle beams, artificial intelligence, and high speed microelectronics.<sup>30</sup>

The French perceive SDI and Eureka as two entirely unrelated programmes. This is reflected in the French Foreign Minister Dumas' words, "SDI is a vast military programme with civilian implications". Eureka is "a vast civilian programme with military implications". This the civilian stress in the Eureka runs counter to the position held by the French Prime Minister who, while addressing

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30 John Fenske, op.cit., n.25, p.235.

the Dutch parliament, called for joint European efforts to build a manned space station.<sup>31</sup> He also hinted at the possibility of developing indigenous European missile defence system, which was reiterated by him in November 1985. On 6 November 1985, eighteen countries of Western Europe, through their foreign and research ministers officially adopted the aforesaid programme at the second EUREKA Conference in Hanover (FRG). The name Eureka is meant to make it clear that the objective is to realise industrial, technological and scientific cooperation of companies and research institutes within the framework of projects aimed at the development of products, systems and services with a global market potential.<sup>31</sup> The Eureka members agreed that Eureka projects should relate primarily to products, processes and services in the sectors of information and communications technologies, robot technology, materials, production technology, biotechnology, marine technology, laser technologies and technologies for environmental protection and transport. In addition, it encompasses R&D projects in high technology fields which are important for the creation of a modern infrastructure and for the solution of transnational problems, especially in the environment sector.<sup>31</sup>

That there is vital need for Europe to move ahead jointly in the field of high technology to cope with the challenge from Japan

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31 Eureka Declaration of Principles adopted in Hanover on 6 Nov. 1985, cited in Klaus W. Grewlich, "EUREKA-eureka?", Aussenpolitik, (Hamburg), vol.37, no.1, 1986, p.30.

and United States, has been felt in the recent past.<sup>32</sup> The only government that have concretely proposed to advance financial resources to Eureka are France below 125 million for 1986, and Netherlands 8.5 million annually. Britain and FRG have also agreed to contribute unspecified amount of funds. However, as compared to the SDI budget of \$2.7 billion in the financial year 1986, the Eureka is a fledgling programme. One significant pointer to the military dimension of Eureka which has not been ruled out is France's concurrence to Israeli subcontracts from French firms.<sup>33</sup>

The policies of the various major political parties in France vis-a-vis SDI are somewhat complicated. All of them have serious doubts about the technological feasibility of Reagan's vision. The Socialist Party (PS) of Mitterrand rejects Reagan's strategic vision of the western defence, but it seems to accept the inevitability of the programme and recommends joint European projects in the related fields. The PS is even more outspoken than Mitterrand in its criticism of the SDI as an obstacle to East-West arms control agreements. While the Rassemblement pour la Republique (RPR) of the former French Prime Minister Chirac strongly criticized Mitterrand's negative attitude towards the SDI, it also rejects Reagan's vision. Instead, the RPR supports active French participation in SDI research to acquire technology for a European ballistic missile defence (BMD) capability.

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32 O. N. Mehrotra, "Eureka: European Research Coordination Agency", Strategic Analysis, (New Delhi), vol.4, no.5, August 1986, p.499.

33 Eureka Joint Venture Deal, Defence & Disarmament Review, Strategic Digest (New Delhi), vol. XVI, no.10, October 1986, pp.31-32.

A significant section of the Gaullists in the RPR supports European BMD programme to avoid a condominium of the two super powers in which Western Europe would be held hostage. The Union pour la Démocratique Française (UDF) of the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and his former Prime Minister Raymond Barre, like the RPR, is critical of Mitterrand's hostility towards the SDI, and believes that France can benefit by participating in the SDI research. But makes no tangible difference from President Mitterrand's position.<sup>34</sup> PCF (Communist Party of France) is totally opposed to SDI and wants France to have nothing to do with it.

The United States allocated 26 billion dollars for the SDI projects and this colossal amount created a lot of confusion among the French industrialists and officials. This confusion, however, to some extent was softened by the fact that the amount is to be spread over five years and not all of it is new money because some already existing programmes were brought under the SDI Programme. The impact is nevertheless dramatic, and French officials and analysts insist on the need to 'decouple' thinking about the long-term military dimension of SDI from the immediate challenge to the scientific, technological, and economic future of France and of Europe.<sup>35</sup> The French responded to this challenge of the SDI through their Eureka programme.

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34 Michael B. Froman and others, op.cit., n.29, pp.51-52.

35 John Fenske, op.cit., n.25, p.242.

The French proposal for Eureka, however, began with an uncertain future because other European partners of France were worried about French motive, but by the end of 1985 its survival was assured. Eureka thus joins the list of successful joint European efforts in science, technology, and industry such as CERN (atomic particle research), JET (nuclear fusion), Airbus (commercial aircraft), ESA and Ariane (civilian missiles and satellites), ESPRIT (computers), BRIT (manufacturing technology), and RACE (telecommunications).<sup>36</sup>

There is a lot of controversy and confusion about the exact nature of Eureka programme. If some treat it as EDI (European Defence Initiative) to counter the US SDI then others regard it as of strictly civilian nature meant for keeping West European countries in technological race with the United States. Klaus W. Grewlich is of the opinion that Reagan's SDI and the resulting concern of the Europeans that they could fall behind economically and technologically in key areas was not the direct cause of the EUREKA initiative,<sup>37</sup> though it was an accelerating element. He argues that Eureka would have come about in its present or some other form even without SDI - just as the development towards a European Technology Community would have been spurred.

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36 Ibid., p.243.

37 The Eureka initiative was launched at the first EUREKA ministerial conference in Paris on 17 July 1985 and entered its realisation phase with the Second EUREKA ministerial conference in Hanover on 5 and 6 November 1985.

The basic ideas underlying the proposed Technology Community and EUREKA, he claims, have been emerging with growing clarity since the beginning of the 1980s in deliberations on research and technology policy within the European Community and have increasingly prevailed in the process.<sup>38</sup> Eureka projects, thus, are basically of civilian in nature and have not come into existence as a reaction to the U.S. SDI, and are geared to meet the challenges of the market forces. The fundamentally civilian character of the Eureka projects, however, does not preclude use of the resulting technologies for military purposes.

The French industries are generally in favour of joining the SDI research mainly because of the enormous money at stake. The official French 'No' to the SDI, has thus been belied by the industrial 'yes'. French officials, moreover, have made it clear that their 'No' does not prevent industry, even nationalized companies, from participating in the SDI work. With the notable exception of Aerospatiale, builder of France's military missiles, most of the French military industries (private and public as well) have shown keen interest to join the SDI research and are bidding for the SDI contract. The chief among the French industries, which are participating in the SDI research are Matra and Thomson - both of them are in public sector.<sup>39</sup>

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38 Klaus W. Grewlich, "EUREKA-eureka?", op.cit., no.31, p.29.

39 Matra is 51 per cent state-owned, whereas Thomson is 100 per cent state owned.



The French industries operate on the logic that R&D financing has to increase in order to keep up with foreign competitors especially Japanese and American. Both Japan and the US are investing enormous money on R&D compared to France. The SDI funds can boost French R&D and participation in it will facilitate transfer of high technology to France.

The Official French 'No' is misleading, for it applies chiefly to the security aspect of the analysis. Because of 'the perverse mechanism of European security', in which two or even three of the four principal West European actors have 'special relationship' with the American ally therefore efforts to create a separate identity, a 'European pillar', are continually being undermined. Deployment of the Euromissiles reinforced America's commitment to European security. But before that commitment was fully implemented, the SDI brought it into question once again. The French are apprehensive of the Soviet response, which they presume inevitable and this will make the American nuclear use option less credible, which is necessary for enforcing NATO's flexible response strategy. Then, there is the distant prospect of an isolationist 'fortress America' made feasible by less than perfect defences provided by the SDI and which also makes the United States less vulnerable than Europe. Paris is, however, confident that a perfect defence against missiles is impossible, and therefore it does not worry about the ultimate credibility of its own force de frappe. But it complains about the added costs, which

can be avoided or reduced by the strict compliance of the ABM Treaty.<sup>40</sup> The 'No' also concerns the alliance, for France sees the United States making yet another unilateral move that is not obviously in the best interests of France and Europe.

The technological, economic and political challenges that the SDI poses are somewhat grievous which France is finding difficult to cope with. On the basis of these three factors, the French reaction is 'Yes' to SDI but this analysis is reversed when the strategic factor of the matrix is considered. The French perception of SDI is that a perfect BMD is impossible. Partial BMD with ABM modification may enhance security. SDI will spark off an arms race in space and this will mean UK and France will have to spend more to maintain a credible national nuclear deterrent. This is against the French security interest and that is why, France is opposed to the SDI. In the short run the French initiating Eureka and private French firms' participation in the SDI may pay off, but in the long run France will have to decide in favour of joining the SDI in its national interest provided that the SDI programme continues. This is because the Eureka programme can in no way match the SDI programme funding, which is many times higher. Thus, prudence would suggest France to join the SDI research in the long run.

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40 John Fenske, op.cit., n.25, p.245.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

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In France, there exists a great deal of consensus regarding its defence policy and its role in the security of Western Europe. The current security policy of France owes a lot to de Gaulle, on whose initiative the Fifth Republic was inaugurated in 1958. Since de Gaulle's departure from the scene in 1969, successive French Governments have pursued policies initiated by him. Over the years, these policies have become sacrosanct and any deviation from them is vehemently resented by the French people. As a result, even if any government is deviating from any Gaullist principle, it does not accept this publicly. The Giscard and Mitterrand Governments' frequent public declarations of adherence to the basic Gaullist principles are an eloquent proof of the deep roots struck by Gaullism in the French mind.

General Charles de Gaulle's defence policy was based on the twin objectives of independence and grandeur. To achieve these objectives, de Gaulle considered possession of nuclear weapons and withdrawal from the NATO's militarily integrated structure as prerequisites. The NATO membership, de Gaulle felt, was undermining the French independence; and in the nuclear age, without the acquisition of nuclear weapons, independence was not possible. The Anglo-American dominance of the NATO was also not acceptable to

de Gaulle. He wanted parity with the UK and the USA, so he suggested a "three-power directorate" consisting of the US, the UK and France, which was rejected by the United States on the ground that other NATO members will also then clamour for a privileged position, which will undermine the cohesion of the Alliance. De Gaulle reacted to this refusal by withdrawing from the integrated structure of the NATO itself in 1966. Withdrawal from the NATO enabled France to retrieve non-belligerency option, which it had lost by committing itself to the NATO Treaty of 1949.

Disenchantment with the Anglo-Americans led de Gaulle to attempt a patch-up with the Soviet Union, which also fitted within his vision of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals". De Gaulle, declined to accept the United Kingdom as part of Europe because of its insular position, which always enabled it to shrink behind the seas during any crisis in the continent. The basic aim of de Gaulle was to dismantle the bi-polar world -- the product of the arrangements reached at the Yalta Conference among the super powers. This he aspired to achieve by making Europe strong and independent. He dreamt of founding a United States of Europe, a sort of federation consisting of all European states under the aegis of France. When his grand design of the United States of Europe, which was to play the role of a third dominant power in the world, failed to take off, he reconciled himself to Franco-German unity, so he concluded a treaty with the FRG, which was termed by his critics as "Fouchet Plan writ small".

The Gaullist vision of Europe was fraught with various contradictions from the very outset. Except Chancellor Adenauer, no European leader supported him wholeheartedly. Many European leaders were even suspicious of the General's motives. Inclusion of the Soviet Union by de Gaulle in his grand design of Europe made his plan a non-starter, because most of the West European leaders were not ready at all to accept the Soviet Union as an ally. So, from the very beginning, de Gaulle's idea of a United Europe was doomed to failure. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 dealt a mortal blow to de Gaulle's vision of Europe. He vehemently denounced the Soviet invasion and abandoned his perception of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals".

Strategic Nuclear Forces (FNS) is the main component of the French security policy. It was assigned a strictly national role under de Gaulle. The French strategy, which is primarily based on the simple military principle of "massive retaliation". It is a strategy of deterrence by the weak of the strong. In other words, it is an anti-city strategy. Because of limited resources, France could not adopt anti-force strategy, which required enormous nuclear weapons to match those of the super powers to enable it to resort to a pre-emptive strike. The French strategy is, therefore, to ensure second strike capability and this strike could be directed against civilian targets, especially major cities of the aggressor. France was convinced that no country would dare to invade France, because the gain of such adventure would be neutralized by the French

retaliation. This is the strategy which was developed during de Gaulle's Presidency and since then is still being pursued with certain modifications.

At the height of the French hostility to the Anglo-Saxons, de Gaulle's Chief of Staff, General Ailleret, propounded the doctrine of *tous azimuts* - omnidirectional strategy i.e. non-designation of the potential aggressor in advance. Earlier France had singled out the Soviet Union as its main adversary and therefore its entire strategy was directed against it. This volte-face in the French defence policy stunned the whole western world. But Ailleret's successor, General Fourquet, gave up the doctrine of tous azimuts and reverted to the old policy of specifying the Soviet Union as the main adversary of France.

France severely criticized the US strategy of flexible response because in its view, it was a disguised move on the part of the US to abandon Europe in the face of a brutal aggression. However, with the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the 'seventies, the French strategic policy itself underwent considerable change. But the French officials did not accept this because of the fear of a public outcry. Tactical nuclear weapons were assigned the dual function of testing the determination of an enemy's intentions and firing the 'warning shot' to declare the French intention of resorting to massive retaliation. This, in a way, is akin to the flexible response strategy,

because the basic aim of tactical nuclear weapons, like the flexible response, is to raise the nuclear threshold, i.e., the delayed nuclear response.

Georges Pompidou succeeded Charles de Gaulle but he lacked the charismatic and dynamic personality of his predecessor. Unlike de Gaulle, he concentrated mainly on resolving internal problems and accorded secondary importance to defence and external affairs. Nevertheless, he did not deviate from the Gaullist defence policy. His administration was marked, in brief, by continuity and change. During his administration, White Paper of 1972, drawn out by his Defence Minister, Michel Debre, was adopted which put down systematically for the first time the Gaullist framework of defence. The pro-US trend initiated by de Gaulle in his last year as President was carried further by Pompidou.

Pompidou's successor, Giscard d'Estaing, also professed adherence to the Gaullist defence policy. However, he also introduced radical changes in it. The most important one was sanctuarization elargie. Under de Gaulle, the FNS was assigned the role of defending only national sanctuary or territory. But Giscard's Chief of Staff, General Guy Mery, extended it to include the defence of the FRG also. This extension of the French nuclear deterrent was resented vehemently by the Socialists, Communists and Gaullists in unison. They castigated it on the ground that by committing the French nuclear forces in advance, France had lost its non-belligerency option. The Giscard



Government was forced to deny any deviation from the basic Gaullist policy and this it did by adopting an ambiguous policy. Thus, if Pompidou's regime was characterized by "continuity and change", then the Giscardian administration was marked by "ambiguity".

Defending the enlargement of national sanctuary, Giscard argued that France could not be immune to any war fought at its next-door neighbour's soil. He perceived only one battle zone in any future war scenario and France, to maintain its sovereignty, had to take part in that. Thus, by committing France in the forward battle for the defence of West Germany, Giscard abandoned the Gaullist concept of two battle zones.

The Giscardian regime accorded prime importance to conventional forces, which is reflected in its higher budgetary allocation to the conventional forces at the cost of the nuclear ones. This was, to some extent, in tune with the US and the NATO's strategy of flexible response, in which conventional forces were to play a key role in repelling the Soviet conventional invasion through conventional forces and, failing in that only the NATO was to resort to nuclear weapons. Critics of Giscard accused his administration for functional integration with the NATO. Though criticized for his conciliatory attitude towards the NATO and the US, Giscard maintained very good relations with the Soviet Union, which is proved by the fact that during the French Presidential elections of 1981, the Soviet Union endorsed the candidature of Giscard against the Socialist candidate, Francois Mitterrand.

The uninterrupted rule of the right since the inception of the Fifth Republic in 1958 forced the French Left parties to unite on a common platform not only to contest the elections but also to form a government. This necessitated an agreement on the programme of governing among the left parties. Some efforts in the direction of Left unity were made in the mid-'sixties, but these were upset by the May 1968 disturbances. The Gaullist landslide victory in 1968 general election convinced the French Left that without unity it could not come to power. This realization led to negotiations between the Parti Socialiste (PS) and the Parti Communiste Francaise (PCF)--the two dominant parties of the French Left. This resulted eventually in the signing of the "Common Programme of Government" in June 1972 by the PS and the PCF, to which the Radicals subscribed in the following months.

To achieve unity both the PS and the PCF made considerable concessions and subscribed to the basic tenets of the Gaullist security framework. The Communists accepted the position of the Socialists in the areas dealing with the Constitution, political institutions and foreign policy including defence. The Socialists yielded to the Communists on the questions of nationalization and West European integration policy. However, the major concession conceded by the PCF was its acceptance of the NATO. In 1976, in a dramatic move, the PCF also accepted the importance of nuclear weapons in the defence of France. Subsequently, the Socialists also followed suit.<sup>1</sup>

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1 It is noteworthy that both the Socialists and the Communists had been opposed to nuclear weapons till 1976. In the Common Programme, they agreed to stop production of nuclear weapons and destroy their existing stockpiles, after coming to power.

The PS and the PCF forged unity with a view to marginalizing each other, but it was the PS which succeeded in its objective. Since the very first election held in 1973, after the signing of the "Common Programme", it had been evident that the PS was the main beneficiary of the "Common Programme". Realizing the decline of its electoral support, the PCF clamoured for updating the 1972 Common Programme in 1976, but the PS refused to introduce any change in the existing arrangements, as it was benefitting from it. Consequently, the PCF broke away from the Common Programme in 1977.

The Left's ambition of coming to power was realized in 1981-- almost one decade after the signing of the "Common Programme"--when Mitterrand was elected to the office of the President. Under the pressure of its Party rank and file, the PCF joined the Socialist Government of Pierre Mauroy (1981-1984) on the Socialist terms and conditions.<sup>2</sup> However, this honeymoon was very shortlived. In 1984, the PCF declined to join the new Socialist Government headed by Laurent Fabius because of its opposition to the austerity programme of the preceding Socialist Government.

The PCF quit the Common Programme in 1977 and the Fabius Government in 1984 to retrieve its pre-eminent position in the French politics, but it failed in its objective. However, all of a sudden, when the decline of the Communist electoral support was appearing

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2 The Communists were given only four ministerial portfolios. As if adding insult to injury, these portfolios were not very important either.

irreversible, in 1988 Parliamentary election,<sup>3</sup> it won a significant number of seats in the Parliament, to the surprise of everyone. This development shows that, though weakened, the PCF cannot be written off from the French political scene.

Like his predecessors, Mitterrand retained the basic principles of the Gaullist defence policy. He, however, introduced certain modifications to adjust it to the changed security scenario of the eighties. The Socialist Government inherited the nuclear triad-- sea, air and land-based nuclear forces--capable of deterring any aggression. But in the era of continued technological development, these weapons must be modernized to maintain their credibility as nuclear deterrents. Therefore, Mitterrand accorded top priority to the modernization of nuclear weapons. He also restored the pre-eminent position of the nuclear forces in the French defence as against the the Giscardian Government's emphasis on the conventional forces for the security of France.

The Gaullist strategy of countervalue or anti-city or deterrence through terror continues to be the strategy of the Socialist Government. This strategy of late has been questioned by some strategists in the changed security scenarios of the 'eighties. The Gaullist dogmas of the 'sixties, they contend, are no longer valid.

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3 President Mitterrand after his election for the second term dissolved the National Assembly to get rid of the Rightist Government of Jacques Chirac, thus ending the brief spell of cohabitation in the French Government.

They want them to be replaced by the strategy of "deterrence through defence". Meanwhile, the Soviet weapons technology has undergone considerable sophistication rendering the French nuclear forces vulnerable to the Soviet first-strike attack. The possible deployment of the BMD system by the Soviet Union will seriously undermine the French Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) capability. Thus, in the absence of an extended American nuclear deterrent, the French nuclear deterrent would be ineffective and the Soviet Union can take the risk of pre-empting the French nuclear forces. This precariousness leaves France with no option but to be more conciliatory towards the US and the US-UK-backed NATO.

The Mitterrand regime has been more Atlanticist than any preceding government of the Fifth Republic ever. Its unequivocal support to the NATO's two-track policy of 1979 also bears this out. Mitterrand also accepted, though very vaguely, Mery's concept of "Sanctuarization elargie". Mitterrand argued in almost Giscardian tones that the defence of France could <sup>not</sup> be detached from that of its neighbours. To reinforce the French commitment to the security of the FRG, the Mitterrand regime is creating a new Rapid Action Force (FAR) on the pattern of Bernard Rogers Plan of Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), to which France is opposed, because it will, in its view, raise the nuclear threshold and decouple the US from the security of Europe.

The FAR, designed to take part in the forward defence of FRG, is to consist of 47,000 troops and is to be equipped with modern

sophisticated conventional weapons. It represents a radical departure from the earlier French policy towards the West German security.<sup>4</sup> The formation of the FAR has been severely castigated by the critics of Mitterrand as a disguised attempt to reintegrate France into the NATO, discarded by it earlier. Though the Mitterrand Government has denied this, yet for the successful operation of the FAR, coordination with the NATO allies, particularly with the USA is a must. This has, of course, been admitted by the French officially.

The Socialist Government has also undertaken modernization of nuclear weapons on a truly massive scale. With the introduction of Inflexible submarine in 1985, France has become the first nation, apart from the super powers, to have MIRVed Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs). Tactical nuclear weapons are also being modernized and Pluton tactical nuclear missiles are to be replaced, by the new Hades system by 1992 with longer range and more accuracy compared to the Pluton system. There was also a plan to deploy tactical nuclear missiles under the dual key system in the FRG, but it was shelved because of the fierce opposition to this move. France also maintains an adequate number of Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) and SLBMs to enforce its strategy of second strike in case of an aggression.

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4 Even after withdrawal from the NATO's militarily integrated structure, France retained three divisions of its First Army, consisting of around 50,000 troops, in the FRG. This force was to cooperate with the second echelon of the NATO forces but was not to take part in the forward defence of the FRG.

Like his predecessors, Mitterrand is also toying with the idea of creating an independent European Defence System under the aegis of France. Revival of the moribund Western European Union (WEU) and setting up of joint Franco-German Committee on Defence and Security (1982) for periodical consultations on issues of common concern are the two main achievements of Mitterrand in this sphere. But success has eluded Mitterrand, as it did his predecessors earlier. The French effort to strengthen the European pillar of the alliance has always been viewed with suspicion by its European allies. They perceive it as a disguised effort to decouple the USA from the security of Europe and enhance the predominance of France in the continent. Understandably, they have not been able to respond enthusiastically enough to the French call either for the strengthening of the European pillar within the alliance or for the creation of an independent European defence system.

Mitterrand's Atlanticist tilt is manifested in his firm support to the NATO's missile deployment programme. Giscard had refused to take sides publicly on the Euro-missile deployment and dismissed it as the "NATO's business". But Mitterrand, immediately after assuming his office, declared that the security of Europe depended on the balance of power and this balance had been disturbed by the deployment of the SS-20s by the Soviet Union, so the NATO and, especially, the USA must take counter-measures to restore the balance. He pleaded that the NATO must deploy Cruise and Pershing-II missiles to neutralize the threat posed by the Soviet SS-20s to the security of the West.

He even went to the extent of intervening in the German election by urging the German electorate to vote for the Christian Democratic Party, which was in favour of the missile deployment, thereby annoying the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the German counterpart of Mitterrand's own Socialist Party (PS). Since France has a public consensus on security issues, it was free from any peace movement, even though peace movements mushroomed all over Western Europe to resist the missiles deployment.<sup>1</sup>

Like the other European NATO members, France has been reticent in hailing the recently concluded INF Treaty. France perceives it as a move in the direction of the American decoupling from the West European security. The European allies of the US contend that it has always been the strategy of the Soviet Union that Europe should be free of the US nuclear weapons. Whenever the United States deployed nuclear weapons in Europe, the Soviet Union either forced it, as did the USA during the Cuban missile crisis,<sup>5</sup> or persuaded it, as it has done through the INF Treaty, to withdraw its missiles from Europe. They also fear that the INF Treaty will tilt the balance in favour of the Soviet Union because of its enormous superiority in conventional forces. The INF Treaty will also promote isolationist tendencies in the USA, weakening the already questionable American political will to use the nuclear weapons and undermining thereby the credibility of the extended US nuclear deterrent. Dismantling of the INF missiles from Europe will also raise the nuclear threshold in

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<sup>5</sup> The US was forced by the Soviet Union to withdraw its Jupiter missiles from Turkey aimed at the USSR, on the condition that it will withdraw its own from Cuba in 1962.



conformity with the flexible response strategy of the US, which has always been denounced by the successive French governments. In brief, the INF Treaty has not been well received in France or, for that matter, in any other West European country.

Reagan took France by surprise by announcing in March 1983, his plan of deploying Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), popularly known as the Star Wars, in the space to render the nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete". France viewed the SDI as a twin challenge to its security and technology. The latter was a more potent threat to France, because the SDI research programme will leave France and the other European countries far behind in terms of technology. France also felt that its security was being threatened by the SDI, because it would compel the Soviet Union to develop its own Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system, which will undermine the credibility of the French nuclear deterrent. To pacify the apprehensive European allies, the former US Defence Secretary, Casper Weinberger, invited the NATO allies to participate in the SDI research programme in March 1985. France did not show much interest in the American offer, nevertheless it allowed the French private firms to bid for the SDI contracts because of enormous sums of money being at stake.

To counter the threat posed by the SDI, France proposed the European Research and Coordination Agency (EUR EKA) to its European allies. Usually apprehensive of the French motives for such moves, they have predictably enough responded to this French initiative with

a number of reservations. They are also questioning the Breka's feasibility and utility. Unlike the SDI, the Breka is primarily a civilian programme with military implications. The current French opposition to the SDI and its counter-proposal of the Breka notwithstanding, it is hoped that in the near future, France, like the other West European states will join the SDI research programme.

The United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, each for its own reasons, bear critical importance in French security policy. But since the mid-'seventies the credibility of the extended US deterrence over Western Europe and the stability of the FRG have been viewed in France as gradually slipping away. It is this new realization, which has prompted a major French rapprochement with the NATO since 1974 in the form of the Ottawa Declaration signed by it and a new debate in the French defence circles as to what concrete contribution France could make to the Alliance and to the FRG in particular. The goal then in the seventies and still under the present Socialist Government is to compensate at least partly for the declining credibility of the US security guarantee in order to help reassure and stabilize the FRG.

As far as one can see, France will continue to play a crucial role in the security configuration of Western Europe. The French nuclear forces modernized massively under the socialist government, will certainly exercise a deterring effect on the Soviet strategy towards the West. But the French doctrinal assumptions also need modernization, as the

national sanctuary concept responds less and less to the strategic challenges of the 'eighties. At the same time, proposals for an independent European defence system have proven deficient. The only option for France is the NATO--not re-integration, which would be politically unacceptable--but rather a greater contribution to the construction of a European pillar within the Atlantic Alliance.

The following are the most likely scenarios for evolution of the French defence policy and doctrine in the 'eighties and the 'nineties.

First, the highest priority given to nuclear weapons will continue with no change, giving the French nuclear weapons a direct European defence role.

Second, the Franco-German military co-operation in conventional forces will increase in the 'eighties (allowing) modifications in the French strategy to include the FRG directly in the French security system.

Third, France is least likely to re-emphasize conventional forces at the cost of nuclear ones. There would be a bit of increased co-operation in the conventional sphere, mainly for political purposes.

Fourth, the increased co-operation will nevertheless stop short of France's rejoining the NATO's militarily integrated structure.

In sum, modernization of nuclear forces will remain the pivot of the French defence policy. These weapons will most likely remain identified solely with the defence of the national sanctuary. There is also a possibility that the French nuclear deterrence might be extended to incorporate the security of the FRG as well.

The foregoing analysis reveals that the defence policy model established during the first decade of the Fifth Republic by de Gaulle serves as an indispensable guideline as also a constraint on

all successive governments in France. The Socialist Government's proclaimed adherence to the Gaullist security model confirms this fully. The French security policy pre-empts to a certain extent, any possibility of major experimentation, for a national consensus exists in favour of the Gaullist framework.

The fundamental principles of this framework are: independence in national defence, a special status as an Atlantic ally, reliance on a national nuclear force, and opposition to a rigid bipolar international system. This framework is, however, flexible enough to accommodate the variety of political and ideological perspectives within France. This Gaullist model is also the best tool for interpreting and predicting the French security policy, because the record of the Fifth Republic indicates that in the long run, the Government will have to adhere closely to the Gaullist principles.

A second conclusion is that the Gaullist model is valuable not only to France but also to France's allies and the Atlantic Alliance as a whole. The Alliance profits from an independent national security policy framework that compels divergent political forces to adapt to policies that are ultimately beneficial to the Western security interests. The case of the French Socialist Party is a case in point: It had to abandon its anti-American and anti-nuclear stances in order to come to power. Under the socialist regime, France has pursued

pragmatic policies on defence and East-West affairs. This means that a responsible policy--one beneficial to the West and even to the international system--need not necessarily coincide with the policy preferences of the United States. Notwithstanding the differences between the US and France on numerous issues, the stark reality is that the West does benefit from the independent security policy of France--a fact that has also been accepted by the West in the Ottawa Declaration of 1974.

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