

De Gaulle, Europe, and the Atlantic Alliance

Author(s): Stanley Hoffmann

Source: *International Organization*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter, 1964), pp. 1-28

Published by: University of Wisconsin Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2705567>

Accessed: 25-09-2019 08:07 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR


University of Wisconsin Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *International Organization*

De Gaulle, Europe, and the Atlantic Alliance

STANLEY HOFFMANN

SINCE January 1963, General de Gaulle's foreign policy has been subject to many contradictory or erroneous interpretations in the United States. It is necessary, therefore, to indicate its foundations, its main lines, some of the expectations and techniques peculiar to the General, and some of the obstacles it encounters. I will concentrate here on his views and policies toward France's Atlantic and European partners.

I. FOUNDATIONS

It is useful, first, to list de Gaulle's basic principles and their political consequences. Two principles constitute the essence of his thought. 

1. *Principles.* The General's first concern, attested throughout his memoirs, is to insure what he calls the grandeur of France and, as a prerequisite for this aim, to maintain France's independence. A great deal has been said about the Napoleonic overtones of de Gaulle's foreign policy—sometimes it is even compared to that of Louis XIV—but in its inspiration the General's thought is at least as much derived from the Jacobin tradition. To any Frenchman who lived through the humiliating war and postwar years—that is, the Occupation followed by dependence and colonial disasters—this jealous concern for national sovereignty is understandable. It indicates a desire to revive in a nation which was for a very long time a great power the sense of being master of its own destiny as far as is still possible. It reflects the need to restore the self-respect

STANLEY HOFFMANN is Professor of Government and Research Associate of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and a member of the Board of Editors of *International Organization*. The author would like to thank Nancy L. Roelker for her assistance in the translation of an earlier and shorter version of this essay, published by the French monthly *Esprit* in June 1963.

which the nation lost during its long ordeal. Such emphasis on independence is justified by two psychological considerations: First, in proportion as a nation's freedom of action is reduced, national pride, the vital spring of action, can be maintained only if the rulers make up in intensity what has had to be abandoned in scope. Also, the habit of dependence grows bit by bit: if a nation first becomes accustomed to relying on another to fulfill some of its needs, it risks being trapped and becoming incapable of freeing itself, especially since dependence on allied and friendly powers is rarely irksome enough to precipitate firm resistance. 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.¹ In today's world, French grandeur is defined by de Gaulle as an attempt to play the role of Europe's awakener and leader.

For, in the second place, the General, a French nationalist, is also a "European nationalist." His concern for Europe is the least understood in the United States, where people tend to assume that only the "Europeans" of Mr. Monnet's persuasion really care about uniting Europe. Just as he wants to prevent France from being a mere pawn on the international chessboard, the General wants to assure that Europe—which he sees as the mother of civilization—can again become one of the principal players after having for more than twenty years been just a stake through the fault of its own divisions. What justifies this concern is the fact that the actions of the great non-European powers which dominate the world are not necessarily compatible with the greatness and power of Europe. Several times, as in the cases of Berlin or of the negotiations for arms control and disarmament, it has seemed that the great powers might be able to come to an understanding only at the expense of Europeans. On this point as well as on the previous one, the General remains guided or haunted by the memories of the war, when the destiny of Europe was determined without Europeans, and sometimes, as the fate of eastern Europe shows, even *against* Europeans. It has been obvious for years that Mr. Khrushchev wants European affairs to be settled by "an American-Soviet Duet"² that would start by freezing the status quo, i.e., the division of Europe, and would thus enhance the Soviet Union's position. Also, anyone who has followed the learned American discussions on arms control, which have been based on the assumption of common interests between Russians and Americans, as well as the recent test ban dis-

¹ On de Gaulle's conception of grandeur, see Stanley Hoffmann, "De Gaulle's Memoirs: The Hero as History," *World Politics*, October 1960 (Vol. 13, No. 1), pp. 140-155.

² Zbigniew Brzezinski, "After the Test Ban," *The New Republic*, August 31, 1963, pp. 18-21.

cussions, cannot fail to find in them a kind of invitation to duopoly—an appeal to the Russians to make them understand that arms control is possible only if the two superpowers prevent other states from rising to the dangerous but tempting heights of “rank,” which General de Gaulle is trying to encourage Europeans to reach.

Many British and Americans attack the General for his *folie de grandeur*. But it is chiefly the greatness of Europe that is in question. The General is quite aware that at the present time, in a universe of giants, a country the size of France cannot regain the rank of a great power all by itself. In this respect, he has been consistent ever since 1944 and deserves to be listed among those “fathers of Europe” to whose great number he sarcastically referred.³ It is by means of Europe that France can still claim a certain grandeur. Only Europe could aspire to the highest rank—a Europe in which, of course, French independence would be assured and in which France would feel at home.


2. *Attitudes*. The political implications of these assumptions are expressed in the General’s most characteristic attitudes. The General’s attitude toward the Soviet Union, which has been misunderstood in the United States and elsewhere, can be stated very simply: If Europe is to regain great-power status, she must first be secure. At the present time, the chief threat to her liberty comes from the Soviet Union. When the General founded the *Rassemblement de Peuple Français* (RPF) in 1947, it was because he saw in the presence of the Soviet Union, “only two legs of the *Tour de France* away,” a menace to France’s very existence, and because he thought that the French political regime was incapable of insuring the nation’s survival in the event of a new catastrophe. Nothing the General has said or done since his return to power provides any basis for thinking he has changed his mind. After all, General de Gaulle is the only Western statesman who has exploded an atom bomb under Mr. Khrushchev’s nose during a state visit of the Soviet leader to his country.

The General’s attitude to the United States is equally easily explained. On the one hand, since the chief menace is from the Soviets, and since at present the Americans alone are capable of checking it, the Atlantic Alliance remains the *sine qua non* of French security. The General has never ceased to proclaim this belief.⁴ Of course, it may not always be so—nothing in international relations is established once and for all—but at least for the duration of the Cold War, the American alliance is indispensable to France. On the other hand, because of changes in the power relations within the Alliance over the last fif-

³ In his press conference of July 29, 1963 (see Ambassade de France, *Speeches and Press Conferences*, No. 192, p. 10).


⁴ Especially in his farewell to General Norstad; also in his press conference of July 29, 1963.

teen years, de Gaulle wants to reform it so as to turn a league dominated by the one major state into a partnership in which the relations among the more important powers would become far less unequal—an ambition both held and, for obvious reasons, suppressed by many of the troubled leaders of the Fourth Republic.⁵ Also, as the French foreign minister has said⁶—in phrasing very displeasing to Americans—the United States has so many bases and forces in Europe only because it is allied to Europeans and not because it is an integral part of the continent geographically. The interests of a vast nation more than 4,000 miles from the Iron Curtain and those of a half-continent which lives right beside it are not always identical. The General fears that European interests might sometimes be sacrificed by the most powerful member of the Alliance, as he thinks they have been in the course of the “long march” toward decolonization. Of course, these suspicions seem both excessive and insulting to many in the United States. Americans should understand, however, that, even if they interpret the interests of Europeans better than Europeans themselves (as has often been the case), it serves no useful purpose to assume the posture of “teacher” to Europe; on the contrary, it only entrenches the Europeans more firmly in their errors.


Moreover, there are two distinct sides to the General’s suspicions. Many of them stem from realities, for the political reasons mentioned above and for strategic reasons to be discussed subsequently. But there is also a sometimes farcical aspect due to misunderstanding. The French conduct of foreign affairs is diplomacy in the traditional style; it is heir to the policy of cabinets, calculations, and concealment, to the politics of the balance of power and of practical and limited alliances which the entire American tradition—that of Washington, Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt—regards with distrust as a permanent manifestation of cynicism, immorality, and Machiavellianism.  is hard for the French to understand that American diplomacy is in a totally different style. Americans tend to see behind the words and acts of French diplomats designs much more sinister than those actually held by the rulers of the Fifth Republic. On their side, the French tend to see in American proposals, or improvisations, elaborate and profound calculations when very often there is no mischievous plot but only a complex and disarming mixture of clumsiness, complacency, spontaneous self-righteousness, and equally naive generosity. Americans tend to see in their own policy nothing but good will and concern for the common

⁵ Press conference of July 29, 1963, pp. 7–8. Also, Edgar S. Furniss, *France, Troubled Ally* (New York: Harper, 1960), *passim*.

⁶ In an interview to the Columbia Broadcasting System, in Ambassade de France, *Speeches and Press Conferences*, No. 176, March 31, 1962.

good—hence, their bitterness. When they are accused of playing power politics and of being just as much preoccupied with the promotion of their national interest as everybody else, they react with the anger of hurt pride, for even though they may indeed *act* that way, they only rarely *think* in those tough terms—or at least they are not aware of it. 

A third essential attitude of the General is his distrust of supranational integration, either for the reunification of Europe or for the reinforcement of the indispensable Atlantic Alliance. He is suspicious of any kind of transfer of the sovereignty of member states to supranational organs, whether composed of statesmen who act by majority vote or of high civil servants whose duty is to represent the common interest rather than a national position. This suspicion has many sources. On the one hand, the General and Mr. Monnet or the latter's supporters disagree about how the unification of Europe is *likely* to proceed. The advocates of supranational institutions stress the snowballing virtues of their method, which they consider to be gradually applicable to all of Europe's problems; de Gaulle believes that this method may be of some value in areas of limited political importance, but that it loses its effectiveness as one gets higher along the ladder of political relevance and closer to the rungs of military and diplomatic power.

On the other hand, de Gaulle and his opponents disagree about how European unity *ought* to proceed. His critics are more concerned with the procedure of unification—i.e., supranationality—than with the substance of policies to be adopted. De Gaulle is primarily concerned with the kinds of policies a united Europe would pursue: he has made it clear that he does not want a Europe whose policies he would consider to be un-European, i.e., dependent on outside powers. Moreover, he suspects that supranational institutions would encourage rather than prevent such dependence. This suspicion is hardly justified by the record of the European Communities so far. However, it is derived from the General's double concern for French national independence and for Europe's independence. Because of his drive for the independence of Europe, he distrusts bodies in which the nations of Europe's lesser powers—those with limited interests, few ambitions, and a low horizon—may be over-represented. As he explained with some harshness but not without profundity in his press conference of May 15, 1962, he disapproves of civil servants who, because they lack political sense and democratic responsibility or because their experience is chiefly in the economic field, run the risk of deriving their inspiration from outside of Europe in matters of foreign and military policy—even when their objective, like his own, is to build a unified and prosperous Europe. Their pragmatic endorsement 

of functionalism clashes with his own highly classical conception of power.⁷ They emphasize that a common defense and a common foreign policy may evolve *later*; he believes that no entity can play an effective role in the world competition *as long as* it does not possess the essence of power—a strategy and a diplomacy. This dialogue between the disciples of Saint-Simon, who loathed and underestimated the apparatus of state power, and the disciple of Richelieu, to whom production and prosperity are instruments of power, is not a smooth one.

II. POLICIES

I. *Defense*. All these attitudes have been translated into acts, most strikingly, in relation to defense. Like the British and his own predecessors who launched France's atomic program, de Gaulle sees in nuclear force at least a steppingstone toward independence for France and Europe. Renouncing an independent nuclear force would mean resignation to permanent dependence on outsiders—i.e., submission to small-power status for France, to decline for Europe. Building such a force, on the other hand, amounts to giving France a lever against America's nuclear monopoly and predominance in strategy-making—i.e., America's hegemony within the Alliance.

In addition to this broad political consideration, there is a basic question of strategy. Europeans and Americans share the objective of preventing war from breaking out in Europe, i.e., a strategy of deterrence. The question arises as to whether it is still possible to wage a strategy of deterrence at a time when both the United States and the Soviet Union are capable of so devastating a retaliatory attack that one can really speak of joint suicide. The United States thinks that it is less and less possible to deter the Russians from an attack on Europe (especially an attack with conventional weapons) by brandishing the threat of a thermonuclear response against the Soviet Union since such a thermonuclear reprisal would be followed by the annihilation of the United States.

The United States has tried to convince its European Allies of what can be called the failure of thermonuclear deterrence. Except in the most extreme cases, which are therefore the least probable, such as a Russian offensive with both conventional and atomic weapons, the United States would like to replace this now implausible strategy with a much more classic strategy of defense, in the

⁷ On some of these points, see Michel Debré, *Au service de la Nation* (Paris: Stock, 1963), part 4, chapter 2. De Gaulle's critique of supranationality is best found in his press conference of May 15, 1962 (Ambassade de France, *Speeches and Press Conferences*, No. 175). I have discussed it in "Discord in Community: The North Atlantic Area as a Partial International System," *International Organization*, Summer 1963 (Vol. 17, No. 3), pp. 521–549. On de Gaulle's concepts of international relations, see the article mentioned in footnote 1, p. 2, above. De Gaulle's conception is strikingly similar to that of Raymond Aron, defined in *Paix et Guerre entre les nations* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1962).

hope that, faced by a strengthened Atlantic army, the Russians would abstain from any military initiative. Europeans, however, fear that such a traditional strategy would have no greater deterrence value than in the past. In the history of Europe, an arms race in classical weapons has rarely prevented the outbreak of war. Moreover, as General Gallois has said repeatedly,⁸ in this kind of competition the Soviet bloc might win, not so much because of a superiority in numbers (western Europe and the United States have a considerable combined population) but because it has the advantage of domestic coercion. So, should a defensive strategy fail to deter, one would be back at fighting a geographically limited war, whose "limitation" may appeal to Americans but which evokes the unpleasant and not so limited memories of 1914 and 1939 to Europeans. Such a "controlled" war, fought in a world in which atomic weapons exist, does not even offer the guarantee of remaining contained in regard to weapons, given the risk of escalation. In other words, the new strategy has the defect of seeming to reduce the risks for the eventual aggressor without necessarily reducing them for those on the defensive—at least in Europe.

The present American effort (pursued with varying degrees of conviction and skill) is to allay the Allies' suspicions and to give them the feeling that they possess some influence over American strategy: hence, the notion of a multilateral nuclear force. But the development of such a force runs the risk of remaining on paper because of three basic obstacles: strategic doctrine, political control, and military command. In the first place, what will be the common Allied strategy—and consequently the strategy of these forces? If the joint nuclear force may not use its ultimate weapons except in extreme circumstances, if the common strategy is primarily a defensive and conventional one which pushes in the background the threat to use the weapons which are the *raison d'être* of the force, there would be no benefit whatever for the Europeans—nor any strategic reason to create such a force. Up to the present, it has not been possible for the Allies to agree on a strategy that would satisfy them all. Nor, secondly, have they been able to work out a formula for the political direction of the joint force which would allow a menaced European state to brandish the atomic threat or which would deprive the United States of the veto power, that is, of the right to block action in precisely those circumstances in which Europeans would consider a threat to use the nuclear force (or even the actual use of the force itself) to be indispensable.

Thirdly, there is the question of command of such a joint enterprise. If the military leader were an American, the "collective force" would amount, for Europeans, to placing their contingents under the command of a foreigner, as

⁸ See in particular his *Balance of Terror* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

General de Gaulle has said several times. We would come right back to the major difficulty of the present situation: the reason Europeans want *either* their own nuclear force *or* a joint one is that even if a strategy satisfactory to all were formulated, they fear that the implementation of this strategy by a purely American command might in a serious crisis be carried out in the service of American interests alone. Conversely, it is hard to imagine Americans placing important forces under the command of a foreigner. Consequently, the very diversity of interests of those who are on the "classic" firing-line and of those who are afraid of becoming victims of atomic fire makes the establishment of a real combined force extremely difficult.

For this reason General de Gaulle has refused to participate in the discussions of a multilateral force, despite recent American hints about the possibility of turning it somehow into a European nuclear force once European political unity has progressed sufficiently.⁹ Such a refusal could be anticipated: the General has always preferred to reach his objectives all by himself rather than having to depend on the good will of others—at least, whenever he thought that France could do it herself. To accept America's offer at a time when European unity remains a distant objective and when United States hints about future arrangements on nuclear sharing remain studiously vague would mean—since the United States would not relinquish its decision-making power right away—having to pay a heavy price tomorrow for the possible relinquishment of control. For eventually France might be forced to choose between either a European organization and European policies defined by or subject to the approval of the United States, as the ransom for some (presently undefined) European nuclear autonomy, or no united Europe at all nor any nuclear forces at the disposal of Europe and of France, should the price prove too high.

Consequently, de Gaulle is trying to create a French striking force. The American point of view is well known: Such a force would be both ineffective (because it would be too small and too obsolete to deter the Russians from anything whatever) and dangerous, to the extent that it would unbalance an already fragile international system, encourage the proliferation of nuclear weapons, make impossible a coherent Western military policy, and upset a strategy which would try to delay and to limit the use of the ultimate weapons. The French striking force would certainly not be capable of devastating the entire Soviet Union, nor of preventing the Soviets—injured but not destroyed—

⁹ See, for instance, Secretary of State Rusk's speech in Frankfurt on October 27, 1963 (*New York Times*, October 28, 1963) and Robert R. Bowie, "Tensions within the Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1963 (Vol. 42, No. 1), p. 68.

from wholly devastating France. The General has recognized this fact.¹⁰ But a French striking force would nonetheless have a triple function.

The first function is in terms of what Americans call the "triggering value" of a small striking force: It could serve to push into action the American thermonuclear arsenal. In case of extreme provocation of western Europe by the Soviet Union, the mere recourse by France to the *threat* to use atomic force (this threat which the Americans think themselves less and less capable of issuing except in the most serious circumstances) and the subsequent threat to annihilate France which the Russians would not fail to counter would *force* the United States to demonstrate its solidarity with France, that is, to spread over France the umbrella of its nuclear protection, even if it had deliberately wished to avoid such a commitment. For the strategic disagreement between France and the United States, France's "disobedience toward the United States," would not be reprehensible enough to justify the abandonment of France to Russian bombs, which would be a disaster for the United States. What is in question here, clearly, is a *preventive* triggering, destined to *deter* Russians from attack or provocation rather than to serve *after* an attack.

In the second place, an independent striking force is useful also because its very existence and the threat it creates for the enemy could obstruct certain strategic conceptions which the Americans would like to impose on the Alliance. Some of the Allies suspect these ideas, which the United States regards as being in the general interest, of having only limited value. These conceptions cannot be implemented if any of the Allies possesses the means to undermine such a strategy. According to the analysis of Malcolm Hoag,¹¹ American strategy, in the case of limited Russian action, would be to use at first conventional weapons alone and to resort to atomic weapons later, only in case of Soviet persistence and only in "controlled" ways—against military objectives but not against cities. (This strategy, incidentally, presupposes a vast American superiority in thermonuclear weapons; if such is the case, however, how does one explain the American hesitation to brandish the atomic threat to deter the Soviet Union in Europe if not by the predominant desire to spare American territory?)

This so-called strategy can succeed only if 1) the Soviet Union plays the same game (which requires a frightening number of hypotheses and a considerable dose of optimism),¹² and 2) if the Allies of the United States are entirely under

¹⁰ See his press conference of January 14, 1963 (Ambassade de France, *Speeches and Press Conferences*, No. 185, pp. 10–11).

¹¹ Malcolm W. Hoag, "Nuclear Policy and French Intransigence," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1963 (Vol. 41, No. 2), pp. 286–298.

¹² See Henry A. Kissinger, "NATO's Nuclear Dilemma," *The Reporter*, March 1963 (Vol. 28, No. 7), pp. 22–37.

American control. If one of the Allies has an autonomous striking force which is necessarily directed, given its small size, *not* against military objectives but against Soviet cities and which is destined to be brandished immediately in cases of extreme provocation, a recourse to the strategy of options is made much more difficult. Insofar as the adoption of such a strategy might encourage the Soviets to attempt certain moves (by making them believe that the risks would be small and controllable), one understands that the United States might prefer an increased risk of limited crises to the risk of an unlikely but final holocaust. One can also, however, understand why such a strategy is disquieting to Europeans, or even why they search means to sabotage it.

Thirdly, in case the United States should nevertheless weaken its nuclear protection of Europe, reserve it for extreme cases, and refuse absolutely to use the threat of atomic destruction to prevent limited Soviet moves against Europe, a French striking force would still have the virtue of making the Russians pause. It would at least be capable of inflicting losses on the Soviet Union that the subjection of France or even western Europe alone would not outweigh. The Soviet Union, according to the reasoning of General Gallois, adopted by General de Gaulle, might *possibly* prefer to suffer enormous losses if the mastery of the world were at stake, that is, in a direct conflict with the United States; but if the stakes were lower, much less imposing forces would *certainly* suffice to make them hesitate.¹³

Whether France *alone* is capable of building a striking force that could fulfill these functions remains highly controversial; a European dimension might be added some day, as we shall see below. Meanwhile, a French force, even limited, is perhaps the shortest and surest way to influence American strategy (whereas the constitution of a multilateral force seems to be both difficult and ineffective from this standpoint). It is also the best means to provide some power of one's own in case the ally refuses to be influenced (whereas the formula accepted by the British at Nassau, of a national striking force integrated into a multinational force but capable of being withdrawn when the supreme national interests are at stake, seems politically lame and militarily awkward). Thus, even if a change in Soviet political strategy should allay European fears about Soviet military intentions and moves, the broad political objectives which the force is to serve would remain valid; as a kind of investment in a lessening of dependence, it may even gain in urgency.

2. *Foreign policy.* From defense there is only a short step to diplomacy. Since

¹³ Nothing, on the other hand, indicates that de Gaulle has adopted Gallois' extreme argument about the obsolescence of alliances in the nuclear age—an argument effectively criticized by Raymond Aron in his book, *Le Grand Débat* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1963).

the liquidation of the Algerian war, Europe has provided France's best chance for initiative and for action. Consequently, Europe has become the essential locus and objective of the General's policy. What he wants in the half of Europe that remains on this side of the Iron Curtain is to *Europeanize the Europeans*—that is, to bring back to them both the sense of a common destiny and the expectation of a great destiny. Such a Europe could be called “inward-looking” only if one means that it would indeed be more concerned—in defense, in trade and aid, in foreign affairs—with its own interests than with those of others—not a very meaningful proposition! If this is “inward-looking,” one wonders how to categorize the attitudes of those Europeans who have stopped caring about an independent role in world affairs, who are concerned only with prosperity, and who are bored by the Gaullist appeal for world responsibilities.

From the viewpoint of de Gaulle's conception, three facts become significant. First, the General's objections to supranationality will persist at least as long as his partners appear to him unwilling to behave as “Europe Firsters.” Secondly, obviously, the General's conception of Europe determines his policy toward Germany since there can be no European entity if West Germany is not solidly tied to western Europe. The only way to keep Germany from seeking reunification by direct deal with the Soviet Union and also to divert Germany, once and for all, from aggressive adventures is, for French diplomacy specifically, to show generous understanding to West Germany when her fundamental interests are at stake. France can thus prove that West Germany does not need to turn for the defense of those interests either to the East or the United States alone, because France is there sustaining her and, in sustaining her, containing her. On this point the General has done nothing more than resume the policy of his predecessors. The third interesting fact is what has been called the General's courting of Franco. This is to be explained not by any sympathy on the part of the man of June 18, 1940, for the former ally of the dictators, but by a double concern: to pull together what remains of western Europe in order to strengthen it, and also to open to a Spain too long isolated from Europe—and soon facing a serious problem of succession—European perspectives which might make the transition easier.

One might ask why, if the General wishes to pull together western Europe, he has also brutally closed the door to England. The decision of January 1963 seems explicable in the following way. First, during the fifteen months the British were negotiating in Brussels on economic questions, the negotiations did not overtly touch on political problems. The separation of the two types of questions was extremely artificial. Even on the purely economic level, the length and difficulty of the discussions showed that Great Britain wished, while

entering the Common Market, to remain a great international and Atlantic power, a leader of the Commonwealth, and champion of developed and under-developed countries distributed in five continents. But since the end of the Algerian war, the Common Market has consisted of nations which, having lost their colonies if they ever had any, have made Europe the essential focus of their policy. The Common Market entails an association with African states, to be sure, but through special agreements of a much more limited kind than England wished to obtain in order to preserve the heritage of a nation which was historically and by priority a world power before being a European power. From this point of view, Britain's choice, or rather Britain's refusal to choose, could not help but complicate the negotiations, since Great Britain was dealing with a man who wanted *first of all* to rally Europe *as Europe* and above all not to dilute it. England played the role of a fat man who tries to go through a door which is hardly ajar and behind which thinner men block the passage. In short, the General told John Bull to come back when he had lost enough weight to enter without effort.

Furthermore, underlying the negotiations in Brussels, which constituted the visible part of the iceberg, lay the fundamental problems of the orientation of Great Britain's military and foreign policy. As for foreign policy, two sets of events probably shaped the General's final decision. In Brussels, the British negotiators often tried to isolate France from the other five. Even though the issues were economic, this was a bad omen for the future of the European political entity—especially to a man like de Gaulle who sees in the cooperation of the major states rather than in the courting of the lesser ones the condition of international action.¹⁴ Also, de Gaulle was deeply affected by the failure of his plan for a European political union, which had been torpedoed by the Benelux countries after months of discussions.¹⁵ Those countries, probably with the hope of forcing de Gaulle's hand, had insisted either on a supranational Europe of the Six or on an obviously not supranational political union including Britain. De Gaulle had wanted an agreement on political union *first*, so as to present Britain with the *fait accompli* of a commitment by the Six to work toward a joint foreign and military policy. The refusal of some of his associates to go along with him, at a time when United States pressure for Britain's entry was strong, meant that they did not want to make such a commitment or at

¹⁴ See, for instance, de Gaulle's suggestions on the Congo in opposition to United States reliance on the UN (press conference of September 5, 1960, in Ambassade de France, *Speeches and Press Conferences*, No. 152, p. 4); and the contrast he described between the original UN (as he interprets it) and what it has become, in his press conference of April 11, 1961 (text in André Passeron, *De Gaulle parle* [Paris: Plon, 1962]), pp. 405–407.

¹⁵ On this fiasco, see the interesting remarks by Edgar Faure in his introduction to *L'Année Politique* 1962 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), pp. xiii–xiv.

least that they did not accept the Gaullist conception of Europe's role. They must have felt that Britain's entry would permit policies different from de Gaulle's and closer to United States inclinations. While such policies might perhaps prevail in a federal scheme, they would have had no chance of being adopted in an intergovernmental union limited to the Six. If this was the case, then de Gaulle had to make it clear to his adversary-partners among the other five that their design was out of the question; it would be up to them to choose between having no political Europe at all or accepting de Gaulle's.

As for the orientation of Britain's defense policy, in three days in Nassau the Americans extracted answers from the British it had taken the French fifteen months not to get. This much discussed Nassau Agreement seems to me to be for many reasons a diplomatic catastrophe on a grand scale.¹⁶ First, neither the Americans nor the British seemed to have realized that the Agreement, far from making Britain's entry into the Common Market easier by appearing to offer to France the same nuclear status as to England,¹⁷ was likely to close the Common Market to Britain. For it amounted to a British choice of military integration with the United States rather than with Europe (although shortly before the Americans had let it be understood that they would have no objection to a European nuclear force, which could only have had a Franco-British base);¹⁸ and de Gaulle is not interested in a Europe militarily integrated under United States control.

Secondly, it was a catastrophe because, even if the military formula adopted at Nassau—that is, integration of secondary striking forces into the American war machine—were politically and strategically sound, the way in which it was prepared and revealed could not help looking like a challenge to General de Gaulle, a sensitive chief of state if ever there was one. A bowl of soup was offered to the General with the remark, "Take some. The British have agreed to eat it; it is good for you." Even if it had been, it should not have been offered in that way. General de Gaulle's weakness is the temptation of arrogance, and his sensitivity is on the point of national and European independence. By putting the bowl under his nose, one gave him the yen and the chance to throw it to the ground. This is exactly what he did.

¹⁶ Whether de Gaulle would have vetoed Britain's entry even without Nassau because of the economic and foreign policy issues discussed above is hard to prove. Maybe the decision would have been the same. But the timing and the manner were certainly determined by Nassau. Without Nassau he might have let the talks drag on and expire over the highly controversial economic issues. Nassau insured that he would *faire un éclat*—i.e., act in the most spectacular fashion and take the responsibility as well as the initiative of the crash.

¹⁷ I insist upon the word *appearing*, since Britain was assured to receive United States aid in the construction of the warheads to be fitted on, and of the submarines to be equipped with, the promised Polaris missiles, whereas no such offer, it seems, was made to France.

¹⁸ See McGeorge Bundy's speech in Copenhagen on September 27, 1962, in Department of State *Bulletin*, October 22, 1962 (Vol. 47, No. 1217), p. 605.

Thirdly, the Nassau Agreement caused the Americans—anxious both to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and to allay European anxiety—to advocate multilateral or multinational forces, which seem likely to come to nothing and to complicate considerably the problem of inter-Allied cooperation. Fourthly, the Nassau formula seemed to show that on a point of capital importance for England—the survival of a national striking force—the United States by canceling the Skybolt had blandly and bluntly sacrificed both the interest and the self-esteem of a major ally. This was a lesson that could not but incite the General to say no to the offer and confirm him in his whole policy. Finally, the Nassau formula proved that England, with her back to the wall, had chosen the United States despite her treatment at its hands. After this, British entry into Europe—in the light of de Gaulle's objective of returning to Europe a certain pride, a sort of moral backbone and a concern for its autonomy—must have seemed to the General an intolerably self-defeating move.

Could the General's reaction have been less harsh? Possibly. It would have been to France's advantage for it to be so, if only to avoid isolation in Brussels and to underline more clearly Britain's share of responsibility. The arguments of General de Gaulle's press conference of January 14 were certainly not the best, and the General's harshness then and still more thereafter has done a disservice to his policy. This harshness is explicable partly in terms of the General's character and partly by his determination that everyone should understand that French intransigence would not let itself be mollified. But in the last analysis he was pressed for time. It was necessary after Nassau to let the United States know immediately that France would not go along, rather than encourage Mr. Kennedy in certain illusions about the docility of his Allies, and, in particular, in the illusion that French grievances about the organization of the Alliance, which de Gaulle had expressed for so long, could be ignored or dismissed with impunity. It was necessary to act while Chancellor Adenauer was still in power and master of German policy. It was also necessary to resolve a problem too long suspended by a final answer to the British, who were pressing the General to say yes or no on the question of their entry into the Common Market.

In foreign policy one rarely has a choice between good and evil. The choice is generally between two unequal evils. Slamming the door on the British without consulting France's five partners—a procedure that could only retard the construction of that Europe the General is seeking—seemed to him less damaging to his policy than the disaster represented by the entry of England, "the Trojan horse" of the United States, into the Common Market and by the formation of a loose Atlantic Community directed by and dependent on the United States. Perhaps the General dealt a blow to his *own* Europe in acting as he did,

but at least he thwarted an American plan that he considered contrary to Europe's deepest interests.¹⁹

III. VISION AND ACTION

Americans and British often have a distorted view of General de Gaulle's policy because they have not grasped either his expectations or his operating techniques.

1. *Expectations.* In the matter of his expectations, it is necessary to see how they both shape and qualify his basic attitudes (described earlier) and how they guide his policies. Here we must distinguish carefully between what he reckons with for the present and what he foresees for the future. Insofar as he thinks the future will be very different from the present (thanks both to unpredictable events and to what will have been accomplished today so that tomorrow may be better), he deems it essential to do nothing in the present which would, as he puts it, offend ("*insulter*") the future.

Thus, as regards the Soviet Union, although convinced that at present and for a considerable time ahead it is enemy number one, the General thinks that little by little it will come to realize (to the extent that the firmness of Western strategy convinces Soviet leaders of it) both the impracticability of its universal ambitions and its true position as a power that is white, economically developed, and primarily European. Thus, the success of Atlantic "containment" and the rupture in the communist camp, partly as a result of containment, would lead the Soviets to return to modesty or moderation.

Since this is the view that has motivated the entire American policy of "situations of strength" since 1947, there is no Franco-American conflict about the final objective. There are, however, divergences on two important issues. On the one hand, there is a divergence on the best way to promote and take advantage of the eventual Soviet "thaw." Here there are two separate points of contention. First, the leaders of the two nations appear to have different timetables. The United States is ready now to engage in discussions with the Soviet Union that may affect the fate of Europe, even if the official subject matter of the talks is arms control. De Gaulle opposes such probes, partly because of his fundamental distaste for any move that might prolong the domination of the big powers over divided Europe, partly because he fears that the purpose of Soviet appeals for such talks is not to introduce "a sincere *détente*" but to promote Soviet interests,

¹⁹ There is a parallel with his domestic action in the months that preceded his veto of Britain's entry. The rather questionable procedure he imposed for revising the Constitution of 1958 could not but emphasize the fragility of the very institutions he wanted to consolidate; but any other procedure was likely to be either ineffective or even to lead to a "revenge" of the "parties of yesterday."

to weaken western Europe, and to create tensions between the United States and its Allies. He feels that the time for deals is later, when the Soviets' change of heart will be a reality not a strategy and when Europe will be sufficiently strong to be among the bargainers—two events obviously interconnected according to de Gaulle, who has frequently alluded to proposals France would make concerning “the peace, equilibrium, and destiny of Europe” at the appropriate time.²⁰

Secondly, the United States thinks that the “thaw” will be hastened and broadened if the Soviet Union has a united Atlantic Community—more or less monolithic—to deal with. The General, on the contrary, believes that in the long run the Soviets will prefer to make concessions to a Europe which is not simply an appendage of Russia's principal rival—or that only such a Europe has a chance of emerging undamaged from East-West deals. (The recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line by de Gaulle, despite his desire to tie to the West a Germany unhappy in its mutilation, is to be explained as a sort of anticipation, and shows his concern not to do anything to compromise the future.) The General may be right.²¹ If not a real unification of Europe—probably closer to the hearts of many Europeans than to the hearts of Americans—at least a certain degree of Soviet military and political disengagement in eastern Europe is much easier to conceive if it is accompanied by a degree of American disengagement. The latter, in turn, is conceivable and safe only if Europe has become strong enough to assure its own defense, at least to a considerable extent, and if the threat from the East has diminished. It is true that as long as western Europe is politically and militarily weak the Soviets will want to negotiate directly with the United States.²² But this is precisely the kind of superpower deal that de Gaulle is hostile to, and it may well be that the emergence of a western Europe that would be a real power could challenge Russia's position in Europe sufficiently to produce the kind of thaw that de Gaulle is interested in—one which shakes up the Soviet empire, not one which consolidates it. And one can expect the proposals at which de Gaulle hints to appeal to all the forces in eastern Europe that might be tempted by the desire to loosen the ties that bind them to their outside protectors and by the prospect of a strong, “confederated” Europe in which, however, the independence and security of each member (for instance, Poland) would be assured.

Thus, it is clear, on the other hand, that there is also a divergence between

²⁰ See André Passeron, *op. cit.*, pp. 414 ff., 420 ff., and 427–428, as well as the press conference of July 29, 1963.

²¹ De Gaulle's belief is similar to George Kennan's opinion in 1949; see Max Beloff, *The United States and the Unity of Europe* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1963), pp. 52–53.

²² This point is made by Raymond Aron in an article to be published in *Daedalus*, Winter 1964.

the General and the United States on the vision of the world after the thaw—a divergence which partly explains their disagreement about the best way to bring about the thaw. Here again there are two points at issue. The first concerns Europe's role in such a world. The Americans, who are curiously fatalistic in their opposition to de Gaulle, find it hard to believe that the "sense of history" could be other than toward a vast Atlantic Community which would certainly include a unified and restored Europe, but a Europe tied forever to the New World. The General has much more ambition and pride for Europe's position than does the United States. Strongly anti-Soviet as long as he fears Soviet thrusts or United States-Soviet deals, his long-term vision is that of Europe as a force standing apart from and above the United States-Soviet power rivalry—which the very emergence of such a force would tend to alleviate or supersede. Within the "imposing confederation" of Europe, he seems to believe that after this rivalry has played itself out, a sobered Russia, shorn of its empire, may again perform along with France its previous role as a balancer of Germany (likely to be reunited at last).

The other point of divergence concerns the domestic political complexion of the future Europe. Convinced that ideologies are merely transitory screens for power ambitions, he would probably have no inhibition against the presence of communist regimes in this Europe, as long as they were independent from Moscow; de Gaulle's sublime indifference to regimes is the counterpart of his relentless concern for power connections in world affairs.²³

With regard to the United States, there is also a distinction between the General's view of the present and his view of the future. I do not believe any more than does Raymond Aron that the General really fears that Americans will abandon Europe at present.²⁴ The striking force is sufficiently explained by his wish for French and European independence,²⁵ as well as by the fear that strategic differences between France, or Europe, and the United States (which would only come into play in certain circumstances) might encourage the Soviets to provoke precisely these circumstances. The General cannot doubt America's will to use atomic deterrence to prevent a large-scale Russian attack on Europe, but what about the case of the crisis which is apparently minor, or minor in its initial stages? The General may also doubt, in the longer run, the will and capacity of Americans to remain forever the protectors of Europe. Insofar as for some years to come there may be no prospect of a solid and general agreement between East and West, insofar as the Cold War remains a "reality" for

²³ De Gaulle's recent statement on Vietnam can be interpreted in this light.

²⁴ See Aron's interview by *U.S. News and World Report*, April 22, 1963, pp. 68 ff.

²⁵ "*Car l'épée est l'axe du monde et la grandeur ne se divise pas.*" (*Vers l'armée de métier* [Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1934]), p. 230.

a long time, he realizes perfectly that his own policy, even if it irritates the United States, will not provoke an "agonizing reappraisal" on the part of the Americans. He is not crazy enough to desire a withdrawal now (quite the contrary, his military and diplomatic policy seeks to plug the gaps that may have been opened by America's very slight strategic disengagement and those that partial United States-Soviet deals might open in Europe in the future). Nor is he sufficiently resigned to want an American presence forever. What is needed is that a substitute should exist for the distant day of American departure and also that America's presence should continue while the substitute is being forged. And this substitute, if it is to be effective, will in all likelihood have to be European rather than purely French.

For, as regards Europe, although de Gaulle knows quite well that it remains militarily dependent on the United States, he believes it capable of becoming again a relatively autonomous force. Here also one must distinguish between the short and the long run. In the former the demands of the present, as well as the necessity to prepare the kind of future de Gaulle believes to be possible if only one works for it, require the creation of a *French* striking force. This does not at all mean that in the long run there would not come into being a *European* force of which the French one would have been the embryo. But one can only build on that which already exists; at the present time a "European" force means France's. The British chose to turn toward the United States rather than toward Europe in relation to nuclear arms. The Germans have no legal right to develop nuclear weapons. Any effort on their part to obtain an independent force would provoke a world crisis (as was not the case with the French and British efforts); for, in view of the position, grievances, and history of Germany, the Russians would undoubtedly consider such an attempt to be a provocation. On this point, de Gaulle and his American critics, who have initiated the multilateral nuclear force, fully agree. Finally, neither Benelux nor Italy has the intention or the means to become nuclear powers. Also (as with the European Defense Community) any European army presupposes a joint military and foreign policy and common political organs. They remain to be worked out. When they actually exist, then and only then will a European force become a possibility. Otherwise the celebrated problem of the many fingers on the single trigger would be as insoluble here as it seems to be in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Nothing justifies the belief that the General's policy is opposed to the future formation of a joint European force, but everything leads us to think that the Europe he envisages for the future, this Europe that will speak with its own voice, would have as its "sword" the French striking force rather than the former multilateral force, whose Euro-

peanization could be achieved only on terms set by the United States. In this sense, and insofar as the nuclear weapon is the supreme weapon, it is not wrong to see in the General's vision of Europe a Europe under French leadership—and this poses many problems.

2. *Methods.* It is easier to analyze these problems if one has grasped the General's methods, which can be summed up in three formulae. First, it has been said of de Gaulle that he is not a man who "kills just one bird with a stone." He calculates his moves in such a way that they can serve a variety of goals and so that, if he should be frustrated by events in one direction, he can still reach at least a subsidiary objective or retreat without any loss of face. This was visible enough in his Algerian tactics. It is not any less true of his foreign policy. His intransigence toward deals with the Soviet Union at present serves two goals: to block direct Soviet-American agreements about Europe, and, should they be reached anyways, to be the catalyst of European resentments and thus of European self-consciousness. Intransigence is both a virtue in itself—for it protects Europe—and a means toward Europe's return to the stage. Similarly, the French striking force can be seen as both the leavening whose presence would hasten the rising of the slow-baking European cake, and, should the dough refuse to rise, the vitamin that de Gaulle would bequeath to France to provide for her health and strength amidst a hostile world and a sickly Europe.

Secondly, there is the General's ambition of providing a last resort. In his European policy the General is using the methods which succeeded so well in France during the years of his exile in England, of the RPF, and of his retirement at Colombey. He wants to offer himself as the supreme alternative for the Europeans, as the man to whom they could turn should American protection lapse or should American protection jeopardize Europe's interests. Similarly, he had presented himself as the salutary recourse to Frenchmen, first against the Germans and their collaborators, and later when the Fourth Republic was crumbling. It is worth noting that in these cases, in order to succeed, he had to brush aside his rivals, to make unbridgeable the chasm that separated him from Vichy, and to contribute to the weakening of the Fourth Republic. It is a policy of poking up the flames in order to point up the helplessness of the firemen. So today, within the limits imposed by the need to preserve the security of the Alliance, he must put his finger on its weaknesses and on American mistakes rather than try to minimize them—for only thus can he play the role of the last alternative.²⁶

No diplomacy is less diplomatic: it loathes what de Gaulle contemptuously calls "pleading one's case"; it is the opposite of Britain's practice of trying to

²⁶ See, again, de Gaulle's statement on Vietnam.

influence the United States by being always at its side; it clashes with Germany's attempts at affecting the United States through faithful, if vigilant, docility. De Gaulle's way of affecting and influencing is through unilateral decisions—through what he does and what he refuses. He avoids negotiations whenever possible: for they are usually too costly when one is weak, and often unnecessary when one is strong.²⁷ Consequently, apparent isolation, although he may not deliberately court it, certainly does not scare him: it is both a (preferably passing) necessity of his kind of game and a *risque du métier*.

To achieve his ends, he uses, in the third place, the method of the “elevator.” When one has little power and wants more, one attempts to rise to the desired level by using others as an elevator. One hopes to continue until the day when, having arrived at the top level of power, one can send the elevator down. Or, to change the metaphor, one draws a check on other people's accounts: it is a loan, but there is no intention to repay. This is a method of some ruthlessness and complete cynicism on behalf of power politics—*raison d'Etat*—according to the rules of traditional diplomacy.

Thus, the United States serves de Gaulle as an elevator. For instance, with regard to Berlin in 1961, he assumed the most intransigent position, which outraged the United States all the more in that France did not possess the military means to defend Berlin if intransigence had led to war. To this charge French diplomacy could reply in two ways: first, the purpose of its hard line was not to provoke war but to deter the Russians from it by intimidating them (through what American strategic jargon calls “the rationality of irrationality”). The object was not at all to provide the means to defend an indefensible position but to behave in such a way that the enemy could not mistake the determination of the Allies. Secondly, according to quite cynical reasoning, this intransigence had some diplomatic value to the very extent that the Americans, for their part, *did* possess the military means to deter the Soviets and *had not decided not* to use the atomic threat, i.e., to the extent that the Russians could not *count* on the disappearance of the American intention to “play the game of chicken.” Gaullist strategy was that of “irrevocable commitment”; American strategy was that of “the threat which leaves something to chance,” to use the categories of Thomas Schelling.²⁸ Given the means at America's disposal, United States strategy was sufficient to deter the Soviet Union, but not without disturbing the Germans a little. Thus, the General, to promote his *rapprochement* with Germany, could give himself the luxury of appearing to be suspicious of American intentions in proportion as he knew their intentions still existed.

²⁷ The General's distaste for bargains was much in evidence during the peace talks with the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN): to negotiated compromises he steadily preferred unilateral concessions accompanied by veiled or not-so-veiled promises and threats.

²⁸ See *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

As another instance of the use of the United States as an elevator, the General seeks to create the nucleus of a European force capable someday of replacing American protection, and this under the American umbrella, without which he would have no chance of launching a policy which is opposed to that of the United States and which aims to make the umbrella unnecessary eventually.

Likewise, in his European policy, the General has used Germany (or rather Chancellor Adenauer) as an elevator. Blocked in his plan for political cooperation by Benelux, rebuffed by Italy, he could at least prevent isolation and sketch out the kind of political organization of Europe he would like to obtain by signing with the Chancellor a treaty which profoundly embarrassed the Germans. For, on the one hand, the political context of January 1963 gave the treaty a meaning that the Chancellor had neither foreseen nor wished, but on the other, neither its inoffensive text nor its crucial explicit purpose (reconciliation of the ancient enemies) allowed the Germans to complain too much; and even less could they extricate themselves from ratifying it.

Finally, Europe itself serves the General as an elevator. He speaks in the name of a Europe which does not yet exist and exploits with virtuosity latent aspirations and reservations about the United States which are both widespread and repressed. Without these intangible desires and misgivings which he is trying to transform into the hard cash of political realities, he would not be taken very seriously. To be sure, Europe is the only elevator that he does not want to send down empty. But the top floor that he is thus trying to reach would be a Europe with a Gaullist décor. The greatness of Europe, just like the greatness of France, is an *idée-force* that inspires him, but the content the General gives to these broad and vague designs is that of Gaullist principles.

To become indignant at the technique of the elevator would be absurd, for it has always been used in foreign policy by great statesmen, for example, Bismarck. It was also used by the General in domestic policy—for instance, at the expense of the men who brought de Gaulle back to power after the thirteenth of May, 1958. If a statesman always limited the horizon of his action to his present capabilities, he would not go far. But it is, of course, essential that the elevator not crash, with the ambitious user himself trapped in the fall. Two conditions are required for success: others must allow themselves to be exploited; and the operator must have enough strength to push the button. To change the metaphor, if the checks drawn on the future were to bounce, de Gaulle would be caught in the same miserable situation as Mussolini.²⁹ Boldness must be tempered by caution. It is a dangerous performance always threatened by self-intoxication, but it is not a hopeless act as long as the vision of the future

²⁹ See de Gaulle on Mussolini in Vol. III of his memoirs: *Le Salut* (Paris: Plon, 1959), pp. 172–173.

is plausible, the new calculation of power correct, and the performer's skill impeccable. The General's skill cannot be denied, even though it is that of the strategist rather than of the diplomat, of the poker rather than of the chess player. But will it be sufficient?

IV. OBSTACLES

In order to judge the General's chances, we must examine the obstacles which might thwart the implementation of his policy.

1. *External obstacles.* First, there are obstacles outside France capable of upsetting the power calculations of the General. The main handicap is the absolute necessity for *all* western Europe of military dependence on the United States for a long period. Certainly, despite Adenauer's reservations about American policy, the Germans can do nothing which would appear to be a choice of French protection at the expense of American support; nor have they any reason, military or political, to do so. Recent German attempts at strengthening the military ties that bind the Federal Republic to the United States have made this crystal clear. On this point, however, the General's long-run situation is not as critical as some observers think. The United States is not in a good position to isolate the General or to exploit for its own benefit Europe's military dependence.

The United States is up against three difficulties. In the first place, on the level of over-all strategy, military and political, the only way in which the United States could isolate General de Gaulle would be to show Europeans that America shares all of Europe's worries and is even more committed to Europe's greatness than is the General. But this position implies a vast American *re-engagement* in Europe, exactly the reverse of the present psychological, political, and strategic tendency. Psychologically, Europe's "insubordination" in various economic matters and the very sharpness and spread of Gaullism have induced in some influential Americans a mood of battle fatigue and anger that plays straight into de Gaulle's hands. Politically, the United States has somewhat abruptly initiated with the Soviet Union talks which have created among Europeans the fears that I have already discussed. Militarily, the United States currently favors the concentration of strategic nuclear weapons in the two great land masses of Russia and North America and in the oceans. The Americans are evacuating some of their thermonuclear bases in and near Europe (against the wishes of General Norstad), and (despite German uneasiness) they are tightening their control over the tactical nuclear weapons placed in Europe. The Nassau communiqué officially reversed the use of the terms "sword" and "shield" so that atomic forces now appear to be no longer conceived as preven-

tive *deterrents* but only as the ultimate *defense*, with doubtful deterrent value. Recurrent rumors about possible troop withdrawals outlive repeated denials.

Far from offering proof of re-engagement, the plan for a multilateral force appears to be partly a formal concession (the strategic usefulness of which is recognized to be mediocre), partly a means to make the Europeans assume a greater share of the financial burdens of the common defense, and partly a clever way of controlling their future military and political course. Furthermore, since it tends to clash with renewed efforts toward arms control, it may even prove embarrassing. Most American strategists remain convinced of the advantages of the present situation (strategic centralization, United States monopoly of nuclear power within the Alliance). Congress remains hostile to any major revision of atomic legislation (whence the necessity to fall back on surface ships for the multilateral force instead of the submarines which the United States would have had to provide to its Allies). Under these conditions German fears, especially, are likely to persist—ships, vulnerable and far away, are not as convincing as solid fuel missiles behind the firing line.

In addition, to cut the ground from under General de Gaulle's feet Americans might have to share with their other Allies scientific information which not only would dispel their resentment of the inequality between nuclear and non-nuclear powers in the Alliance, but would also enable them to catch up with the advances Britain and France have made in nuclear development. However, since America tries to delay the spread of nuclear weapons, for it to scatter nuclear information while simultaneously limiting the build-up of atomic weapons and keeping a monopoly of their use for itself would be tantamount to squaring the circle. The Americans are thus hardly able to take the edge off the General's arguments. They cannot threaten Europe with a return to isolationism should Europe succumb to the Gaullist siren, both because this would go against their own interests and because it would only be playing into the hands of the Gaullists, who assume a permanent isolationist tendency in the United States and predict its victory in the long run. To be sure, the irritation provoked by the General's position is reviving some isolationism in the United States; its premature success, however, would be a catastrophe for France—which would be thus exposed in more ways than one—and for Europe. Since it would also be a catastrophe for America, it remains improbable.

The Americans' second difficulty is on the purely military plane. The United States is trying to convince Europeans that it is to their interest to leave to others dreams of grandeur based on nuclear power and to confine themselves to conventional forces. If the Americans themselves can no longer consider the threat of nuclear action sufficient to deter the enemy, *a fortiori* smaller striking forces

could not do so either. The real deterrent is a combination of imposing conventional forces and the American atomic "reservoir." It is quite possible that the Americans are right and that Europeans are presently making the mistake of taking seriously a strategic doctrine which the Americans abandoned about 1957-1958 and which was valid only as long as the Russians did not possess an invulnerable retaliatory force. It is quite possible that it would be much wiser for Europeans to put themselves in a position to wage limited war in case of armed conflict. But, on the one hand, this kind of reasoning introduces a permanent discrimination between non-European and European powers, and, on the other, Europeans may not be capable of hearing American arguments unless they had first traveled themselves the same road as the Americans. Europeans may only discover the vital usefulness of conventional forces after having tasted the disappointment of the striking force. They too may come to realize the need for balanced forces—but a purely conventional one would not be any more balanced than a small, anti-city nuclear force. As long as Americans insist both that the experience with atomic weapons is a bitter one and that they want to keep it to themselves, Europeans may well be suspicious of American "disillusionment" and prefer to sink their own teeth into the apple so as to find out for themselves. (Also, while Americans compassionately explain that France or England lack the necessary resources to build a striking force and run the risk of bleeding themselves white, they are urging England and France to greater expenditures for conventional weapons—not to savings.)

The third difficulty faced by the United States is on the level of diplomacy. The Americans, in order to foil General de Gaulle, are making an effort to convince Germany not to listen to his blandishments as well as trying to take German anxieties into consideration. Theoretically, they could resort to competitive bidding: The General, despite his eagerness to bind the Germans to western Europe, has carefully refrained from giving them even any right, claim, or hold on the French striking force. Practically, however, despite Mr. Kennedy's trip to Europe, the Americans have not exploited nor can they exploit the situation fully. The United States cannot give the Germans the means to trigger thermonuclear weapons (in a multilateral force or otherwise), because it can neither risk making arms agreements with the Russians impossible nor dare to stimulate strong fears in other members of the Alliance, notably the British, just to reassure the Germans. Furthermore, at the same time as the Americans stress that they are the best defenders of German interests, they are reopening negotiations with the Russians about European affairs; that is, they do not hesitate to revive German anxiety. For they too do not wish to "offend the future." Even while it is to America's interest today to draw closer to the

West Germans in order to isolate de Gaulle, it is also to their interest to negotiate directly with the Russians for future agreements which would reduce the danger of war. The two Germans, while partners of the two great powers, remain also pawns and stakes in such discussions. Anything that increases the weight of Germany within the Atlantic Alliance is likely to complicate relations between the two power blocs. America's freedom to maneuver is very small—a weakness which the General's talents can exploit.

If the obstacle offered by the United States to the General is not insurmountable, the General faces another opposition to his foreign policy, harsher and closer to home—the resistance of other Europeans to the Gaullist vision. The General's supporters are indignant about it. Why should an appeal to Europe's pride, initiative, and future meet with disfavor? But things are not so simple. First, differences between member states and within each state as to what policies a united Europe should pursue remain important. Whether it is the issue of a common external tariff (on which American pressure will increase), of fiscal or agricultural policy, of sources of energy or transport, of association with overseas territories, of what stand to take toward the UN or the Soviet Union, Europeans disagree. They are far enough apart to make premature any major leap into supranationality, and too far apart for negotiated compromises to be easy. Since January 1963, for instance, the conflict between France and the Netherlands (which had hoped for a European Community whose membership would grow and which would follow a liberal economic and commercial policy) has been exacerbated. Within Germany, divergences between Adenauer and Erhard, von Brentano and Schröder, have been noticeable. Since the construction of Europe is a mass of ambiguities in motion, the General's "no" to the British (which temporarily cleared up one of the ambiguities) could not fail to exasperate those who wished to resolve them in the opposite way.

Furthermore, for certain of France's partners the appeal to a "European patriotism" comes up against what might be called the habit of dependence. The smaller or secondary powers have had the habit and necessity to be dependent for so long that it is difficult to reverse the course of their history. The specter raised for them, as well as for West Germany,³⁰ by the General's policy is of a simple *change* in dependence, that of the displacement of American protection—which has the virtue of having been adequate, soft, and geographically remote—by French protection, which is (under de Gaulle) rougher, harder to accept since it is that of a neighbor, and much more dubious, since France is infinitely weaker than the United States. The idea of a Europe autono-

³⁰ West Germany certainly has no "habit" of dependence, but it has had the need for it, both because of its division and position, and because any other form of diplomacy would have fanned the flames of anti-German memories and resentments in the West.

mous but with the French nuclear force as its only “sword”—while the others provide the “shield”—obviously does not appear to France’s partners as an improvement over an Atlantic association in which the United States keeps a thermonuclear monopoly and the Europeans contribute the foot soldiers. The change is certainly tempting to the French, but why should it attract the other European states?

The General suspects the integrationist group, i.e., the high civil servants and economists inspired by Jean Monnet, of having also fallen into the habit of dependence—partly because of their experience with the United States in the days of Europe’s direst needs, partly because of personal sympathies and associations. These men have always shared de Gaulle’s idea of a Europe strong and sure of itself, but since they have worked a great deal with their opposite numbers from other nations, they are conscious of their colleagues’ jealous concern for equality and of the animosity aroused by any French policy that seems to stem from a concept of French hegemony—or even from any notion which gives France precedence as spokesman and swordbearer of Europe. This explains why those Europeans who are *not* used to playing a minor role—like the Germans—also have good reason to hold back from the General’s policy. They suspect de Gaulle of opposing the supranational method not only because it might in some cases threaten the autonomy of France, but also because it lends itself less easily to the maneuvers and designs of traditional diplomacy. We can expect the British to feed these suspicions in the years ahead. In politics, suspicions and rumors count for almost as much as facts, and manners are no less important than measures. If French diplomacy persists in treating France’s partners too high-handedly and does nothing to dissipate the fears trumpeted by those like M. Spaak, who claims to see in Gaullism the intention to destroy the Atlantic Alliance and the construction of Europe,³¹ the European elevator will break down, to the great detriment of French policy.

The external obstacles do not, however, seem insurmountable to me. If the American protection of Europe should continue to become more conditional, if French power—the prerequisite for the diplomacy of the elevator—should keep growing, if French diplomacy should gradually stress the European rather than the purely French function of its sword, and if only it would use more tact to accompany force or to mask inflexibility, France’s neighbors ultimately would have to accept “things as they are.”

2. *The domestic obstacle.* But what is probably the fundamental obstacle is the domestic one: France herself and her political future in the broadest sense. The General’s foreign policy assumes, requires, and exploits a France strong

³¹ Paul-Henri Spaak, “Hold Fast,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 1963 (Vol. 41, No. 4), pp. 611–620.

and rich, willing to bear the expense of an extraordinarily ambitious foreign and military policy. To do so, it is necessary not only that the elevator technique bring continuous benefits—i.e., that each new effort be rewarded by an increase in power and glory, a result that certainly does not depend on France alone—but also that France have a regime capable of justifying sacrifices and making them acceptable to her people. It is partly a question of economic and social policy: if inflation gets out of hand, if social troubles, arising either from inflation or from an excessively harsh anti-inflationary policy hamper production, if exports decline, if French industry and commerce do not succeed in overcoming certain structural and psychological resistances to modernization, then the foreign policy of General de Gaulle will seem to be a costly pretension rather than a grand ambition. For only if financial stability, economic progress, and social well-being are maintained will this policy be both endorsed and capable of succeeding. But to a very important extent economic and social policy is a function of the political system. Even if the Gaullist system overcomes all the difficulties of finance, labor relations, income distribution, etc., the system's future remains uncertain—in spite of present stability, in spite of the victory won over the "parties of the past" in November's elections by that former theorist of *Blitzkrieg*, General de Gaulle.

The ultimate stability of France depends on a certain number of conditions which are not yet fulfilled. What is needed, first, is an authority capable of long-range action. The present form of the Constitution tends to provide it, especially through the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage. But for this authority to be capable of acting unhampered, France also needs a legislative branch coherent enough to support, or in any case not to paralyze, the action of the Executive. (This is especially important as long as there remains a dual executive, with a Premier responsible to the National Assembly.) Such a legislature presupposes a reorganization of the party system which the popular election of the President may not provoke all by itself, and which is complicated by the presence of a still powerful Communist Party that acts as the collector, sounding board, and exploiter of all the discontents which the sacrifices imposed by Gaullist foreign policy arouse. Finally, a necessary condition for a healthy political body would be the entry into political life of those "new notables" who have doubtless regenerated the economic and social life of Frenchmen but who have not yet taken to political action. At the present time there is nothing in sight to indicate the coming of this political blood transfusion, without which the body politic of France will be dangerously anemic. Furthermore, it is hard to find anything in the present constitutional regime and political process which could bring it about.

We must therefore end with a large question mark. Yet two observations should be made: First, a risky undertaking is not a crazy undertaking, because the future is not predetermined; it is made. A nation which takes no further risk is a nation resigned to decline, unless it has no freedom at all for maneuver, which is not the case of France. Second, General de Gaulle has always sought to act in such a way that his successors would find themselves committed by what he had done, whether they liked it or not.³² With each passing year this commitment seems more real. It is easy to change a policy of a few months, but a policy built over the years, in which much time and money has been invested, becomes much more irreversible. New external obstacles may deflect its course, but the longer it has lasted, the more it requires a sizable obstacle to change it drastically. In 1959 an independent French striking force could perhaps have been stopped. In 1963 enough military, administrative, and political experts have rallied to it to make it a lasting fact. Therefore, Americans and British should not count too heavily on the good will of the General's eventual successors.³³ The choice for France's allies, now as before, is rather a choice between a foreign policy which is ambitious, irritating, even arrogant—but certainly not lacking in a certain greatness and strength—and a foreign policy which would have similar objectives but without the financial and economic means and the domestic political stability which are indispensable.

It would perhaps be in France's interest to revise certain methods, certain designs, and some of her ambitions *herself*, in order to improve her chances by avoiding the second alternative. (For France needs also to build houses, schools, and hospitals, to transform her agriculture and commerce, etc., and she cannot sacrifice her internal strength to her foreign policy without jeopardizing both.) I continue to believe, however, that it is *not* to the advantage of the United States to encourage the second alternative: For whereas a sound national pride, possessed by self-respecting people, can adjust itself to reduced ambitions, the kind of "modesty" imposed by chaos, doubt, and outsiders is always accompanied by resentful nationalism as dangerous for the Alliance as for Europe and for the nation herself.

³² This would not hold in the improbable case of the seizure of power by the extreme right or the extreme left.

³³ It is not impossible that they will shed the General's hostility to supranational institutions. However, *in practice*, the differences between such institutions and intergovernmental ones tend to decrease as the functions dealt with by the European bodies become more general and affect more the area of high politics. (See my remarks in: S. Hoffmann, C. P. Kindleberger, L. Wylie, J. R. Pitts, J. B. Duroselle, and F. Goguel, *In Search of France* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963], pp. 79–80, and in "Discord in Community," *loc. cit.*) Moreover, on issues of *substance*, France's opposition leaders have increasingly indorsed Gaullist positions: they too want a "European Europe" and see in France's nuclear force the embryo of a European one. Their tone is less overtly challenging or suspicious of the United States; their policies hardly less so. To the extent to which they would like to reach, faster than de Gaulle, a much more tightly united Europe whose policies would not be very different from his, should not American enthusiasts for European integration shift their attention from procedures or institutions to substance and policies?