FRENCH POLICY TOWARD NATO: ENHANCED SELECTIVITY, VICE RAPPROCHEMENT

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FOREWORD

The U.S. defense community enjoys unusually close bilateral ties with its French service counterparts. Additionally, as we have seen in the former Yugoslavia and most recently in Rwanda, France is very active in peace and humanitarian operations, which will likely increase the probability for future U.S.-French bilateral military cooperation. However, at the national level, and particularly in NATO fora, French objectives and actions often leave U.S. and other European allies perplexed. Consequently, a better understanding of internal motives behind French foreign policy, particularly toward NATO, is clearly warranted.

The authors of this report explain how French policy toward NATO has changed since 1992. Importantly, they discuss *how* these changes have been effected. However, certain key elements of French external policy have not changed. In effect, therefore, the authors argue that while France may wish to cooperate with NATO, this does not imply that there will be a more cooperative French attitude toward the Alliance.

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The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this report as a contribution toward an improved understanding of French external policy.

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Introduction.

French policy toward NATO has consistently challenged U.S. policymakers. On the one hand, *bilateral* security and defense cooperation between Washington and Paris has long been cordial, if not intimate. Moreover, relations between the respective armed services of these two countries have also been close and mutually support common national objectives.[1] However, this degree of cooperation has not extended into the multilateral fora of NATO. Paris has long suspected U.S. motives in the Alliance and harbored perceptions of inadequate political control over NATO's military structures.[2] This distrust has resulted in obstructionist, if not counterproductive, French policies toward the Alliance. It is little wonder, therefore, that this seemingly irrational and schizophrenic approach toward an organization which has provided the very bases for French national security has confused U.S. officials.

Yet, in its own Gallic and peculiar way, French policy toward NATO *was* logical. It was *logique* because President Charles de Gaulle, the architect of French security policy in the 5th Republic, felt that NATO-defined missions would not be as effective in ensuring civilian control over the military as those which were nationally defined. Thus, de Gaulle's decision to withdraw from NATO's integrated military structure served as the basis for Gaullist defense policy, which continues to influence strongly French strategy:[3]

- Firm civilian control over the military, both within France and NATO,

- An independent strategic nuclear deterrent,

- Substrategic and conventional forces for deterrence and defense in Central Europe and the Mediterranean,

- Intervention forces for out-of-area operations,

- A sophisticated and technically advanced industrial base to ensure a high degree of independence in nuclear and conventional force requirements.

During the cold war, Gaullist security and defense policy offered France the luxury of pursuing a defense policy which supported specific French *national* interests, while Washington stationed forces in Germany and kept the Soviet Union out of Western Europe. Under these circumstances, France maintained an independent distance from NATO, garrisoned forces in Germany, developed national nuclear forces, and deployed military forces throughout the world in support of French and Western interests.

Paris, in short, had all of the political advantages of an aspiring world power, without having to pay the full political cost associated with NATO membership.[4]

Regrettably for France, this has all changed as recent events have destroyed the comfortable assumptions which underwrote Gaullist strategy. Pierre Lellouche writes,

> The French too are awakening, reluctantly to a messy Europe, where most of the basic foreign policy and defense guidelines laid out by General Charles de Gaulle 35 years ago are simply no longer relevant.[5]

Moreover, recent circumstances have unleashed a series of events which have challenged cherished French political objectives in Europe. German unification ended the long held claim of French leadership in the close Franco-German relationship.[6] The French vision for a deeper European Union (EU)[7] has effectively been placed on hold while the EU is widened with the inclusion of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Austria, and, perhaps by the end of the decade, some of the Visegrad states of Central Europe.[8] Finally, the continuing conflict in the former-Yugoslavia, and Western Europe's seeming inability to halt hostilities there, let alone effect a long-term peace, have made French officials realize that their approach to dealing with both the United States and NATO needs to be revised.[9]

While these circumstances may be widely known within the U.S. policy-making community, the effects of these new conditions on French policy toward NATO may be less well understood. The key question about French *policy* remains whether this reassessment of NATO is in fact a change in *policy*, or *attitude*, or a combination of both. This paper will argue that altered regional security conditions have forced French President François Mitterrand to change aspects of French *policy* toward NATO. However, lingering atavistic *attitudes* within certain elements of the French bureaucracy *may* complicate the implementation and longevity of these new policies. Indeed, one needs to recognize that notwithstanding France's newly found interest in participating in NATO consultative fora, structures, programs, and activities, some French *attitudes* will not necessarily be all that different, *or* less difficult for Alliance and U.S. officials to confront.

Consequently, it is quite likely that American perceptions of recalcitrant French attitudes toward NATO will continue to impede closer ties. Yet, as recent events have demonstrated, French policy toward NATO is capable of dramatic change (notwithstanding French statements to the contrary) when French national interests so require. Thus, an appreciation of the subtle differences in policy and attitude will better elucidate actual changes in the *content* of French policy, and will indicate how policy will, or will not, be implemented.

Who's Who in Paris.

Before examining the details of how and why French policy toward NATO has changed, it may be instructive to describe the various elements of the security policy-making community in Paris and explain their complex interactions. For example, even those relatively familiar with Paris may not fully comprehend how strong an influence domestic politics exert over French policy toward NATO. Also, because of the past content and rhetoric of French security policy, many may not be aware that the United States and NATO enjoy strong support within portions of the French bureaucracy. Unfortunately, these individuals and bureaucracies are not at the pinnacle of the French decision-making structure.

"Palais de l'Elysée" (Presidential Palace). Under the practices of the 5th Republic, the President of the Republic enjoys a *domaine réservé* (reserved domain) over defense and security policy. As David S. Yost, a leading expert on French security, has argued, however, President Mitterrand has taken a selective interest in defense issues (e.g., emphasizing European and nuclear issues) and has largely left the administration of the French armed forces to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense.[10] The key result of this condition is that unless the President makes a conscious effort to change security policy, inertia prevails. Concerning NATO, Mitterrand's Gaullist political foes have long painted him as an opponent of the widely popular principles of de Gaulle's defense and security policy. Thus, Mitterrand's opposition to rapprochement with NATO (i.e., rejoining the military integrated command structure)[11] may be due more to a desire not to leave the legacy of having betrayed the basic tenets of Gaullist security policy.[12]

"Quai d'Orsay" (Foreign Office). As befits any foreign ministry, the *Quai* attempts to dominate foreign and security policy. Thus, whenever the President and his advisors are not actively engaged in effecting or overseeing a change in policy, the *Quai* reigns supreme in the implementation of foreign *and* security policy. Moreover, the *Quai* is extremely influencial in government and society: it is staffed by graduates of the *Grandes Ecoles*. Perhaps more critical for dominating the security and defense bureaucracy, the *Quai* is the agency charged with receiving and distributing (or *not* distributing as the case may be) official communications received from outside of France.

Special internal political considerations also contribute to the *Quai's* bureaucratic preeminence of security policy. De Gaulle perceived that NATO's integrated command structure lacked sufficient political oversight. Intent on maintaining tight civilian control over the military, de Gaulle and his successors have relied on the *Quai* to ensure close scrutiny. Consequently, the *Quai* traditionally has fought vociferously against French participation in the Alliance's military structures.[13] To put it

diplomatically, the *Quai* is anti-NATO; and all too often makes its "concern" known at every possible moment, *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*.

"Hôtel de Brienne" (*Ministry of Defense*). As a consequence of the Gaullist objective of ensuring civil control over the military, the *Hôtel de Brienne* has long exerted little influence in the formulation of national strategy and security policy. As a result, it historically has operated at a disadvantage in the interagency policy formulation process. A cadre of experts located in the *Quai* in the area of politico-military and security affairs has compounded this disability. Thus, despite the fact that many military and civilian officials have long wished for closer ties to NATO, the relative weakness of *Hôtel de Brienne* has precluded such an eventuality.

This situation has recently changed. In 1992 the Minister of Defense, Pierre Joxe, reorganized and strengthened the *Délégation aux Etudes Générales* with top flight civilian and military security analysts and renamed it *Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques (DAS)*. This reorganization better prepared him when he and his ministry sallied forth into the interagency policy-formulation process.[14] Moreover, the elevation of Admiral Jacques Lanxade to Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (see below), as well as the French experience in the Gulf War and the deployment of sizeable numbers of French forces to the former-Yugoslavia, has increased dramatically the influence of the Ministry in the interagency formulation of national strategy and security policy. In short, many in the French government, and particularly within the security policy apparatus, recognize that the new European security environment requires input from the *Hôtel de Brienne* in the policy-making process.

Hôtel Matignon (Office of the Prime Minister). Given the President of the Republic's *domaine réservé* in defense and security policy, the Prime Minister traditionally has wielded little power in these areas. However, the return to power by the conservatives (*Rassemblement pour la Répubique--RPR*, headed by Jacques Chirac and the *Union pour la Démocratie Française--UDF*, led by former-president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing) has created a second instance of divided government (*cohabitation*) during the 5th Republic. Because of the previous tumultuous experience with *cohabitation* when Jacques Chirac (President Mitterrand's arch political enemy) was Prime Minister from 1986 to 1988,[15] Mitterrand has gone out of his way to ensure a solid working relationship with the current Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.[16]

Evidence of the extent to which Mitterrand will go in ensuring the success of this working relationship with Balladur can be found in the release of the *Livre Blanc sur la Défense* (Defense White Paper)--the first such document published since 1972.[17] The French lead in attempting to end the Yugoslav civil war and the presence of large numbers of French troops there has also necessitated Balladur's support and input into the

policy-making process.[18] This cooperative atmosphere (which, not insignificantly, undermines Chirac's chances in the April 1995 presidential elections) has produced a unique situation where the Prime Minister has regularly been brought into the policy-making circle. Despite his early claim that he would not challenge Mitterrand's *domaine réservé*, Balladur has used this opportunity to encroach on the President's security prerogatives and "to gather the strategic community around the prime minister...." in preparation for his own run for the presidency in 1995.[19] As result of the *Matignon's* new influence, *domaine réservé* is now sometimes referred to as *domaine partagé* (shared domain).[20]

Secretariat General de la Défense Nationale--SGDN (General Secretariat of National Defense). Organizationally under *Matignon* and the Prime Minister, the *SGDN* is not a decision-making body, but rather a coordinating agency whose principal activities include organizing national intelligence efforts and developing net assessments. *SGDN* is also the principal coordinating agency for crisis management. Since the establishment of the *DAS* in the MoD, the *SGDN* has lost some influence, particularly in developing net assessments.

Assemblée nationale and le Sénat (National Assembly and the Senate). Outside of providing budgetary input along with the government and bureaucracy in the development of the important *loi de programmation militaire* (long-term defense program law), these legislative bodies have little influence in national strategy and security policy. The Parliament in France, unlike the U.S. Congress, does not have extensive organizational support (e.g., Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office) or resources for it to have a significant impact on the formulation of defense and security policy. Notwithstanding the activities of their respective legislative committees (whose reports tend not to influence directly policymaking, but which receive considerable press), given the power of the *Elysée* in defense and security policy, these bodies effectively are unimportant in the formulation of national defense and security policy.

C'est la politique interne. When attempting to decipher French policy *and* attitudes toward NATO, one should never forget that its basis is largely founded on domestic, *vice* external political rationales.[21] Notwithstanding the appearance of a large security policy-making community in the French government, key decisions on policy issues are made by the President, in close collaboration with the *Quai*. And, given the continued high esteem in which the French public continues to hold General de Gaulle, successive Presidents have been loath to veer far from the tenets of Gaullist defense and security policy.[22] Thus, for Mitterrand and Balladur not to adhere publicly to Gaullist security and defense principles would end one of the very few areas where at least a semblance of common ground exists in domestic French politics. But, this public approach has not eliminated their basic policy differences, and has occasionally led to conflicting

signals from the French government.

Strains also exist within the policy-making bureaucracies. For example, under the 5th Republic, differences have always endured between the *Elysée* and the *Matignon* over the respective roles of the President and the Prime Minister in the formulation and conduct of security policy. This has been true even when the same political parties have occupied both offices, but it has been exacerbated during periods of *cohabitation*.[23]

Other domestic political issues continue to shape French policy toward NATO. Most obvious are the differences between the Socialists and their opponents on the Right (e.g., the *RPR* and the *UDF*). Equally important is the jockeying for position for the upcoming presidential election within the Right (Giscard [*UDF*] and Chirac [*RPR*]), as well as within the *RPR* (Chirac and Balladur). The result of all these competing and conflicting interactions is that they confuse French policymaking, and thus, confound observers of French security policy.

Changes in French NATO Policy.

The year 1991 was a difficult one for French officials. According to David S. Yost, the Gulf War had a chilling effect upon many of the military and political assumptions undergirding French strategy and security policy.[24] The French experience during the Gulf crisis explains largely why one saw the emergence of a dual, if not contradictory, French approach to NATO. First, clinging to the old axiom that the maintenance of bilateral security ties with the United States should be dealt with separately from NATO issues, some French officials-- particularly then-Foreign Minister Roland Dumas--argued that the United States, the sole remaining superpower, needed to be balanced by an independent and more deeply integrated European Community.[25] Hence, France opposed efforts at transforming NATO from a purely collective defense organization to a body that could participate in collective security missions under Article IV of the NATO Treaty.[26] Instead, the French government favored a stronger and revitalized European *Union* (vice Community) which eventually would undertake collective security responsibilities.[27]

These efforts failed. Ironically, during this same period President Mitterrand and Minister of Defense Pierre Joxe begin quietly reassessing and changing French policy. First, nine months after NATO started reassessing its strategy, Joxe surprised many analysts by announcing that France would participate in the Alliance's ongoing strategy review.[28] Given that the divisive debates that led up to the Alliance's adoption of the strategy of Flexible Response in 1966 contributed significantly to de Gaulle's decision to leave NATO, this move had both substantive, as well as symbolic meaning. France's subsequent endorsement of the Alliance's New Strategic Concept at the November 1991 Rome Summit further underscored the shift in

French policy. At the same time, however, Paris continued to oppose French participation in the Defense Planning Committee (much to Joxe's disappointment),[29] and remains suspicious of the lack of sufficient political control over the SACEUR.

Notwithstanding the importance of these developments, the most significant step in France's policy evolution was the French decision at the Oslo NATO foreign ministers meeting, in June 1992, to underwrite NATO participation in Article IV missions (i.e., peacekeeping), under the political auspices of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.[30] Equally important, the French are participating under NATO aegis in missions such as OPERATION DENY FLIGHT and SHARP GUARD.[31]

These decisions have had three key effects. First, by agreeing to these new missions for the Alliance, France retreated from its long-held view that NATO should not be employed for missions other than the collective defense of its members.[32] Second, the Chief of the French Military Mission to the Military Committee has participated in the Military Committee since April 1993[33] concerning discussions dealing with "peacekeeping," however broadly defined.[34] Third, the recent *Livre Blanc* leaves the door open for the Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces to participate in the North Atlantic Council and the Military Committee, on a case by case basis, as decided by the President and Prime Minister.[35]

The reasons for these changes in French policy are several. The French have recognized that the dramatic changes in the European security environment have made NATO more important, not less so as they originally perceived.[36] The experience with the Western European Union and the crisis in the former-Yugoslavia, for example, have reinforced the importance of NATO. This particularly may be the case in peace operations, which appears to be the most likely venue for the employment of French forces for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the French have insisted on increasing the power and importance of the Military Committee in Article IV missions, at the expense of Major NATO Commands. This has resulted in the Chief of the French Military Mission to the Military Committee attending as a participant, vice as an observer, for the first time since 1966 when France left the integrated command structure.

French participation in the Military Committee is certainly more politically palatable within France than allowing the Minister of Defense to attend Defense Planning Committee (DPC) meetings, because such a symbolic and substantive move would enhance the power and prestige of the *Hôtel de Brienne* at the expense of the *Quai*. Moreover, if the Minister of Defense attended such meetings, other DPC members might demand that France participate fully in the defense planning process, a policy the French evince little likelihood in changing.[37]

Just as the French military have returned to high level *defense* discussions in NATO, so, too, the French military now participate in a standing multinational structure in peacetime. Granted, the French military have remained nonintegrated participants in NATO (i.e., the integrated air defense system), to include wartime agreements to allow cooperation between French forces and NATO military commands (e.g., agreements with SACEUR and CINCENT) since 1967.[38] But, new initiatives indicate the extent of change in French policy.

The first example concerns command and control of the EUROCORPS. The EUROCORPS was a joint initiative of President Mitterrand and German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl that emerged from the Franco-German Summit at La Rochelle in fall 1991.[39] As proposed, the EUROCORPS would be based on the existing Franco-German brigade and provide the foundation for a European Defense and Security Identity. Although the Bush administration and others in the Alliance strenuously opposed the initiative as another French assault on NATO,[40] the Germans touted the EUROCORPS as a means of easing French participation in Alliance military structures.[41] The German view appeared vindicated when, according to press reports, on January 21, 1993, an agreement signed by the Chief of Staff of the *Bundeswehr*, General Klaus Naumann; then-SACEUR, General John Shalikashvili; and Admiral Lanxade placed the EUROCORPS under the *operational command* (vice *control*) of the SACEUR for the conduct of NATO missions.[42] Thus, not only are French forces assigned to the EUROCORPS anchored within a multinational structure, but French forces could fall under the command of the SACEUR for wartime operations should nations so decide, with all the peacetime implications this implies.[43]

The issues of NATO command and control and French forces in Article IV missions continued their evolution when, at the January 1994 NATO Summit, France agreed to U.S. initiatives for Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Combined/Joint Task Force (C/JTF).[44] While Paris agreed, in principle, to both concepts, implementation of the initiatives has not been without expressions of French reluctance. For example, within PfP, Paris insisted that the Planning Coordination Cell (the nerve center of PfP) could not be under control of SACEUR at SHAPE, but only located at "Mons" and answerable to the North Atlantic Council in Brussels. Additionally, Paris manifested its long-held suspicions of the SACEUR during discussions concerning the development of the terms of reference for C/JTF.[45] While perhaps not precisely what U.S. and other Alliance countries would have preferred, the mere fact that Paris did not veto these concepts marks a significant change in French policy.[46]

A final notable change in French policy toward NATO has been in the area of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In recognition of the importance of this issue and the absolute need for the coordination of Western efforts in this regard, the French have agreed to participate in the Alliance's political and

defense committees dealing with nonprolif- eration.[47] Within the defense committee, France not only participates in the Senior Defence Group on Proliferation, but cochairs the group with the United States.[48] Paris's participation in this group is one of the first times France has joined in a defense committee since 1966. Clearly, the potential magnitude of the proliferation problem and overriding need to coordinate efforts with its allies has prompted this important, if quiet, change in French policy.

The Implementation of French NATO Policy.

If it is important to know *how* French policy toward NATO has changed, it is equally important to understand *the manner* in which this change in policy has been effected. For without this understanding, policymakers may not appreciate the basis for perceived French perfidy or problems that remain to be encountered. Additionally, understanding the process of change may also provide key indicators of the probability of further change, as well as the continuity of what has been achieved.

At the outset, one must recognize that discerning change in French policy toward NATO is stymied in two different ways. First, it seems that whenever senior French officials from *Matignon* or *Hôtel de Brienne* enunciate an apparent change in French policy, these declarations are almost inevitably followed by denials from the *Elysée* or the *Quai*.[49] Second, in view of past French policy *and* attitudes toward the Alliance, some observers and officials find it difficult to accept that Paris has changed its NATO policy. This has been the case not only in an historical sense, i.e., during the cold war; but was reinforced by French rhetoric and actions during 1989-92 as the Alliance developed its new strategy and significantly reduced force structures.

The choice of Admiral Jacques Lanxade as the primary agent of change has been one of the more remarkable aspects of France's policy toward NATO. The reasons that Mitterrand chose a military official for this task, as opposed to the foreign minister or professional diplomat, are two-fold. First, as the President's Chief of Military Staff in the *Elysée* during the Gulf War, Lanxade was well placed to coordinate France's involvement in DESERT SHIELD/STORM, especially in sensitive political discussions with French allies, and particularly with the United States. Following the end of hostilities in April 1991, Admiral Lanxade became Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Because he enjoys Mitterrand's confidence, he has been able to restructure the French Armed Forces, paying particular attention to joint and combined operations. This reorganization and emphasis on joint issues, in turn, supports Mitterrand's new policy of enhanced selectivity with NATO.

Second, as underscored earlier, internal French politics helped drive Lanxade's selection for this task. Since the introduction of *cohabitation*, the issue of NATO has taken on an

interesting partisan flavor, beyond its normal levels. French presidential elections will be held in April 1995 and many currently assume that the race for the presidency is between Jacques Chirac (the leader of the *RPR* and mayor of Paris) and *RPR* Prime Minister Balladur (a previous Chirac supporter). Within this unusual intra-political party struggle, Foreign Minister Alain Juppé supports Chirac, while Minister of Defense François Léotard supports Balladur.

As a result of this partisan political morass, Lanxade is the one individual capable of operating above partisan politics while still maintaining close relations with *all* the major political actors, particularly President Mitterrand. Indeed, French officials readily--albeit privately--acknowledge that Lanxade is probably the most influential and powerful defense official in the area of policymaking and implementation in many years.[50]

***Quo Vadis* France?**

As the preceding analysis indicates, French policy *appears* to have changed. But, as this essay also suggests, the depth of that change remains open to question: Do the issues described above constitute a fundamental change in policy or has policy remained relatively fixed while the French pursue new means to their long-established ends? Even if French policy has changed, have French attitudes in key elements of the policy bureaucracy altered sufficiently to effect this change, or will bureaucratic foot-dragging forestall full-scale implementation?

On balance, it should be clear that long-standing French *policies* toward the Alliance have changed. However, one must be aware that Mitterrand's reconsideration of France's relationship with NATO will not result in a return to *status quo ante* 1966, which would more accurately support the description that France had "returned" to the Alliance.[51] Indeed, French policymakers--even those who most strongly support NATO--continue to pronounce that France will not return to the Alliance's integrated military structure.[52] Nor do the developments constitute a *rapprochement*, as described by one French newspaper.[53] Simply put, apparently irreconcilable differences (e.g., independent French nuclear deterrent and strategy, and the French phobia about political oversight of NATO military authorities) remain between Paris and NATO. In this respect, therefore, a reconciliation does not a marriage remake.

While France is drawing closer to NATO, the Alliance should expect France to continue to pursue a policy of NATO *à la carte*. Certainly, the menu of French choices appears to be expanding, but the Alliance should only expect the French to opt for the perquisites that support French national interests and defer selections that would add new--and costly-- responsibilities (e.g., contributions to infrastructure funding; adherence to NATO planning requirements; meeting NATO training and readiness

standards; and supporting standardization, rationalization, and interoperability requirements).

If one, therefore, accepts the proposition that French policy toward NATO has changed, it is advisable to examine the nature and extent of these changes. The fact that the *Quai*, traditionally the center of French diplomacy and security policy formulation, effectively has been marginalized in the process--and by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces no less--does not bode well for long-term continuity of policy. Simply put, once Mitterrand and Lanxade pass from the scene (as Mitterrand soon will, with Lanxade likely to follow quickly thereafter), will their successors continue these policies or will the *Quai* reassert its traditional opposition to French participation in the military structure of the Alliance?

Encouragingly, Balladur, a strong candidate for the presidency, favors this fresh approach to NATO, as evinced in the *Livre Blanc*. However, irrespective of whoever wins the presidential election in April 1995 (i.e., Balladur, Chirac or Giscard d'Estaing), the new president may find it difficult to stray far from Mitterrand's current course. Given the political and security situation in Europe, there simply is little other choice.[54]

Thus, even with a surface change in *policy*, an understanding of the deeper currents of French *attitudes* toward these changes, particularly within the policy bureaucracy, takes on added importance. Given the past *attitude* toward NATO by the *Quai* (as well as some officials in the *Elysée)*, the absence of strong pressure from the President may allow recidivist officials in the *Quai* and *Elysée* to sabotage further improvements in relations with NATO. That the Minister of Defense continues to be proscribed from attending DPC meetings (much to the displeasure of Minister of Defense Léotard) underscores the continued institutional power the *Quai* enjoys over *Hôtel de Brienne*.[55] And, disaffected officials need not openly assault policy to kill it; they can simply let it wither and die from neglect. Thus, while Paris can be expected to support some new NATO initiatives and draw closer to the Alliance, one should also expect standard, time-worn rationales to be trotted out in opposition to others. Despite this qualified reconciliation, therefore, France will continue to befuddle NATO and remain a source of frustration within the Alliance.

Such an approach should not come as a surprise. Nations are expected to act in their own national interests and pursue policies that further those interests. To assume otherwise is imprudent. But recent French initiatives should be viewed positively. These initial, hesitant steps may eventually lead to fuller French participation in the Alliance, and the United States and other NATO partners should encourage France to return to the fold.

In sum, French policy toward NATO has changed, a bit, but attitudes in critical elements of the French government remain unrepentant, largely due to domestic political and bureaucratic reasons. Moreover, many French policymakers conceptually see a European defense and security identity to be at odds with a strong NATO. The combination of limited change, French demands that even these circumscribed revisions occur on French terms, and residual attitudes in key segments of the French policy bureaucracy emphasizes the fact that in effect, if not in principle, France continues to follow a policy of *enhanced selectivity* when dealing with NATO.

That said, there is a bright side to this less than optimistic assessment: Wide-spread consensus in Paris has led to the realization that France's approach to NATO must change. However, given the fact that French NATO policy is heavily influenced by domestic concerns over the sensitive issue of civil-military relations and Gaullist foreign and security policy legacies, fundamental attitudes toward the Alliance may never change or change only ponderously. Yet, the altered security environment in Europe has resulted in a long overdue reassessment of French policy. Whether these *policy* changes can eventually drown out lingering *attitudes* toward NATO remains to be seen.

Recommendations.

Given that the French are pragmatically pursuing a policy of enhanced selectivity, so, too, must NATO take a pragmatic approach toward increased French cooperation within the military sphere of the Alliance:

• The United States and its Alliance partners must have a clear vision of exactly what they want from France. To expect France to return to the integrated military structure is to expect too much, and only sows the seeds of future failure. Instead, the goal of U.S. policy should be full French military participation in the Alliance. This will require some finesse and patience on all sides, but existing arrangements and agreements provide a sound foundation upon which to build increasing cooperation. Given recent Alliance experience in dealing with the "Spanish model," this does not appear to be an insurmountable obstacle, if all parties are open to compromise.

• U.S. policy must ensure that the French clearly comprehend NATO's position on French cooperation and what the Alliance expects from France. The French must understand that cooperation is a two-way street that will require compromise from all parties and that the Alliance will not yield to extreme French demands. Consequently, given the changes NATO has made since the end of the cold war, there is no need for dramatic revisions to the overall political decision-making structure of the Alliance. For instance, the proposal floated last year by a French official in NATO that the military structure of the Alliance needs greater

political control--as the French envisage, and not as the other 15 agree--before France can consider greater participation in NATO makes little sense.[56] In any case, Paris seems to have concluded that it is in French interests to reach accommodation with the existing military structure. The Alliance, therefore, should help the French see the logic of increased cooperation, and not cave in to immoderate demands.

• Washington must gently, but firmly, inform France that NATO *à la carte* is inadequate. France should not be allowed free access to the Alliance, without paying the *quid pro quo* of increased responsibilities within the Alliance. To allow such a practice only rewards poor behavior and encourages the *Quai* and others to pursue enhanced selectivity at the expense of other Alliance members who must shoulder an unfair burden of responsibilities that the French have shirked.

• Many in NATO and in France need to recognize that France, perhaps more than any other country in Europe, *needs* NATO. France has great power aspirations and worldwide interests, but faces weak European partners, wide-spread block obsolescence in its military establishment,[57] limited defense resources in comparison with security requirements, growing instability to its south, and a Balkan war that simply defies resolution. Thus, France needs NATO, just as NATO needs France.

• European impotence in the Yugoslav crisis and the changed European security environment (i.e., unified Germany and instability in Central and Eastern Europe) have reinforced French understanding that U.S. leadership in Europe remains essential. Coupled with converging worldwide interests, one can expect, therefore, increased bilateral cooperation with the United States, particularly in European affairs. Understandably, a bilateral approach to certain problems may be appropriate; however, the United States should insist that decisions concerning European security policy be made in, and implemented through, NATO. While recognizing the sensitivities of many in the *Quai*, allowing Paris to employ a bilateral approach in European matters may undermine the credibility of NATO. After all, the United States has to consider the interests of its other European allies who do not share their French counterpart's anxieties about NATO and who continue to see great value in decisions being made at the "16."

Conclusions.

U.S. and NATO adherence to these recommendations, while perhaps painful at times, will help smooth the bumpy road to fuller French participation in the Alliance. *But, while France can be expected to turn to NATO more frequently in the future, more cooperation with Paris does not imply a more cooperative approach to doing business.* For instance, when the Alliance attempted to accommodate French political sensitivities by

convening an informal meeting of defense ministers in October 1993 at Travemünde, Germany (the first of its kind),[58] Minister of Defense Léotard did not attend.[59] And, the fact that the Chief of the French Military Mission to the Military Committee now takes part in deliberations on peacekeeping and votes on such issues in the Military Committee does not ensure automatic French cooperation. Even without traditional French obstructionism, it is too much to expect that French national interests (or any other nation's) will always coincide with the remainder of the Alliance. Indeed, enhanced selectivity may possibly create as many future problems in NATO as it might solve.

ENDNOTES

1. On the surface, the image of French policy is of French independence in defense and security affairs, while maintaining, in public, a distant relationship with NATO. The image and reality are not the same. Following France's ostensible divorce from NATO, Allied commanders and their French counterparts maintained close, if not intimate, working relationships. As Frédéric Bozo documented in his comprehensive study on this "secret" relationship, French *indépendence* from NATO has, indeed, been qualified to say the least. See Frédéric Bozo, *La France et l'OTAN; De la guerre froide au nouvel order européen,* Paris: Masson, 1991. When considered with the very close relationship with the United States, to include nuclear research and development cooperation, the French claim of having maintained defense *indépendence* has to be assessed with skepticism. Apropos nuclear cooperation see *The Washington Post,* May 29, 1989, and June 2, 1989.

2. See Michael Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security,* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, p. 118.

3. It should be mentioned that one of the reasons for the wide-spread support in France of the tenets of Gaullist defense policy over time is because it encapsulates long-standing French defense traditions. See Diego Ruiz Palmer, "French Strategic Options in the 1990s," *Adelphi Papers,* No 260, London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Summer 1991, p. 3. For excellent historical background on the development of Gaullist security policy see Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally,* pp. 116-134. For a superb analysis of French attitudes toward the military and defense policy, see David S. Yost, "The French Way of War," paper presented at the Conference of the International Studies Association, Philadephia, PA, March 18-21, 1981.

4. For an excellent assessment of contemporary French strategy and force structure, see David S. Yost, "France," in *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, pp. 233-277.

5. Pierre Lellouche, "France in Search of Security," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 72, Spring 1993, p. 122. *N.B.:* Lellouche is the foreign affairs counsellor to Jacques Chirac, leader of the *RPR*.

6. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine,* July 19, 1990. For an excellent historical perspective on this important bilateral relationship see Julius W. Friend, *The Linchpin: French-German Relations, 1950-1990,* The Washington Papers No. 154, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, New York: Praeger, 1991.

7. See Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, "The Implications of German Unification for Western Europe," in *The New Germany and the New Europe,* ed. by Paul B. Stares, Washington, DC: The Brookings

Institute, 1992, p. 266.

8. Note that Switzerland also is considering EU membership. The Visegrad states include: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.

9. See Lellouche, p. 128.

10. David Yost, "Mitterrand and Defense and Security Policy," *French Politics and Society,* Volume 9, Nos. 3-4, Summer/Fall 1991, pp. 146-147.

11. See *Agence France-Presse* (Paris), May 5, 1994, in *FBIS*-WEU- 94-088, May 6, 1994, p. 26.

12. It is interesting to note that François Mitterrand was the most determined critic of de Gaulle's foreign policy for many years and he and the Socialist Party rejected de Gaulle's defense policy. Yet, upon taking power in 1981, Mitterrand and the socialists continued to support the tenets of Gaullist defense policy. For an excellent treatment of this see Philip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 106-118.

13. See Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally,* pp. 118-119.

14. In effect, *DAS* has become the policy cloister in the Ministry, which has brought it into conflict, at times, with the *Etat-Major des Armées* (Joint Staff).

15. For background on this period see Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France,* pp. 144-157.

16. Indeed, some in his own party have complained that Mitterrand has done this at the expense of destroying politically his successor Michel Rocard, as leader of the Socialist Party, and in effect, the Party itself. See *The Washington Post,* June 23, 1994.

17. See *Livre Blanc sur la Défense,* Paris, Ministère de la Défense, 1994. Note that another key reason for producing this document was to demonstrate, no matter how illusory, the continuation of bipartisan cooperation in the area of defense.

18. For an excellent assessment of French policy toward the Yugoslav conflict see Pia Christina Wood, "France and the Post Cold War Order: The Case of Yugoslavia," *European Security,* Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1994, pp. 129-152.

19. David Buchan, "Paris makes European security ambitions clear," *London Financial Times,* February 24, 1994, p. 2.

20. See *Le Quotidien de Paris*, February 12-13, 1994.

21. See for example, David Buchan's commentary on recent policy formulations in Buchan, "Paris makes European security ambitions clear," p. 2.

22. Daniel Vernet, "The Dilemmas of French Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 1992, p. 661.

23. See Buchan, "Paris makes European security ambitions clear," for an example of the current period of *cohabitation*. This is one of the key weaknesses in the 5th Republic's Constitution, *viz*., Articles 5, 20 and 21.

24. See David Yost, "France and the Gulf War of 1990-1991: Political Military Lessons Learned," *The Journal of Strategic Studies,* Volume 16, No. 3, September 1993, pp. 339-374. Jacques Baumel's (former foreign minister and current *RPR* deputy) evaluation of the French security environment bolsters Yost's assessment. See *Le Monde (Paris)*, April 1, 1993, p. 2.

25. See Yost, "France and the Gulf War," p. 354.

26. The NATO Treaty establishes the Alliance as a collective defense organization; i.e., nations bound together to defend themselves from outside aggression. Since the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, some have attempted to use the consultative provisions contained in Article IV of the treaty as a justification for increased emphasis on NATO as an agent of reliance on collective security (i.e., maintaining peace and stability among the members of the organization) missions such as peacekeeping or peace enforcement. See Articles IV and V of the Washington Treaty which can be found in *NATO Facts and Figures*, Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1989, Appendix 1, Document 2.

27. This particular policy was seen in Paris's opposition to the German-U.S. initiative to create the North Atlantic Cooperation Council within NATO, and France's spurring the European Community to mediate the growing conflict in Yugoslavia. François Heisbourg, former Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and current vice president of Matra Corporation, argues that the French intended to use these initiatives to destroy NATO. See François Heisbourg, "A French View: Developing a European Identity," ROA National Security Report, *The Officer*, January 1993, p. 31.

28. See *Le Monde*, March 19, 1991.

29. Joxe was particularly upset because he could not attend meetings of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, of which only France in the Alliance did not send a representative. See *Le Monde*, September 30, 1992.

30. NATO Press Communique M-NAC-1(92)51, Brussels, NATO Press Service, June 4, 1992, p. 4.

31. For details of DENY FLIGHT see, Allied Forces Southern Europe, "Fact Sheet--OPERATION DENY FLIGHT," Naples, March 24, 1994. For details of OPERATION SHARP GUARD see, Allied Forces Southern Europe, "Fact Sheet--NATO/WEU OPERATION SHARP GUARD," Naples, July 7, 1994. Interestingly, to account for French sensitivities, OPERATION SHARP GUARD is carried out under the authority of the Councils of NATO and WEU.

32. A sympathetic view would hold that French officials value too highly the Alliance's collective defense provisions to allow it to be damaged by participating in politically-sensitive collective security operations. A less charitable interpretation holds that the near debacle experienced by the European Community in the former-Yugoslavia convinced France that the only way the United States would actively deal with these crises was through NATO, and therefore, it had no other choice.

33. See *Le Monde*, May 14, 1993.

34. *Le Monde,* December 21, 1993.

35. See *Livre Blanc sur la Défense*, p. 37.

36. "Les évolutions intervenues depuis 1991 dans l'organisation et les activités de l'Alliance doivent être prolongées et amplifiées." *Livre Blanc sur la Défense,* p. 35.

37. For a persuasive argument for France to take a more pragmatic view toward participating in the DPC see Bozo, *La France et l'OTAN*, pp. 206-207.

38. See *ibid.,* pp. 101-104; and, Diego Ruiz Palmer, "France," in *European Security Policy After the Revolutions of 1989,* ed. by Jeffrey Simon, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1991, p. 232.

39. For an excellent description and analysis of the EUROCORPS see Rafael Estrella, "After the NATO Summit: New Structures and Modalities for Military Co-operation," Draft General Report AL 76 DSC(94) 2, Brussels, North Atlantic Assembly, May 1994, pp. 7-12.

40. See, for example, Jeane Kirkpatrick's essay, "Is France Trying to Torpedo NATO?", *CQ Researcher,* Vol. 2, August 21, 1992, p. 729.

41. See *ADN* (Berlin), November 28, 1992, in *FBIS*-WEU-92-230, November 30, 1992, p. 1; and, *Le Monde*, March 12, 1993 in *FBIS*-WEU- 93-057, March 26, 1993, p. 2.

42. See Daniel Vernet's excellent article in *Le Monde*, March 12, 1993; *Le Monde*, May 7, 1993; Karl Feldmeyer's essay in, *Frankfurter Allgemeine,* December 5, 1992; and, *The New York*

Times, December 1, 1992.

43. For example, French forces should be subject to NATO training and readiness requirements. They must also be capable of operating with NATO forces, thus obligating the French to ensure adequate interoperability and standardization.

44. See Press Communique M-1(94)3, Brussels, NATO Press Service, January 11, 1994. For details of the Partnership for Peace Program see Press Communique M-1(94)2, Partnership for Peace: Invitation, Brussels, NATO Press Service, January 10, 1994. A solid description and analysis of Combined/Joint Task Forces can be found in Stanley R. Sloan, "Combined/Joint Task Forces (C/JTF) and New Missions for NATO," CRS Report for Congress, 94-249S, March 17, 1994.

45. For an excellent and insightful assessment of this debate see Bruce George, MP, "After the NATO Summit," Draft General Report, AL 88 PC(94) 2, Brussels, North Atlantic Assembly, May 1994, pp. 4-5.

46. NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner has stated that C/JTF should enhance French participation in NATO military activities, without its complete reintegration. See *Le Monde*, December 16, 1993.

47. For details see Press Release M-NAC-1(94)45, "Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction," Brussels, NATO Press Service, June 9, 1994.

48. See George, "After the NATO Summit," p. 6.

49. See *The Economist* (London), October 3, 1992, p. 34. The numerous experiences of former Minister of Defense Pierre Joxe, (*Le Monde*, November 10-11, 1991; *Le Monde*, September 30, 1992; and *Le Monde*, December 4, 1992), as well as the late Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, (*Le Monde*, September 6-7, 1992) commenting on new policy initiatives toward NATO and subsequent governmental denials are good cases in point.

50. This is not intended to disparage the efforts of former Minister of Defense Pierre Joxe to realign France's NATO policy. Before *cohabitation* he contributed significantly.

51. See *The Baltimore Sun*, January 16, 1994.

52. Of the many examples, see particularly, *Le Quotidien de Paris*, December 20, 1993, in *FBIS*-WEU-93-242, December 20, 1993, p. 35; *Liberation* (Paris), February 24, 1994, in *FBIS*-WEU-94-037, p. 35; and Agence France-Presse, May 5, 1994, in *FBIS*-WEU-94-088, May 6, 1994, p. 26. The most recent and most clearly stated French position can be found in Balladur's speech to the Institute for Advanced Studies of National Defense (IHEDN) on May 10, 1994, a copy of which can be found in "Balladur on

Proliferation Issues, Defense Policy," *FBIS*-WEU-94-157-A, August 15, 1994, pp. 6-12.

53. See, *Liberation*, February 24, 1994, in *FBIS*-WEU-94-037, February 24, 1994, pp. 28-30.

54. Interestingly, according to French defense expert Olivier Debouzy, it was during the presidency of Giscard d'Estaing, a Gaullist, and not during Mitterrand's "watch," that the most far reaching conceptual and doctrinal changes in Gaullist defense policy took place. Cf., Debouzy's book review of Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France,* in *Survival,* Volume 36, No. 1, Spring 1994, p. 186.

55. See *Le Monde*, December 21, 1993.

56. "Le défaut majeur de l'Alliance tient à l'autonomie excessive de son commandement militaire, et au trop faible contrôle politique sous lequel celui-ci opère." See G. Trangis, "Ni splendide isolement ni réintégration," *Le Monde*, July 14, 1993.

57. For extensive background on the difficult choices facing French defense officials see Ruiz Palmer, *French Strategic Options.* For recent information on the French defense procurement program see *The Washington Times,* June 13, 1994.

58. See "Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers," Press Statement M-DM-1(93)64, Brussels, NATO Press Service, October 21, 1993.

59. See *La Tribune Desfosses* (Paris), October 20, 1993, in *FBIS*-WEU- 93-201, October 20, 1993, p. 32.

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