

DEGAULLE AND THE FRENCH INDEPENDENT
NUCLEAR STRATEGY

by

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B. A., Stanford University, 1959

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A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

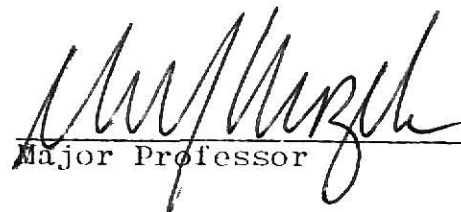
MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1974

Approved by


Major Professor

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PREFACE

When France joined the exclusive nuclear club in *Opening* 1960, she signalled to the world her willingness to use nuclear warfare to advance her national interests, even though this decision could well result in the annihilation of the human race. *It is* therefore important to understand why France decided to build a nuclear deterrent and *also* ~~even more~~ important to see how she has envisioned its employment. By learning the answers to these questions, world political leaders are better equipped to deal with France while ensuring that they not provoke her to unilateral nuclear action.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the development and justification of French nuclear strategy during the presidency of Charles deGaulle. Although the decision to build an atomic bomb rests with his predecessors of the Fourth Republic, it was Charles deGaulle, as first President of the Fifth Republic (1958-1969), who gave this military program special impetus and formulated its strategy. What is noteworthy is not that the French government developed a strategy to complement its nuclear deterrent but that the French President himself should have played so direct a role in its conception and that, in due course, he would develop an independent nuclear strategy outside the bounds of NATO. The two questions which become central to this study are: why did deGaulle choose an independent nuclear course, and

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what was the impact of this decision? The impact of the Gaullist decision is easier to determine than its explanation.

DeGaulle justified his nuclear strategy in political, diplomatic, and military terms. In fact, deGaulle's main strategic focus was political and diplomatic, rather than military, since there is no concrete evidence to prove that the French President ever felt that the national security of France required an independent nuclear strategy. As we shall see, deGaulle offered convincing military arguments for his nuclear deterrent and strategy but, at bottom, indicated that strategic independence was a basis for two non-military aims: enhanced national pride and international influence. Although this strategy has provided France with a degree of national pride and international influence, its overall impact has proven to be deleterious. Indeed, when deGaulle left public office, the French nuclear deterrent and concomitant strategy lacked worldwide credibility and had become more expensive and controversial than ever before. Nonetheless, it is significant to know that, according to the latest French White Paper on national defense (1972), no major shift in military strategy has occurred since deGaulle's retirement.

A few words are in order concerning the source materials for this project. DeGaulle's own writings proved to be indispensable in my attempt to understand his complex personality and in my quest for an explanation of his nuclear

strategy. As general background, I found his War Memoirs and Edge of the Sword very useful. For a clue to what lies behind his nuclear strategy, the Army of the Future and Memoirs of Hope were invaluable. The two sizable documents which dealt with deGaulle's major addresses, statements, and press conferences, while interesting and revealing a remarkable consistency of philosophy, were taken with suspicion. The documents provided much historical data and a good framework for tracing the evolution of French policy; however, the researcher soon learns that the cryptic deGaulle did not always say and mean the same thing. One is therefore confronted with the task of separating the "wheat from the chaff" and trying to discern deGaulle's real intent.

Among the secondary works on the subject, I found no cohesive or complete study of French nuclear strategy per se. The books which most closely paralleled the subject are Wilfrid Kohl's French Nuclear Diplomacy which deals with the international politics of deGaulle's policies, and Wolf Mandl's Deterrence and Persuasion which covers in detail the birth and development of the French military nuclear program. The several excellent works of André Beaufre and Raymond Aron help to explain French attitudes toward defense and offer a theoretical framework of an ideal military strategy of France.

Finally, no military man can fail to take a professional interest in this subject. French nuclear strategy

is unique. France was the first nation to develop a nuclear program after World War II, when not engaged in a military struggle for national survival. In no other country was the imprimatur of one individual so dominant as that of Charles deGaulle in France. His name became synonymous with his nation's nuclear strategy. Moreover, deGaulle is unique among the leaders of the nuclear powers in that he rejected military allies, pursued an independent strategy, and implied that the pressing value of nuclear weapons was political and diplomatic. My professional interest in this subject becomes personal. As an analyst of French military strategy for the Department of the Army, I hope that insights gained in preparing this work will have future applications.

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CHAPTER I

THE FOURTH REPUBLIC AND DEGAULLE'S NUCLEAR ANTECEDENTS

After the liberation of Paris, Charles deGaulle formed a provisional French government and served as head of state from October 1944 until his resignation in January 1946.¹ Having led the forces of the Fighting (Free) French, against Nazi-occupied France and the collaborationist French government of Marshal Philippe Petain from June through August 1944, deGaulle recognized that his nation had barely averted civil war and was suffering from internal wounds.² Therefore, deGaulle cautiously pursued the goals of civil order, economic recovery and government stability while refraining from diatribes and partisan politics.³ He appealed for unity and national pride but refrained from defining defense strategy, much less a nuclear one.⁴

Nevertheless, deGaulle's impact on France's early nuclear development was significant. In October 1945, he authorized the establishment of the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (CEA), ushering in France's nuclear era. DeGaulle charged the Commissariat with building a scientific infrastructure⁵ to provide nuclear energy for science and industry, as well as for national defense.⁶ Although he emphasized the peaceful application of nuclear energy, the former general

could not have ignored the military advantages of that energy source.⁷

Most of deGaulle's successors, however, as well as most other senior officials in government, showed indifference to the French nuclear program until after the Suez crisis of November 1956. The government offered little guidance to the CEA, while the agency's almost complete autonomy in nuclear planning illustrated the disinterest of political leaders. The only formal restriction was that the Commissariat could not pursue a military nuclear program.⁸

Prior to Suez, the Commissariat grew slowly and devoted most of its time to recruiting and training scientists and technicians, acquiring often scarce raw materials, and constructing nuclear installations.⁹ Research and experimentation suffered from a low budget, inexperience, and the refusal of the United States and British governments to share nuclear data and equipment with their ally.¹⁰ By the early 1950s, the government approved the construction of France's first plutonium-producing plant and requested that the electronics and aerospace industries begin preparing for the eventual use of nuclear energy.¹¹

Although the government had officially rejected a military nuclear program, it permitted secret protocols between the Minister of the Armed Forces and the CEA which specified that the Ministry should draft studies on the

possible use of nuclear weapons and should assign a small group of military officers to work with civilian scientists at the Commissariat. With the first liaison in 1952, a CEA civilian-military research team was formed and began a series of studies and experiments oriented to produce a prototype bomb.¹² By 1955 the Ministry had sealed its collaboration with the CEA by arranging to pay a portion of its annual budget in exchange for nuclear secrets.

Why did the government condone this violation of announced policy? Although successive premiers prior to the Suez crisis generally rejected the concept of a military nuclear program for France, they nevertheless recognized that enthusiasm for such a program was mounting, especially in the middle bureaucracy of the government and military establishment. To prevent unrest in the bureaucracy as well as unwanted debate in parliament on the question of a French nuclear deterrent, the premiers concluded that the tidiest compromise was to acquiesce in this unofficial liaison at the CEA.¹³

During the entire Fourth Republic, France's nuclear program was a loosely supervised affair. Until November 1956, the government provided little direction and encouragement for either a civilian or military application of nuclear energy, and the CEA operated in a virtual vacuum.¹⁴ Although there is no simple explanation of why the planning and responsibility rested so heavily on the shoulders of that

agency, several considerations help to explain the phenomenon. Since the growth and achievements of the Commissariat during the early period had been unimpressive and disappointingly slow, the government tended to ignore it. Moreover, many senior officials failed to see a need for nuclear energy. Finally, national security did not seem to require a nuclear military program since the government had committed itself to NATO and submitted to the nuclear protection of the United States. The military establishment, divided on the efficacy of nuclear weapons in general, as well as the advisability of a French deterrent, exerted no pressure on the government to adopt a military nuclear program.¹⁵

What were the events, culminating in the Suez crisis, which united the French government and military establishment on the desirability of a French military nuclear program? The government and military high command began to recognize during the last five years of the Fourth Republic that the United States no longer held unquestionable nuclear superiority and that France could not necessarily depend on the backing of the American nuclear force to protect French interests.¹⁶ The Soviet Union had detonated its first thermonuclear bomb in 1953¹⁷ and, by 1955, had placed into operation its first heavy bombers, capable of delivering nuclear weapons in a radius of 6000 miles.¹⁸ The French government interpreted these events as a shift in the balance of power which would force the United States to treat the Soviet Union with

considerable deference. Indeed, the government questioned the firmness of the American commitment to France and deemed it imprudent to depend wholly on the American nuclear "umbrella."¹⁹

Several incidents confirmed this growing suspicion. The United States refused to honor the French request for tactical nuclear weapons and other aid during the siege of Dienbienphu in 1954, unintentionally hastening France's withdrawal from Indo-China.²⁰ During the same year the United States supported the proposed European Defense Community (EDC), a concept unpopular in France and the subject of heated parliamentary debate. (Under the EDC, France would have compromised her national sovereignty by submitting her armed forces to a supranational authority and, in effect, would have placed her armed forces under a "European Minister of Defense."²¹) The Gaullists vehemently repudiated the EDC and any proposed legislation for supranationalism.²² When the Algerians began their insurgency against French colonial rule in November 1954, the United States could scarcely conceal its sympathy for the liberation of all colonial peoples and thus antagonized its French ally.²³ In October 1956, the French government observed that the United States, having encouraged the insurrection of the Hungarian freedom fighters, had abandoned the Hungarian cause when a showdown with the Soviet Union began to crystallize. This suggested to the Quai d'Orsay that Washington, regardless of its rhetoric,

would not risk nuclear war for anything less than its own vital interests.²⁴

The principal annoyance, however, was the Eisenhower Administration's conduct during the Suez crisis. In collusion with the Soviet Union, the United States delivered to Britain and France an ultimatum to withdraw their punitive expedition from Egypt. The French government considered the Suez Canal an economic lifeline and felt compelled to reopen it by force after Gamal Nasser, the President of Egypt, expropriated it in October 1956. To the French, the action of the United States government was a betrayal of the Western alliance. The lesson of Suez was clear. American and French vital interests did not always coincide, and France could not be certain of American political or military support. Traditional American superiority in nuclear affairs had given way to near parity with the Soviet Union. The world balance of power seemed to equalize as the Russians demonstrated their new technological prowess. In 1957, in the aftermath of Suez, they tested their first ICBM, launched their famous Sputnik, and introduced IRBMs into central Europe.²⁵ Thus, the shift in the military balance between the superpowers occasioned a reconsideration of military, diplomatic, and political factors which hastened the French decision to develop nuclear weapons.

Despite the apparent shift in the military balance between the superpowers, the French government's rationale

for adopting a military nuclear deterrent was not solely military.²⁶ The complicated interaction of political, diplomatic, and military factors hastened the French decision to develop nuclear weapons. Because the decision resulted from a combination of concerns, the governments of the Fourth Republic failed to enunciate a cohesive policy statement of how they expected to use nuclear weapons. Even the official approval to undertake the military nuclear program and to build a prototype bomb was the culmination of small decisions, often at the subcabinet level. In other words, events unfolded without precise directives from the government. The nuclear strategy of the Fourth Republic was no strategy at all but merely the specific decision to build and test nuclear weapons.

Since there was no general nuclear strategy during the Fourth Republic, one must look elsewhere for antecedents of deGaulle's policy of an independent nuclear force. Two of them lay in France's foreign policy trends and her general military strategy. The lack of strong executive leadership and interest in France's overall nuclear program was a manifestation of the more basic problem which troubled the short-lived governments of the Fourth Republic. Faced with fragile coalitions, a weak economy, recurring internal dissidence and colonial warfare, the numerous premiers found themselves continually involved in crisis management, which diverted their energies from developing long-range policy.²⁷ Under

France's chaotic parliamentary system, the main goal had become mere survival.²⁸ Within this context, civil servants and middle level bureaucrats involved in low-priority projects, like those at the Commissariat, could operate with great autonomy. Senior officials of the government would avoid any controversial issue, such as the creation of a French nuclear deterrent, which could result in political crisis and the collapse of governments. Consequently, high officials generally permitted programs to drift without central control or guidance.

Although the French government and, to a lesser extent, the high command appeared in disarray during the period 1946 to 1958--drifting or presiding over erratic policies, several broad trends developed. The French governments identified the Soviet Union, especially from 1948 to 1956, as the paramount threat to national security, recognized the necessity of military allies, and became fully committed to NATO. The concept of European integration also received heavy attention in high government circles.²⁹

Although a subject of much parliamentary debate, French governments edged toward European integration, ultimately choosing to join the Common Market in 1957.³⁰

Like the French political leadership, the hierarchy of the armed forces, both civilian and military, failed to enunciate a comprehensive strategy during the Fourth Republic. Several facts serve to explain this problem. Since the

military after World War II was generally held in disrepute for its capitulation in 1940 and its affiliation with Petain's Vichy regime, its leaders felt estranged from much of the French citizenry.³¹ Therefore, the military hesitated to assert itself or to raise so controversial a subject as nuclear strategy. Obedient and loyal to civil authority and disdainful of political debate and factional bickering, the high command sought strategic guidance from the government, rather than to provide it.³² Consequently, France had no clear military strategy. Instead of serving as a vanguard or united front for a military nuclear program, the high command evaded the question until 1956. Senior military officers could justify this failure to the extent that the military became preoccupied with the major colonial war in Indo-China, the subsequent insurgency in Algeria, and recurrent civil strife at home.³³ Although it lacked a clear and comprehensive military strategy, the French military adhered to three basic propositions: devotion to the French Empire, opposition to communism, and support of NATO.³⁴

Military careerists, who had spent time and blood on colonial assignment, had a greater active interest in the French Empire than in metropolitan France. They were determined to fight to prevent its demise. The careerists empathized with the overseas French, who appreciated and respected their presence as protectors, and resented the indifference of Paris

to the military's heroic efforts. Many officers blamed the loss of Indo-China on defeatism in metropolitan France and considered it a sellout. This civil-military antipathy, dating to World War II, reinforced the high command in orienting its efforts to the French Empire rather than to France in Europe.³⁵

The Algerian insurgency was of special concern to the military establishment. After the government authorized strong military action to destroy it, the high command placed unmistakable priority on winning the Algerian campaign. The military leaders reasoned that a global war or a limited war in Europe was unlikely but that communist-inspired insurgencies and revolutionary wars, as in Algeria, would continue to plague the world. Therefore, France would concentrate on developing expertise in counterrevolutionary and counterinsurgent action. The high command could not understand why the United States and other NATO nations failed to believe that the Algerian insurgency was communist-inspired and that North Africa was as vital to the defense of the Free World as were the Western nations bordering the Iron Curtain.³⁶ Having transferred a huge force from France and Germany by the late 1950s, the military hierarchy demonstrated its conviction that Algeria was as important as the NATO states in Europe.

Although the high command became increasingly preoccupied with Algeria, it never repudiated NATO. In fact,

the senior French officers in the organization continually pressed the United States for a greater French role. Already recognizing the Soviet Union as France's greatest military threat in Europe, the high command concluded that NATO was the best instrument for ensuring the national security. Although by 1954 some senior military leaders had begun to question Washington's willingness to use its nuclear deterrent, there is no evidence to suggest that the French military establishment challenged the importance of the United States for the defense of France or the wisdom of France remaining in NATO.³⁷ The American nuclear deterrent compensated for France's diminishing troop levels in Europe. The high command accepted France's nonstrategic land, air and sea role, since these conventional forces were supplemented by the American nuclear deterrent. It seemed to matter little who controlled such weapons as long as they were committed to the defense of Western Europe.

It was not the senior military officers therefore but those at the middle level, including Colonel Charles Ailleret and his colleagues from the Commissariat, who argued for an independent nuclear deterrent within a clearly defined strategic framework. These officers justified their recommendation in political, diplomatic, and military terms, arguing that French nuclear weapons would not only increase the flexibility of French military strength but would also add to French pride and international prestige. A French

nuclear deterrent would not only help to compensate for sizeable troop shifts to Algeria, it would also reduce France's total dependence on the American nuclear deterrent. Finally, French nuclear weapons would tend to place French-American relations on a more equal footing and give France a stronger voice in NATO. Although these strategic arguments by Ailleret and his associates gained some acceptance after Suez, the highest military circles advocated only the development of France's embryonic nuclear deterrent and not of a strategy for its employment. Whatever the influence of Ailleret on French military thought, he had no influence on a high command whose talents were committed to the Algerian crisis.

Since the defeat at Suez was humiliating, it generated an anger that united the government behind a military nuclear program. Nonetheless, there lingered in the high circles of government and the military a pronounced skepticism about the value of the independent nuclear deterrent. The program was now urgent enough to be adopted but not urgent enough to become the center of a strategy. Skepticism notwithstanding, the high command began in December 1956 a series of studies to determine a prototype aircraft and missile as delivery systems for French nuclear weapons. In addition, studies were expanded to consider a suitable organization of fighting forces to use nuclear weapons, although the government approved no final plan.³⁸ What is clear is that the vast majority

of officers concerned with the French nuclear program felt so deep a commitment to NATO that they never expected France's proposed deterrent to be used unilaterally or outside the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.³⁹

FOOTNOTES

¹Guy de Carmoy, The Foreign Policies of France: 1944-1968 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 3.

²After the capitulation of France in June 1940, the majority of the political and military leadership in France sided with Petain who, in an attempt to reduce bloodshed, save the destruction of the French Army, prevent total occupation by the Germans, and restore stability to the nation, surrendered to the Germans and accepted their terms of Armistice. Under German occupation, the French population suffered many privations, humiliations and atrocities from their conqueror. A smaller French contingent, led by Brigadier General Charles deGaulle, bolted the government, fled the country, insisted that surrender to Germany was ignominious, and perpetuated the anti-Nazi struggle from exile.

³Jean Blondel and E. Drexel Godfrey, The Government in France (3d ed; New York: Thomas Crowell, 1968), p. 175.

⁴Stanley Hoffman (ed.), In Search of France (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 336.

⁵The term infrastructure includes personnel, equipment, and facilities.

⁶Wilfrid L. Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 16.

⁷Lawrence Scheineman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 5-7.

⁸Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 18.

⁹Scheinerman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic, op. cit., pp. 20-57.

¹⁰Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 17; President Eisenhower relaxed this restriction in 1954 and permitted sharing nuclear secrets for non-military purposes; and Carmoy, op. cit., p. 102.

¹¹Wolf Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 138-143.

¹²Ibid., pp. 142-143.

¹³Ibid., pp. 135-150.

¹⁴Scheineman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 20-57.

¹⁶Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

¹⁷Carmoy, op. cit., p. 180.

¹⁸Louis J. Halle, The Cold War as History (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 343.

¹⁹Scheineman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic, op. cit., pp. 116-126.

²⁰Alfred Grosser, French Foreign Policy Under DeGaulle (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), p. 103.

²¹Halle, op. cit., pp. 252-253.

²²Carmoy, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 124; The Catholique mouvement républicain populaire (MRP), led by two staunch European integrationists, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, was the only political party to vote as a bloc for the EDC. The party consisted of moderates, many of whom were Alsatians, who viewed the EDC and supranational institutions in general as the panacea for a lasting detente between France and Germany and as another stepping stone toward European political union; Carmoy, ibid., pp. 36-41.

²³George A. Kelly, "The Political Background of the French A-Bomb," Orbis, (Fall 1960), 286-287.

²⁴Scheineman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic, op. cit.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 175-202.

²⁶Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁷Hoffman, In Search of France, op. cit., pp. 74-117.

²⁸Simon Serafty, France, DeGaulle and Europe: The Policy of the Fourth and Fifth Republics Toward the Continent (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968), p. 81.

²⁹Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 55.

³⁰Lord Gladwyn, DeGaulle's Europe or Why the General Says No (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), p. 163; France joined the European Economic Community or Common Market in March 1957. This was a supranational organization, administered by a high authority, and claiming the membership of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

³¹Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 70.

³²Orville D. Menard, The Army and the Fifth Republic (Omaha: The University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 7; The military break from the government in 1958 was an aberration in modern French history.

³³Edgar S. Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations (New York: 20th Century Fund, 1964), p. 226.

³⁴John S. Ambler, The French Army in Politics - 1945-1962 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1966).

³⁵George A. Kelly, Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 31-104.

³⁶Ambler, The French Army in Politics - 1945-1962, op. cit., pp. 335-365.

³⁷John S. Ambler, The Government and Politics of France (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1971), p. 301.

³⁸Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 43-47.

³⁹Scheinman, Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic, op. cit., pp. 171-774.

CHAPTER II

DEGAULLE DISCOVERS A ROLE FOR A FRENCH NUCLEAR STRATEGY

On 13 May 1958, French settlers stormed the government-general building in Algiers and nearly precipitated a civil war. They doubted that the government could crush the Arab insurgency and had even begun to doubt the wisdom of retaining ties with France. The military high command were in collusion with most senior civil bureaucrats and Gaullist partisans in Algeria. They immediately seized control of the dissidents and led the French Algerians into open insurrection against the crumbling Fourth Republic.

The upheaval should have come as no surprise in Paris. Four days earlier, General Raoul Salan, the joint military commander in Algeria, had given warning to the President of the Republic as he sought a new government. Unless he appointed an acceptable premier, the French Army in Algeria would abandon the metropolitan government and might even join a rebellion. The appointment of Pierre Pflimlin as premier displeased dissident circles. Consequently, after the incident of 13 May, Salan became virtual dictator of Algeria and even began staging forces for a possible invasion of metropolitan France.

President René Coty yielded to pressure from sympathizers

of Salan by requesting the resignation of the new premier. He then designated Charles deGaulle to succeed Pfmilin. Although many senior officers, formerly associated with the Vichy regime, personally disliked deGaulle, they recognized that he was a strong leader, associated with Algerie Française, and the only acceptable compromise candidate.¹

DeGaulle's return after 12 years of voluntary retirement owed less to his popularity than to the fact that his broad acceptability could create an opportunity to reunite the country. He could not easily have re-entered the French political arena if a crisis of major proportion had not demanded it. Only internal crisis based on colonial problems brought the National Assembly to confirm him as leader of France--not dissatisfaction with foreign or defense policy.

Termed the "hermit of Colombey"² for refraining since 1955 from public pronouncements on national issues, deGaulle had made no definitive statement on Algerie Française, but the consensus was that he favored the continuation of French rule. Nevertheless, deGaulle had a clear set of strategic concepts, to include a major role for French nuclear weapons, but knew that implementation of these ideas demanded internal stability. DeGaulle recognized that so long as his country continued to bleed in North Africa--causing near schism in France--and the French political system continued to stumble forward unreformed, he could never achieve his strategic aims. Eager to be premier but on his own terms,

deGaulle declined to risk his opportunity by doing or saying anything controversial. Knowing that the support of the military, much of parliament, and the President himself was transitory, deGaulle decided to drive a hard bargain by reshaping French political institutions. Therefore, prior to his investiture, deGaulle conferred at length with President Coty and insisted on certain conditions before he would accept the premiership. He requested: "full powers, prerogation of parliament, a new Constitution to be drawn up by my government and submitted to referendum."³ DeGaulle refused to subject himself to the weaknesses that had compromised preceding governments. Moreover, the fate of these governments suggested that deGaulle's would be short-lived. By restructuring the government under a new Constitution, deGaulle knew that he could control his own fate and not be beholden to the army of any other clique.⁴

Coty and parliament honored his request and, on 1 June 1958, the National Assembly elected deGaulle as the last premier of the moribund Fourth Republic. DeGaulle then took steps to draft a new Constitution and consolidate his political control. His followers in the Union pour la nouvelle républic (UNR) became firmly established and were the dominant party in parliament during deGaulle's 11 year tenure.⁵ Finally, on 28 September 1958, the nation approved a new Constitution by referendum and elected deGaulle President of the new Fifth Republic of France. The election resolved,

to deGaulle's satisfaction, the previous ambiguities regarding roles and prerogatives within the government and revealed the public's preference for presidential over parliamentary rule. Three articles of the new Constitution especially pleased deGaulle since they ensured him a direct role in foreign policy and national defense. Article Five provided that the President be "guarantor of national independence, of the integrity of the national territory, and of respect for agreements and treaties;" Article 15 identified the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; Article 21 provided that the President could overrule the Premier in matters of national defense.⁶ DeGaulle had thus established himself as President of the Republic to deal with the crises at hand: the Algerian revolt and French disunity.⁷

One can only speculate when deGaulle said: "I had played no part whatsoever in the local agitation, or the military movement, or the political schemes which provoked it, and I had no connection with any elements on the spot or any minister in Paris."⁸ In neither his Memoirs nor any official policy statements does he admit that he had intended to liquidate it if he returned to power in June 1958. Whenever he did settle on a policy regarding the ultimate disposition of Algerie Française, deGaulle kept it to himself. As a result, he and the army in Algeria coexisted without trust but without conflict. A master of ambiguity, deGaulle used

language to satisfy the largest possible audience. For example, deGaulle was vague on 4 June when he addressed a mixed throng in Algiers: "I have understood you." Understood what? Was he talking to the Arabs or to the French?⁹

DeGaulle resolved the mystery on 16 September 1959, announcing that Arab and French Algerians would choose by referendum one of three options: independence, "association," or integration with France.¹⁰ This official announcement occasioned a serious confrontation between deGaulle and the army in Algeria, the creation of the Secret Army Organization (OAS), and an abortive army putsch against deGaulle in April 1961.¹¹ But the prestigious generals could not outbid deGaulle and the Fifth Republic for the loyalty of the majority of the army. DeGaulle prevailed: Algeria would receive its independence on 1 July 1962.¹² He had come to recognize that the Algerian crisis was to debilitating. Algerie Française created more division and embarrassment than prestige and profit, proving that French possession was like harboring a cancer. Unlike a large minority of the army, deGaulle and most of the French electorate did not fear that independent Algeria would succumb to communism or threaten the Mediterranean underbelly of France. Furthermore, deGaulle was preoccupied with international affairs, and the internal nuisance of Algeria was a distraction to his main goal for France. He wanted Algeria out of the way so he could proceed to the main business of his tenure. DeGaulle's ultimate goal, the restoration of France's greatness, was vague and elusive. Because he shunned specific ideologies and declined to adopt

an exact schedule for achieving his goal, deGaulle expected to build a broad constituency.¹³ He considered himself a statesman rather than a politician and loathed most politicians for their party loyalty, shallow perspectives, and selfish motives.¹⁴ DeGaulle was not bound by partisanship and approved any practical effort to enhance French grandeur. Any tactic could be acceptable to take advantage of any opportunity.¹⁵ In Machiavellian fashion, he pursued his goal with "indifference to moral law, acceptance of the philosophy of Hegel and the practice of the political ideas of Maurras."¹⁶ Although deGaulle's defense policy sometimes seemed contradictory, it therefore enjoyed consistency in its exploitation of opportunity. Whenever deGaulle achieved an advantage for the restoration of France to importance in the world, his strategy was consistent. Allowing Algeria its independence freed the French government to work in new ways for the restoration of the nation's greatness. The means to this objective were both psychological and practical. DeGaulle wanted to use the nation-state and international power politics as means of developing morale and a sense of national destiny. "It is the nations," deGaulle said in 1958, "very different from one another, each having its own soul, its own history, its own language and its own misfortunes, glories and ambitions--it is these states which are the only entities with the right to order and the authority to act."¹⁷ Although he never denied the need for spiritual or material interdependence among nations, he refused to place France's political,

economic, or military destiny in the hands of others.¹⁸ DeGaulle had stated as early as 1949 that it was inconceivable that France place her defense under the control of others since this would be a renunciation of sovereignty.¹⁹ For the same reason, deGaulle resisted economic or political integration.²⁰ Nonetheless, since the majority of Frenchmen had never enthusiastically endorsed integration, his approach was not politically impractical.²¹ What deGaulle wanted in Europe was a system of pre-existing independent states without any federal center.²² In effect, he objected to any association or alliance in which France did not enjoy equality or dominance.

DeGaulle believed that France was a unique civilization that had favorably affected the entire world. Although the superpowers were richer and more powerful, French culture and intellect were superior. These impelled France to vigorous action in the world.²³ As deGaulle wrote in his War Memoirs:

The positive side of my mind always assures me that France is not really herself unless in the front rank: that only vast enterprises are capable of counterbalancing the ferments of dispersal which are inherent in her people; that our country, as it is, surrounded by the others, as they are, must aim high and hold itself straight, on pain of mortal danger. In short, to my mind, France cannot be France 'without greatness.'²⁴

As one historian has noted, "the whole of deGaulle was linked to the France he loved, venerated and served as a son."²⁵

Despite the inferiority of France in military and political capability, deGaulle wanted to restore his Republic to first-class status and prestige. To be great, deGaulle concluded, France must exercise worldwide influence and never subordinate herself to either of the superpowers.²⁶

With this in mind, deGaulle adopted two successive approaches toward international relations: first, to gain equality or control in international organizations; second, to reject multinational organizations in favor of personal bilateral negotiations. From 1958 to 1962, deGaulle tried to work within NATO and the Common Market; however, by 1961 he had also begun voicing strong support for a proposed "European Political Union"--Europe des Patries--which would ultimately supersede both NATO and the Common Market. The proposal of Europe des Patries operated at cross-purposes with the more supranational-minded leaders of the Western European governments. DeGaulle was suggesting a nationalist's solution for European relations by endorsing a confederation of European nations based on existing states and without any central capital. Unlike the committed integrationists, deGaulle sought the kind of loose confederation that Metternich of Austria had pursued 150 years earlier: a concert of nations, now with France as the senior partner.²⁷ By 1963, deGaulle was frustrated by his inability to gain greater French influence in the existing organizations, stem the rising tide of supranationalism, or to sell the concept of Europe des Patries. Therefore, he resorted to

bilateral diplomacy to maximize French influence. Yet, even his efforts at bilateralism, which will be discussed in Chapter III, met with only modest success. One begins to see clearly deGaulle's egocentrism as a world leader as the years unfold.

DeGaulle reserved a special role for himself in achieving his goal for France. Like Charlemagne, he considered himself the indispensable man of destiny. In the words of one political analyst, William Schlam: "Gaullism was Charles deGaulle's notion that France needed a ruler--not just a government, not just a political leader, not even a dictator, but an honest-to-God ruler, a true king--in short, Charles deGaulle."²⁸ This autocratic approach may have derived from his experience as an officer in the army who equated efficiency and success with central direction and a clear chain of command. "In order to make decisions and determine measures," he said in his War Memoirs, an organization "must have a qualified arbitrator at its head."²⁹ As the political leader who cut the Algerian knot and ushered in the stable Fifth Republic, deGaulle had no doubt of his qualification to lead France.

DeGaulle was vain, domineering, blunt, and often humorless. But he was a charismatic leader whom most Frenchmen credited with great statesmanship.³⁰ As President of France, deGaulle was the last living giant among the Allied leaders of World War II. There was no living patriot who

enjoyed a broader base of national respectability than Charles deGaulle. He was the one major French leader to emerge from World War II not only untarnished, but heroic. He inspired the Résistance, led the anti-Nazi crusade for France and, by demonstrating exceptional courage and determination, helped save the French honor during its dimmest hour. Moreover, 13 years later as President of the Republic, he had brought economic prosperity and political stability to his country while gaining it more respectability in world affairs than it had enjoyed for almost four generations.³¹ He convinced his constituents that he was a selfless and responsible servant of the people and understood their true desires. Although there was internal debate over such specific Gaullist programs as opposition to European integration and the decision to build a nuclear deterrent, deGaulle generally received wide support in foreign and defense policy throughout his presidency.³²

But image was not enough. National unity and deGaulle's personalized rule were not automatically material factors in foreign and defense policy. The broader objectives required hard, physical support. Therefore, on 23 October 1958, at his first press conference as President of the new Fifth Republic, deGaulle announced that France needed nuclear weapons to assure its national sovereignty and that he intended to expedite the military nuclear program started by his predecessors in the Fourth Republic. He said that "while the

other three states (Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States) remained overarmed, France will not accept a position of chronic and overwhelming inferiority."³³ Three months earlier, deGaulle had appointed Pierre Guillaumat, a Gaullist of long standing and former Administrator-General of the CEA, to be Minister of the Armed Forces³⁴; and from that time forward, although under civilian control through the CEA, the military's decision-making role in nuclear affairs greatly increased.

On 13 February 1960, at Reggione in the Sahara, the military detonated the first French atomic bomb, making good deGaulle's talk of an independent nuclear capability. In the following May, deGaulle added:

France must have her own role . . . and her own personality. This implies that she must acquire a nuclear armament since others have one . . . that she must be sole mistress of her resources and her territory; in short, that her destiny, although associated with that of her allies, must remain in her own hands.³⁵

Soon after the nuclear tests, he submitted the first coordinated nuclear program to parliament for approval.³⁶ The program, known as the loi de programme (program law) was designed to cover the years 1960 to 1965. The opposition viewed the loi as a vengeful reaction to the refusal of the United States and Britain to share their nuclear secrets with France, and thus they fought the loi vigorously.³⁷ There were two especially delicate problems. Was the proposed French nuclear striking force (force de frappe) to be independent

of NATO, and was this deterrent to become France's main military effort, even to the detriment of modernizing or expanding conventional forces? The answer to both questions was yes.³⁸ The force de frappe was to be the main body of deGaulle's military establishment and the essence of his strategy.

In December 1960, after two months of steady debate in parliament, the controversial loi finally was passed intact.³⁹ It provided for the development of France's first generation of nuclear weapons, atomic bombs of 50 to 60 kilotons, and for the concurrent manufacture of 50 Mirage jets to carry them. These bomb-laden Mirages would constitute the force de frappe. The loi also provided for the development of a first nuclear submarine and an additional isotope separation plant at Pierrelatte.⁴⁰

The first loi also caused considerable furor within the armed forces. The army bemoaned the fact that the air force was given custody of the force de frappe while the army approached obsolescence.⁴¹ Finally, after heavy pressure from both the army and its supporters in parliament, the first loi was amended in 1962 to provide added funds for conventional army forces.⁴²

The second loi, passed in December 1964, was to cover the six-year period from 1965 to 1970. This loi also passed, but only after heated debate and after the first Mirages had become operational.⁴³ The second loi continued the acquisition of the Mirages and authorized the development

of IRBMs with 150 kiloton warheads. The IRBMs were to be a second generation system to replace the Mirages and to be operational by the early 1970s.⁴⁴ The loi further specified the addition of two nuclear submarines, the construction of a tactical nuclear weapons system, progress toward a thermonuclear warhead, and a 50 percent reduction in the size of the army.⁴⁵ DeGaulle had thus decided that France would concentrate on a nuclear deterrent of atomic bombers, subordinate the conventional forces, and pave the way for successive generations of nuclear weapons. DeGaulle conceived that the force de frappe could provide a most useful domestic function. After the Algerian settlement of 1962, deGaulle viewed the force as a tool for renewing the stability and strength of the military establishment. Sensitive to the problems attendant on the military's withdrawal from Algeria, deGaulle granted amnesty to most officers associated with the attempted putsch in 1961 and even assumed full responsibility for the French disengagement from North Africa. DeGaulle did not want to break the spirit of the military.⁴⁶

At the time when France was yielding her overseas empire, the public was clamoring for a smaller standing military.⁴⁷ The prestige of the armed forces was low, and the army would be newly confined to duty in metropolitan France. DeGaulle wanted the force de frappe to dispel the anger, boredom, and despair of the armed forces.⁴⁸ He hoped that the force would

reunite the military, redirect it toward the strategic defense of Europe, and provide it with renewed respect at home and abroad. At the same time, commitment to the force would win back the army's loyalty to civilian authority.⁴⁹ One cannot help noting how sensitive and prophetic deGaulle had been in 1934:

In the rough school of character the army can recover its faith and pride. Thus strengthened, it can wait without dismay for the scales of fortune to dip once more in its favor. For the bad days will pass, the spirit and the wind which had cruelly bent the tree will strengthen it again.⁵⁰

Unlike the politicians of the Fourth Republic, deGaulle integrated nuclear weapons into his political and military strategy. He did not merely leave the nuclear program on the fringe of his interests. DeGaulle also differed from his predecessors by emphasizing the political and diplomatic rather than just the military value of nuclear weapons. With a sense of history, deGaulle looked at France in the long term and in her totality. Lessons of the past taught him that France was strongest when united and stable, and the French leader knew that such qualities at home could be best achieved by a successful policy abroad.

FOOTNOTES

¹Ambler, The French Army in Politics - 1945-1962, op. cit., pp. 204, 208.

²Carmoy, op. cit., p. 176.

³Charles deGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971), p. 27.

⁴Ibid., pp. 17-36; Menard, op. cit., pp. 129-131.

⁵Phillip Ouston, France in the 20th Century (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 242.

⁶Blondel and Godfrey, op. cit., pp. 194-200.

⁷Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., p. 136.

⁸DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 17.

⁹Menard, op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁰Ambler, The French Army in Politics - 1945-1962, op. cit., p. 251.

¹¹This episode in French history is well explained in Orville Menard's The Army and the Fifth Republic.

¹²Menard, op. cit., pp. 151-234.

¹³Carmoy, op. cit., pp. 468-569.

¹⁴Stanley and Inge Hoffman, "The Will of Grandeur: DeGaulle as a Political Artist," Daedalus (Summer 1968), 835-850.

¹⁵For example, deGaulle made his strongest overtures to China in 1964 when the Sino-Soviet feud was at its height. Seeking a bilateral detente with the Soviet Union in 1966, he withdrew France from NATO when the United States was bogged down in Vietnam.

¹⁶Carmoy, op. cit., p. 469.

¹⁷Stephen Clarkson, "Peaceful Co-Existence: Gaullist Style," Current History, Vol. 54, No. 316 (March 1968), 160.

¹⁸Kelly, George A. "The Political Background of the French A-Bomb," Orbis (Fall 1960), 41; For this reason, the Gaullists voted "non" in 1954 on the proposal for a European Defense Community (EDC).

¹⁹Carmoy, op. cit., p. 273.

²⁰Ambler, The Government and Politics of France, op. cit., p. 217; It should be no surprise, therefore, that deGaulle was conspicuous in not mourning the death of one of the French founders of the European Economic Community, Robert Schuman; Paul Reynaud, The Foreign Policy of Charles DeGaulle--A Critical Assessment (New York: Odyssey Press, 1964), p. 26.

²¹Pierre Henry Laurent, "France and the Common Market Crisis," Current History, Vol. 54, No. 319 (March 1968), pp. 166-167.

²²Charles deGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964 (New York: French Embassy, Press and Information Division, 1964), pp. 92-93.

²³Pierre Hassner, "From Napoleon III to DeGaulle," Interplay, Vol. 1, No. 7 (February 1968), 9.

²⁴Charles deGaulle, The Complete War Memoirs of Charles DeGaulle (3 vols.; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 1.

²⁵Richard D. Challener, The French Theory of the Nation in Arms, 1866-1939 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 167.

²⁶DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 247.

²⁷DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 171.

²⁸Irwin Isenberg, France Under DeGaulle (New York: Wilson Co., 1967), p. 46.

²⁹DeGaulle, The Complete War Memoirs of Charles DeGaulle, op. cit., pp. 890-891.

³⁰Wladyslaw W. Kulski, DeGaulle in the World: The Foreign Policy of the Fifth French Republic (Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp. 33-37.

³¹Ibid., p. 68.

³²Ibid., p. 37.

³³DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 28.

- ³⁴Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 83.
- ³⁵DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 77.
- ³⁶Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 110.
- ³⁷Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 108.
- ³⁸Ibid., pp. 116-119.
- ³⁹Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., p. 142.
- ⁴⁰Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 179-180.
- ⁴¹Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., pp. 188-192.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 196.
- ⁴³Carmoy, op. cit., p. 356.
- ⁴⁴Wolf Mendl, "Perspectives of Contemporary French Defense Policy," The World Today, XXIV (February 1968), 51.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 178; Isenberg, France Under DeGaulle, op. cit., p. 25.
- ⁴⁶Grosser, French Foreign Policy Under DeGaulle, op. cit., p. 50.
- ⁴⁷Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., pp. 181-186.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 213.
- ⁴⁹Elizabeth Stabler, "French Foreign Policy," Current History, Vol. 50, No. 296 (April 1966), p. 233.
- ⁵⁰Charles deGaulle, The Edge of the Sword (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. 53.

CHAPTER III

DEGAULLE'S INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR STRATEGY IN DIPLOMATIC TERMS

DeGaulle recognized many advantages in the emergent French deterrent and foresaw its significant impact on domestic, diplomatic, and military policy.¹ He became convinced that the independent French deterrent would help restore national unity and pride, reorient the military establishment from Algeria to Europe, and serve as the instrument for enhancing the position of France in global affairs.

In 1958, deGaulle did not believe that the cold war had ended, but he also doubted that the Russians would attack Western Europe. Therefore he questioned the military need for NATO.² NATO became the focal point of deGaulle's diplomatic discomfiture and an obstacle to deGaulle's grand design for France.³ DeGaulle regretted that the Allies of Western Europe had subjected themselves to the political, economic, and military hegemony of the United States. He hoped for the eventual demise of NATO, from whose ashes he would build a new European defense coalition under French domination.⁴

DeGaulle knew, however, that he could not openly repudiate NATO or his commitment to the Atlantic Alliance

while France was still weak. He decided to bide his time, taking "appropriate steps in the direction of Atlantic disengagement while at the same time maintaining our direct co-operation with the United States and Britain."⁵ A moot point is whether or not deGaulle would have supported NATO had he been given equal status in the organization. In any event, he perceived that the United States dominated the Atlantic Alliance through NATO and, most significant, encroached on French sovereignty. It was through this perception that a feud erupted between France and the United States, reaching from 1958 until deGaulle's formal withdrawal from NATO in 1966.

The North Atlantic Treaty does not bind or coerce any member nation of NATO. Article Five states that the signatories agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America would be considered as an attack against them all. But it does not bind a nation to military retaliation against the belligerent. This right is left to the discretion of the member nation. NATO is not a supranational institution, but a coalition of North Atlantic states committed by intent to defend themselves as a bloc against external aggression.⁶ Therefore, how could deGaulle argue that NATO was an encroachment on French sovereignty? In more precise terms, deGaulle objected to NATO because the organization denied him the degree of flexibility he deemed essential for French greatness. He preferred the prospect

of leading his own military coalition. Short of that, he would engage in direct bilateral negotiations in which he could act without consultation or Allied interference. NATO, deGaulle contended, subordinated a country to the view of the majority of member states on such issues as global strategy, German reunification, East-West detente, and world trade. Specifically, he felt that France without nuclear weapons was ipso facto a second-class member and a lackey of Anglo-American policies.⁷ DeGaulle objected that the United States held seven of the 13 NATO commands, possessed a preponderance of nuclear weapons and exclusively controlled their distribution and use in NATO, failed to consult with its NATO allies regarding global strategy, and tended to treat NATO as a subordinate.⁸

DeGaulle argued that even though France had formal control over her military destiny, the United States by its overwhelming power could draw France into conflicts that she could otherwise avoid. In an address to the École Militaire on 16 September 1959, deGaulle said that "the defense of France must be in French hands (and) if a nation like France is obliged to make war, it must be its own war; its effort must be its own effort."⁹ In effect, deGaulle was arguing that alliances were important but that in the course of history a state could not hope to survive unless it assumed full responsibility for its own defense. In addition, its military high command deserved the authority

and prestige associated with directing its own strategy and battles. He further declared:

The consequence is that we must provide ourselves, over the next few years, with a force capable of acting on our own behalf, with what is commonly known as a 'strike force,' capable of being deployed at any moment and in any place. The basis of this force must obviously be atomic weapons.¹⁰

Despite deGaulle's displeasure with American dominance in NATO, the French nuclear deterrent remained a "paper tiger," not becoming an operational reality until the first Mirage IV-As were assembled late in 1964.¹¹ DeGaulle knew, therefore, that his best interim policy would be to work within the confines of NATO, hoping to strengthen the voice of France in the decision-making process. Again demonstrating shrewdness while manipulating a situation to maximum French advantage, deGaulle refrained from specifying the conditions under which the developmental force de frappe would be employed. Moreover, he waited until 1964, when the force became operational, before articulating a French nuclear strategy. By such evasion from 1958 to 1964, deGaulle hoped to increase French prestige and influence in the Atlantic Alliance through certain American concessions. By deferring definitive action on his force de frappe, deGaulle could expect Anglo-American nuclear assistance. He felt further that, since the non-French hierarchy in NATO could only guess whether France would withdraw from NATO upon the development of the French deterrent, they would seek accommodation with France to

prevent such an occurrence. DeGaulle thought that he strengthened his bargaining position by creating an air of mystery.¹²

In fact, the opposite proved true. Instead of acquiescing to Gaullist demands and wooing the French, the United States and the remaining NATO members discouraged the construction of the French deterrent and continued their traditional method of operations. It is hard to believe that this surprised the astute deGaulle, since he must have sensed that the United States favored its dominant role and would do nothing deliberately to erode it. Nevertheless, deGaulle probably felt frustrated from 1958 to 1962 when he was working well within the confines of NATO. From 1962 onward, deGaulle pursued an increasingly independent tack in international affairs, unfettered by existing organizations, as his developmental force de frappe approached reality and France became correspondingly less dependent on the American nuclear deterrent.

In July 1958, deGaulle requested technical nuclear assistance from the United States to build a reactor for a planned nuclear submarine but, because it would violate the provisions of the MacMahon Act, Congress denied the request.¹³ At about the same time, deGaulle recommended the formation of an international consortium to build IRBMs for the defense of Western Europe, but again the United States rejected the suggestion.¹⁴ In September 1958, deGaulle sent a memorandum

to NATO Secretary General Paul-Henri Spaak (of Belgium), British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, and American President Dwight Eisenhower, proposing that Britain, France, and the United States form a permanent consulting body in NATO to deal with worldwide diplomatic and military crises. These Allied leaders denied deGaulle's request, arguing that it would violate the North Atlantic Treaty. DeGaulle remained unassuaged since he had determined that Britain and the United States, through their so-called "special Anglo-Saxon relationship," already controlled global strategy and major policy within NATO.

The timing of the proposal, called the "triumvirate," was significant and betrayed French anxiety over recent unilateral actions by the Americans. The United States conducted an incursion into Lebanon in July 1958 and sent its Seventh Fleet to guard Quemoy and Matsu, the offshore islands of Taiwan, against a possible attack by Communist China during the same summer. DeGaulle was upset that the United States had not consulted its NATO partners before embarking on ventures which could have resulted in a global confrontation. Moreover, deGaulle disapproved of such dogmatic policies as "rollback" in Central Europe to release the satellite countries from Communist domination and "brinksmanship."¹⁵ He felt that the United States should have sought the French government's opinion on issues of worldwide consequence. He also believed that France

should have had the right to veto American global strategies and that the "triumvirate" system would have provided such an instrument. DeGaulle justified excluding Germany and Italy from the "triumvirate" on the grounds that they were not developing nuclear weapons and lacked worldwide interests.¹⁶

In 1959, deGaulle again sought American assistance for his force de frappe, requesting information to develop a solid fuel for missile launch systems. His representatives visited the United States and approached the Lockheed and Boeing Aviation Industries to acquire licensing privileges for the non-nuclear propulsion systems of the Minuteman and Polaris missiles. Although the two industries were willing to cooperate, Congress denied the French request, contending again that this violated American law.¹⁷ DeGaulle concluded that the United States was snubbing France, if not conspiring against her, and was clearly committed to Anglo-American nuclear hegemony within the Atlantic Alliance. The United States seemed determined to keep France in a subordinate military position. Referring to President Eisenhower, deGaulle said: "No doubt he showed the somewhat elementary conviction which inspired the American people to the primordial mission which had developed upon the United States as though by a decree from providence and gave them the right to predominance."¹⁸

To demonstrate his displeasure over his exclusion from the "Anglo-Saxon Club" and his failure to elicit support

for the "triumvirate" proposal, deGaulle took a series of retaliatory steps within NATO. The actions were unmistakably anti-American and reflected both the inadequacies of Eisenhower's policies and deGaulle's misinterpretation of them.¹⁹ In December 1958, France announced at the NATO ministerial conference that she would not integrate her air force into the air defense command of NATO.²⁰ In March 1959, deGaulle refused to permit the emplacement of foreign nuclear-armed IRBMs on French soil.²¹ DeGaulle extended this ban by mid-year when he forbade the emplacement of nuclear bombs on foreign aircraft based in France.²² Also in 1959, and partially because of his preoccupation with Algeria, deGaulle withdrew his Mediterranean fleet and all but two army divisions from NATO.²³ He justified withdrawal of this fleet by correctly asserting that the American government had not assigned its Sixth Fleet to NATO but had only earmarked it for use within the organization.²⁴ In June 1959, deGaulle told the United States to evacuate all nuclear stockpiles and special ammunition dumps from French soil.²⁵ Finally, in July, apparently exasperated at having received no support for his developmental nuclear deterrent, deGaulle refused to sign an American-sponsored protocol to share military nuclear secrets within NATO regarding tactical nuclear warheads.²⁶ It is significant to note that deGaulle's decision to reject the spirit of cooperation implicit in nuclear sharing followed the defeat of his "triumvirate" proposal. It would appear that, by the end of 1959, he had

satisfied himself that the development of a French nuclear program rested solely on French initiatives.

The United States must share the blame for driving deGaulle into completely independent development of the force de frappe. Indeed, the United States withheld support for the French effort. Moreover, the world at large, including the United Nations, disapproved the emergence of another nuclear power.²⁷ Nonetheless, it is understandable why Eisenhower was reluctant to share nuclear information with France. DeGaulle had declined to commit the French deterrent to NATO and raised the possibility that France would accept no limitations from NATO or any other body regarding its use. If doubt had existed before, deGaulle made it clear at his press conference of 5 September 1960 that France would never accede to outside dictates in military matters.²⁸ By contrast, Britain never adopted such an independent air. It is therefore no surprise that Anglo-American rapport remained strong while both powers evinced a healthy suspicion of France's politico-military intentions.²⁹ Although deGaulle and Eisenhower exchanged a series of letters throughout the year 1960, French-American relations became chilly, and the breach between the two countries regarding NATO and the French nuclear program widened.³⁰

When John Kennedy assumed the presidency in 1961, he recognized that French-American relations had deteriorated and attempted to revive the "triumvirate" issue in modified

form as a gesture toward rapprochement. Kennedy offered to establish within NATO a tripartite committee of senior military officers to draft joint strategic plans for two crises that were then of immediate concern: war in Laos and Soviet pressures in Berlin. Kennedy observed deGaulle's growing disenchantment with NATO and his increasing independence. By offering France an increased role in NATO, Kennedy hoped to persuade deGaulle to accept greater integration within the organization. Although deGaulle had accepted Kennedy's recommendation, he did not follow through by sending a French representative to join the tripartite committee. Dirk Stikker (of the Netherlands), the NATO Secretary-General in 1961, explained to a puzzled Kennedy that deGaulle had given up on NATO and seemed set on charting a separate course for France. Stikker argued that deGaulle's interest in NATO and inter-allied cooperation was always shallow and added: "If deGaulle had had atomic weapons, it would have made no difference; he would not have been more helpful in NATO. He would have wanted the veto (in the "triumvirate") for himself; but he would not have wanted anyone else to have it."³¹ In other words, the very dominance that deGaulle accused the United States of exercising, the French leader would have likewise exercised if he had the opportunity. This was consistent with deGaulle's grand design, the restoration of French influence.³²

Although he greatly respected Kennedy and sensed

that he, unlike Eisenhower, had dealt with France "directly and specially," deGaulle nonetheless became more rigid and independent in his diplomatic behavior.³³ Kennedy may have been partly responsible for this when, in 1961, he openly stated his disapproval of the force de frappe and described it as an obstruction to world peace and a case of nuclear proliferation.³⁴ In March 1962, he added: "We do not believe in a series of nuclear deterrents . . . and, I think, effective alliances will be somewhat weakened (by them)."³⁵

In another attempt to bridge the gulf between their two countries, Kennedy agreed to provide American nuclear training assistance to French troops in NATO and to sell France 12 KC-135 jet aircraft tankers which were capable of refueling the short-range Mirage IC-A bombers in flight.³⁶ Although this sale assisted the developmental force de frappe, deGaulle's behavior remained independent. Two other events in 1962 served to re-enforce this attitude by annoying the French President: the first concerned the NATO commander and the second the ill-fated multilateral force (MLF).

General Lauris Norstad, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (NATO Commander), had requested the assignment of American IRBMs directly to Allied control for custody and use by the various NATO nations. The United States government refused. Moreover, President Kennedy summarily replaced Norstad with the Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Lyman Lemnitzer. Both this apparent rebuff

of Norstad and Kennedy's replacement of the NATO commander without consulting the NATO allies aggravated deGaulle. Norstad had been popular in Europe, and many non-American leaders considered him to be "his own man." Lemnitzer, on the other hand, appeared as a hardliner in the Pentagon's employ.³⁷

The MLF plan would bring the NATO allies to share in the integrated planning and management of nuclear weapons, as well as in decision-making for their possible use. This was an American concept, and Washington seemed to regard it as a panacea to counter Gaullist complaints of excessive American influence in NATO and to restore Western solidarity. The MLF would have included a flotilla of 25 surface vessels, each armed with eight American Polaris missiles.³⁸ The United States hoped that France would accept the proposal since deGaulle had previously voiced concern over the so-called "Anglo-Saxon special relationship." The American government considered the MLF a means for France and the other NATO nations to share with the United States and Britain a common nuclear deterrent. DeGaulle was unimpressed. He vetoed the proposal, and MLF died as Gaullist suspicions toward American dominance in NATO mounted. DeGaulle had seen the MLF proposal as yet another attempt to undermine France's force de frappe and subordinate it to American control. Any talk of nuclear sharing was nonsense, deGaulle argued, since the United States would still determine the conditions for

"pushing the button."³⁹ In the words of the Gaullist historian, W. W. Kulski: "DeGaulle's first reaction (to MLF) was one of amusement rather than anger. . . . Could a fleet of surface vessels be operated by mixed crews of several nationalities? Would this enterprise be more lucky than the tower of Babel?"⁴⁰ To deGaulle, the proposal was tokenism of the most insulting sort, and moreover, he knew that Europe would absorb most of the expense for maintaining it.⁴¹ Thus it seemed evident by the end of 1962 that deGaulle had to look outside NATO to ensure French independence and influence among nations.

As deGaulle bided his time in NATO, expediting the development of the force de frappe, he followed a path designed to maximize French influence among the continental powers of Western Europe. As early as 1959, deGaulle supported some form of European political integration and, in a major address on 31 May 1960, officially endorsed that concept, provided that it would not become more than a loose confederation.⁴² DeGaulle implied that a "European Political Union" (Europe des Patries) would supersede NATO, saying that it would "contribute to building Western Europe into a political, economic, cultural and human group, organized for action, progress and defense."⁴³ The "Union" would force American and British retrenchment from Europe while allowing France to become the dominant political-military power within a coalition of Western European states. DeGaulle recognized

that, although a middle-rank power with limited population, territory, and resources, France would nevertheless become the dominant state in Western Europe as long as she alone possessed nuclear weapons on the Continent. He knew that Germany, France's only potential rival, had predestined itself to second-rate military status in 1954. As the price for postwar rearmament, Germany renounced the intention of ever building nuclear weapons. DeGaulle envisioned a "European Political Union" of only the six nations of the Common Market, thereby confirming the conditions for French nuclear hegemony. The force de frappe would compensate for West Germany's economic superiority and relatively large troop force. Because of its own nuclear force, Britain had no place in the "Union" or in deGaulle's design for Western Europe. He rationalized that Britain had traditionally sided with the United States in all debates regarding the defense of Western Europe and had "surrendered" its nuclear independence when it voiced support for the MLF in 1962. Britain had failed to support France's bid for support in the development of the force de frappe and, most significant, would rival France as an additional nuclear power vying for the leadership of Western Europe.⁴⁴

The heads of the six governments of the Common Market approved the designation of French Ambassador Christian Fouchet to lead a commission to draft a proposal for the six-member "European Political Union" in February 1961.⁴⁵

Eleven months later deGaulle, alone among the six heads of government, rejected the Fouchet Plan as inconsistent with his overall scheme for a Europe des Patries. The plan provided for a common foreign and defense policy, scientific and cultural cooperation, the establishment of a "Council of Europe," and a political commission.⁴⁶ Moreover, it provided that the Common Market would remain separate and intact and that the member states would continue to endorse NATO.⁴⁷ Because of the last two provisions, deGaulle could not accept the plan. The two annoyances that he had tried most to eliminate would persist. DeGaulle wanted the Common Market to be placed under the political control of the "Union," thereby ending its supranational character. In the case of NATO, deGaulle was not about to acquiesce to continued American dominance in Europe. As a result, deGaulle submitted his own amended version of the Fouchet Plan, which would have placed the "Union" above the Common Market and separated the "Union's" defense system from NATO.⁴⁸ Except for West Germany, the remaining four nations repudiated Europe des Patries, or deGaulle's updated version of the Fouchet Plan, as a ruse to block British entry into the Common Market and an excuse to permit France to supersede Britain and the United States as the principal military agent for the defense of Western Europe. The reason why Konrad Adenauer, the Chancellor of West Germany, supported Europe des Patries is unclear. Adenauer may have sided with deGaulle because he

wanted to demonstrate his friendship for France and did not balk at the prospect of French military superiority on the Continent. He may have contended that, upon joining the "Union," the French would pledge the force de frappe for the defense of Western Europe and hence to the security of West Germany. At the same time, nothing precluded West Germany from signing a bilateral defense treaty with the United States, regardless of possible changes in NATO, under which the United States would promise its nuclear deterrent to West German defense and could retain its troops in West Germany. This line of reasoning helps to explain why Adenauer could follow a course of accommodation with France and later signed the French-German Friendship Treaty of 22 January 1963. That Treaty proved to be more a protocol of good faith than a document of substance. For example, in the area of common defense, there were no specific provisions on strategy, the commitment of the force de frappe, or the integration of French and German conventional forces. The main points of the Treaty were relatively insignificant: quarterly meetings between the ministers of defense, the continued stationing of French forces in Germany, and the willingness to cooperate in the joint development of conventional armaments.⁴⁹

The French-German Friendship Treaty takes on meaning in the wider context of deGaulle's unhappiness with NATO and American efforts to subordinate the force de frappe. One week prior to signing the Treaty, at his press conference

of 14 January 1963, deGaulle formally rejected the MLF, saying that: "we will adhere to the decision we have made: to construct and, if necessary, to employ our atomic force ourselves."⁵⁰ DeGaulle sounded louder than ever his resolve to pursue an independent strategic course. Therefore, any forthcoming support for the incipient force de frappe--such as through the French-German Friendship Treaty--could only bolster French prestige and suggest the embryonic development of a European coalition to rival NATO.

During 1963 and 1964, as the force de frappe slowly became a reality, deGaulle continued his dual effort to disengage from NATO, without actually admitting it, and to consolidate his position as the principal political leader of Western Europe. In June 1963, deGaulle withdrew the French Atlantic Fleet from NATO.⁵¹ At his press conference of 29 July 1963, he renounced the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as meaningless.⁵² While he praised the spirit of the agreement, deGaulle pointed out that the Treaty did not cancel all nuclear testing nor provide for the destruction of existing nuclear stockpiles. Regardless of deGaulle's words, his main concern was to ensure no interruption to his own nuclear testing in the Sahara.⁵³

DeGaulle accelerated his disengagement from NATO in April 1964 when he withdrew all French naval personnel from Allied Naval Headquarters in London. In September, he specified that French naval forces would not participate in the annual NATO naval maneuvers. In June 1965, deGaulle

shunned the annual NATO army maneuvers and concurrently rejected Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's offer for France to join a new NATO planning group for nuclear strategy.⁵⁴ Although deGaulle did not formally withdraw France from NATO until the following February, his major address on 9 September 1965 set the stage:

Above all it is a question of keeping ourselves free of any vassalage. It is true that, in many areas, we have the best reasons for associating with others . . . but on condition of retaining our self-determination. Thus, so long as the solidarity of the Western peoples appears to us as necessary for the eventual defense of Europe, our country will remain the ally of her allies but, upon the expiration of the commitments formerly taken--that is, in 1969 by the latest--the subordination known as 'integration' which is provided for by NATO and which hands our fate over to foreign authority shall cease, as far as we are concerned.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, deGaulle's attempts to gain political-military pre-eminence in Western Europe began to collapse. Ludwig Erhard, Adenauer's successor, was less sentimental about French-German rapprochement and exposed deGaulle's scheme toward Germany as an attempt to relegate his nation to satellite status.⁵⁶ Erhard also disagreed fundamentally with deGaulle on such issues as NATO, nuclear proliferation, and Europe des Patries.⁵⁷ Most of all, he grew suspicious of the cordiality that had begun to develop between France and the Soviet Union starting in 1963. Erhard interpreted these French efforts as indirect pressure on West Germany. The implication of a French-Soviet deal was that, if West Germany did not accede to French leadership in Western

Europe, the Russians might pressure West Germany from the East.⁵⁸ In effect, within two years of its consummation, the French-German Friendship Treaty had lost any significance.

By 1965 deGaulle had become aware of several unpleasant realities. NATO remained united and unchanged under American influence. The European member nations refused to abandon NATO in favor of a French-dominated European defense alignment that was undefined and unproven. As a case in point, Erhard repudiated France's offer to quit NATO and join with her in becoming the foundation of a "European Defense System." The German Chancellor contended that the force de frappe was no substitute for the American strategic deterrent and that West Germany, bordering on the Iron Curtain, was especially vulnerable to communist external pressures. The NATO governments regarded deGaulle as a vain opportunist whose main objective was to advance French power and prestige, even if such efforts endangered the solidarity of the Atlantic Alliance or harmed their individual or collective interests. DeGaulle had demonstrated his obstructionist tactics in several ways. Not only did he block British entry into the Common Market, he actually boycotted that organization from June 1965 to May 1966.⁵⁹ He continually criticized NATO, showed pronounced anti-Americanism, and made clear to his peers within Western Europe that he opposed any form of supranationalism. Prior to 1965 deGaulle had hoped, with the advantages of his newly acquired force de frappe, to

lead Western Europe into a third planetary coalition, credible enough to deter Soviet aggression and influential enough to have a major voice in international affairs.⁶⁰ In his

War Memoirs deGaulle wrote:

To collaborate with West and East, and contract, on one side or the other, the necessary alliances, without ever accepting any sort of dependence. . . . To bring together politically, economically and strategically, the states bordering on the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees; to make of this organization one of the three planetary powers and, if necessary some day, the arbiter between the two camps: Soviet and Anglo-Saxon.⁶¹

By 1965, frustrated that France could not assert herself in NATO or in the Common Market, deGaulle decided to quit NATO, abandon his diplomatic pursuits in Western Europe, and attempt to cultivate a major French role vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the world at large. On 21 February 1966, deGaulle withdrew France from NATO, following the act with personal letters to President Lyndon Johnson and the other heads of government within NATO. In his letter of 7 March to President Johnson, deGaulle served notice that all French troops would be withdrawn from NATO by 1 July 1966 and that, by 1 April 1967 at the latest, all foreign troops and installations were to be removed from France.⁶²

His plans thwarted in NATO and within Western Europe in general, deGaulle hoped to achieve on the bilateral level what he could not do in NATO or as leader of any other European coalition. DeGaulle sought to create the role of arbiter (for himself) in Soviet-American detente, an end

to the cold war, and an increase of East-West economic, cultural, and social ties. A continuing mystery is whether deGaulle's intentions were sincere or he simply wanted to occupy "center stage," gain publicity and enhance French status. It is possible that deGaulle may not have wanted to achieve complete success in arbitration, since German reunification, for example, could result in the emergence of a Germany too powerful for France to control. Moreover, deGaulle must have known that any real hope for East-West detente rested primarily with the efforts of the superpowers themselves. DeGaulle had taken a hardline toward the Soviet Union and had no illusions about Soviet aims and capabilities. In fact, as late as 1962, he denounced the Soviet Union as a "collossal world threat."⁶³ It is not too cynical to suggest that deGaulle, with the added might of his force de frappe, expected to achieve additional French glory through closer French-Soviet communications and greater equality with that nation. As he played the role of peacemaker, he wanted to establish himself as the spokesman for Western Europe. This usurpation was presumptuous, and it is difficult to see how deGaulle could expect to resolve such a thorny problem as German reunification without the participation of the United States or Britain. Nonetheless, that is what he attempted. In a press conference on 4 February 1965, one year before his famous state visit to the Soviet Union, deGaulle implied that Britain and the United States had no

role to play in the matter of German reunification and the normalization of East-West relations on the European continent. The problem could best be solved by France and the Soviet Union alone:

What has to be done can only be done . . . (by) the peoples who have always been . . . principally interested in the fate of the German neighbor: in brief, the European peoples. . . . France, for her part, believes that (the question of German reunification) cannot be resolved except by Europe itself.⁶⁴

DeGaulle's overtures toward the Soviet Union yielded little but publicity. DeGaulle was not reckless in his negotiations with the Russians. Although Khrushchev had fallen from power and French apprehension of the Soviet Union had subsided, deGaulle was only guardedly optimistic about French-Soviet relations from 1965 until 1968. Alexei Kosygin, Khrushchev's successor as Premier, was less likely to precipitate a crisis, but deGaulle approached the Soviet leadership with caution.⁶⁵ As it turned out, French attempts at settling the so-called bipolar stalemate proved fruitless. The Soviets did not view the force de frappe, deGaulle's principal bargaining chip, as an intimidating influence, and they did not consider the French President as a legitimate mouthpiece of the United States. Moreover, the United States and the Soviet Union had in fact coexisted for years and, by the mid-1960s, a "thaw" between the countries had already begun. The Russians feared a reunited Germany and felt no impulse to settle the complex question of the two Germanies bilaterally with France. They certainly did not embrace

deGaulle's dream for a united and independent Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals,"⁶⁶ freed from either Soviet or American influence. Although deGaulle had made little progress in his ostpolitik, he had elevated his nation to prominence in cold war diplomacy, and this may have assuaged the self-centered deGaulle.

Still looking outside of the confines of Western Europe, deGaulle also explored the possibility--starting in 1964 when the force de frappe became a reality--of asserting French influence in the Third World. DeGaulle felt that France would be a logical leader for the Third World since she was the only major nation without territorial ambitions, external claims or avowed enemies. He reasoned that many emerging nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia preferred coalitions with a senior nuclear partner other than the United States or the Soviet Union who could help them develop economically and socially, yet provide them with the degree of national security which was only available from a nuclear power. Although he enjoyed momentary adulation in state visits and international meetings, deGaulle could not establish hegemony or even lasting influence among these countries. Indeed, beyond infuriating various national leaders with his haughtiness and meddlesome behavior in what were viewed as internal matters, deGaulle's impact in the Third World was minor.⁶⁷

Although a Third World power, China was a unique

case, and deGaulle never expected to place that giant under the protective wing of France. One could argue that deGaulle's justification for recognizing the People's Republic of China in 1964 followed the Gaullist pattern of international "grandstanding." He hoped to gain material benefits through trade but most of all to gain respect from Chinese officialdom and maximize his publicity in the world.⁶⁸

The last year of deGaulle's tenure as President of France set a number of facts into sharp focus. DeGaulle knew that French status in international affairs had risen, that he personally had acquired significant prestige abroad, and that the French people generally admired his foreign policy and especially his élan. These achievements contributed to deGaulle's pursuit of national unity and overriding quest for French grandeur or greatness. He thought that France could have never achieved prominence in international affairs if she had not acquired an independent nuclear deterrent, thereby offsetting the fact that in most other respects France was a second-rate nation. The nuclear deterrent had catapulted France to the forefront as one of the five nuclear nations. This in itself had an exhilarating effect on deGaulle.

Unfortunately, the possession of the force de frappe was insufficient to attain lasting diplomatic benefits. In other words, the United States remained entrenched in

Europe. France could not dominate the Common Market or win support for her own "jury-rig" political, diplomatic, and military concept of Europe des Patries and for a "European Defense System" for Western Europe. The superpowers continued with "business as usual"--regardless of French attacks on NATO or Gaullist rhetoric in Paris or in far off capitals. Finally, deGaulle could not end the cold war or reorder Europe to his liking.

What must have been especially upsetting to deGaulle was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.⁶⁹ It put an abrupt end to the Gaullist pan-European vision as well as to the hope that France could achieve her special European and global role. No longer could deGaulle attack the relevance of NATO by arguing that the organization had become an anachronism. No longer could deGaulle argue that the tendency toward greater domestic freedom among the Eastern European satellite nations had proven that the Soviets were serious about detente, and that an auspicious moment had presented itself for resolving the East-West debate. Indeed, with the misfortune of Czechoslovakia, deGaulle's rationale for French behavior and attempts at ostpolitik was discredited. Conversely, the conservative argument that the cold war continued, that the Soviets would not relinquish suzerainty in Eastern Europe, and that detente would evolve slowly seemed correct.

Although French diplomatic endeavors, particularly

regarding NATO, the "European Political Union" and ostpolitik had proven generally unsuccessful, deGaulle never lost faith in the importance of his force de frappe. By the time he withdrew France from NATO, deGaulle had crystallized his nuclear strategy and clearly etched his views regarding the role of his deterrent in world affairs. He had embarked on an independent nuclear strategy, to which concept he remained committed for the remainder of his presidency.

FOOTNOTES

¹DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., pp. 166-167.

²Cyrus L. Sulzberger, The Last of the Giants (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), pp. 61-62.

³DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., pp. 199-201.

⁴Andre Beaufre, NATO and Europe (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 6.

⁵DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 203.

⁶John W. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), p. 55.

⁷DeGaulle objected to the revision of the MacMahon Act, passed by the American Congress in 1954 and amended in 1958, which specified that the United States could share nuclear secrets and equipment with Britain but not France. This was clear discrimination since deGaulle did not regard Britain as a more significant power than France; Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 56.

⁸Robert E. Osgood, NATO, the Entangling Alliance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 257-258; Sulzberger, The Last of the Giants, loc. cit.; Carl H. Amme, NATO Without France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 155; Beaufre, NATO and Europe, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

⁹DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 204.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 206.

¹²William F. Brandes, "Will France Withdraw from NATO," Student Research Thesis, U. S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., (23 February 1968).

¹³Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁵"Brinksmanship" meant that the essence of good diplomacy was to bring the adversary (the USSR) to the brink of confrontation, thereby creating a situation where the Soviets would have no acceptable choice but withdrawal.

¹⁶Aside from a few island colonies dotting the globe and limited holdings in South America, France could hardly qualify as a power with global interests. DeGaulle meant that France had assumed the responsibility for the defense of the former French colonies in Sub-Sahara Africa. It was also a member of the UN Security Council and, of course, was a budding nuclear power; Gladwyn, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁷Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 185.

¹⁸DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 209.

¹⁹Carroll Quigley, "France and the United States in World Politics," Current History, Vol. 54, No. 316 (March 1968), 157.

²⁰Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 86.

²¹Carmoy, op. cit., p. 246; The US Air Force Thor missile was placed in Britain in 1958 and the US Army Jupiter missile arrived in Italy and Turkey in 1960; Carmoy, loc. cit.,

²²It is interesting that the opportunistic deGaulle did, nevertheless, permit American nuclear weapons to be placed on French aircraft stationed in West Germany and made no effort to have them removed until the Americans initiated the request for removal in the spring of 1966; Goodman, "DeGaulle's NATO Policy in Perspective," Orbis (Fall 1966), 704.

²³Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., p. 252.

²⁴Amme, NATO Without France, op. cit., p. 155.

²⁵Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 91.

²⁶DeGaulle may have also objected to any proposal which might dilute growing French nuclear strength on the Continent. It would be in his best interest to deny his Continental neighbors in Western Europe nuclear information, thereby paving the way for French pre-eminence through the force de frappe.

²⁷DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 215.

²⁸DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

²⁹Carmoy, op. cit., p. 279.

³⁰Dwight D. Eisenhower, Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1965), p. 428.

³¹Goodman, "DeGaulle's NATO Policy in Perspective," op. cit., 699.

³²Henry Kissinger has speculated that the reason DeGaulle rejected Kennedy's proposal for a tripartite committee was that he feared that such an arrangement would have somehow subordinated the force de frappe to the control of the Pentagon; Henry Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 101.

³³DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 255.

³⁴Kulski, op. cit., p. 138.

³⁵Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., p. 272; This untimely remark paralleled France's withdrawal from Algeria.

³⁶Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 222-223; The Mirages had a radial range of not more than 1500 miles. The sale of the tankers was therefore significant since, without an inflight refueling capability, the force de frappe could not hit targets in the Soviet Union and return to France in one sortie. In effect, without the tankers, the force de frappe would not be a credible deterrent; Kohl, op. cit., p. 179.

³⁷Furniss, DeGaulle and the French Army: A Crisis in Civil-Military Relations, op. cit., pp. 275-276; Bernard Brodie, "How Not to Lead an Alliance," The Reporter, Vol. 36 (March 9, 1967), 21.

³⁸Harold Van B. Cleveland, The Atlantic Idea and Its European Rivals (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), pp. 54-55; Lawrence S. Kaplan, Recent American Foreign Policy: Conflicting Interpretations (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1972), pp. 265-268.

³⁹Kulski, op. cit., pp. 144-151.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 144.

⁴¹Amme, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴²Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 268.

⁴³DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁴Anthony Hartley, Gaullism: The Rise and Fall of a Political Movement (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971); Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 319-325; For these more than economic reasons, deGaulle blocked Britain's admission to the Common Market during the entire presidency. He found excuses to oppose British entrance since he hesitated to publicize his true intent. Officially, he objected to London's outside interests, specifically the British Commonwealth and the European Free Trade Area. Britain would have to show its good faith and shed these economic attachments before it might join. This was an unacceptable course of action for Britain during much of deGaulle's presidency; Ambler, The Government and Politics of France, op. cit., p. 205.

⁴⁵Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 270.

⁴⁶The "Council of Europe" would have been a sort of international cabinet comprised of the heads of member governments.

⁴⁷Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 268-271.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 272-273.

⁴⁹Alfred Grosser, "France and Germany: Divergent Outlooks," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 44, No. 1 (October 1965).

⁵⁰DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 219.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 176.

⁵²Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States signed the Treaty of Moscow in June 1963. It provided for the discontinuation of all nuclear testing except underground and was the first agreement in history to limit nuclear activities.

⁵³Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 222.

⁵⁴Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

⁵⁵Charles DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, March 17, 1964-May 16, 1967, p. 247.

⁵⁶Blondel and Godfrey, op. cit., p. 184.

⁵⁷Grosser, "France and Germany: Divergent Outlooks," op. cit., 180.

⁵⁸Cleveland, op. cit., p. 144.

⁵⁹Blondel and Godfrey, op. cit., p. 186.

⁶⁰Gladwyn, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

⁶¹DeGaulle, The Complete War Memoirs of Charles DeGaulle, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

⁶²Goodman, "The World Through DeGaulle's Looking Glass," Orbis (Spring 1967), 707.

⁶³Carmoy, op. cit., p. 323.

⁶⁴DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, March 17, 1964-May 16, 1967, op. cit.

⁶⁵DeGaulle had not trusted Khrushchev and doubted his integrity. The succession of major East-West confrontations which deGaulle accused Khrushchev of perpetuating upset deGaulle since each occurrence could have erupted into global holocaust: the jingoistic Soviet threat to close the rail and auto routes to West Berlin in 1958, the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962; DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit., p. 98; DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., pp. 224-234; Quigley, op. cit., 158.

⁶⁶Carmoy, op. cit., p. 328.

⁶⁷France had already established legitimate influence in foreign policy, defense, and economic matters within the Sub-Sahara French-African community as well as within her overseas possessions; Carmoy, op. cit., pp. 226-237; deGaulle's meddlesomeness led him to areas that had been traditionally outside the French sphere of influence. He criticized Israel for launching the Six Day War in 1967, encouraged the Arabs by providing them with a consignment of Mirages, and insisted

that Israel should return the confiscated Arab lands to Jordan, Syria and Egypt. DeGaulle also chastised the Canadian government in 1967 for discrimination against French-Canadians and suggested that this minority was entitled to independence. The historian Edward Fox likened this attempt to wresting the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia in 1938; Edward W. Fox, "Megalocracy in France," Current History, Vol. 54, No. 316 (March 1968), 130.

⁶⁸Grosser, French Foreign Policy Under DeGaulle, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

⁶⁹The Soviet Army brutally crushed the Czech attempts to gain greater autonomy from the influence of the Soviet Union. It quelled anti-Russian demonstrations and forcibly removed the liberal Czech government of Anton Dubcek; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 145.

CHAPTER IV

DEGAULLE'S INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR STRATEGY IN MILITARY TERMS

When deGaulle returned to power in 1958, he brought with him a set of military concepts developed in 35 years of military service. The leader of the Fighting French during World War II and a well-known officer and military author, deGaulle's professional credentials were solid. More than any other French officer alive, deGaulle commanded the respect of his countrymen--military and civilian alike--for both his military acumen and prowess. His Army of the Future written on the eve of World War II flashed like a beacon to all who read it and warned that France must take immediate action to update her force structure and strategy. Few heeded the book, but nearly 20 years later all Frenchmen recognized its prophetic message.

In 1958, deGaulle proceeded to restore the neglected discipline of strategy to a prestigious niche. He personally encouraged the French high command to value it as he did.¹ Consistent with Clausewitz' dictum, deGaulle demanded that strategic thinking complement national political objectives and be subordinate to civil authority.² In articulating broad military strategy, deGaulle repeated two propositions that permeated his writings since the early 1930s: France

must be solely responsible for her own defense, and must ensure that her fighting force be modern, alert and strong. While acceding that alliances were important, deGaulle added that they should also be treated with suspicion. Allies had not always responded to the French call, and senior partners, such as the United States and Britain in World War II, could be unpleasantly coercive.³ Therefore, by 1958, deGaulle had resolved to take whatever action necessary to minimize French dependence on other nations and to make France as militarily self-sufficient as possible.⁴

As early as 1936, after Hitler's army marched into the demilitarized Rhineland, deGaulle pleaded unsuccessfully for a mechanized 100,000 man, offense-minded military force capable of engaging in the most modern form of warfare.⁵ Reflecting the growing pessimism of those times, deGaulle said:

Is it possible to conceive of life without force? Only if children cease to be born, only if minds are sterilized, feelings frozen, men's needs anesthetized, only if the world is reduced to immobility, can it be banished It is the prerequisite of movement and the midwife of progress Force gives laws to the people and controls their destinies.⁶

DeGaulle also wrote in Army of the Future that the "sword is not only the last argument in (France's) quarrels, it is also the only thing that makes up for her weakness."⁷ He reasoned that France alone and with limited territory, population, wealth, and resources needed the most efficient,

economical, and powerful military establishment within her capability. He therefore rejected France's cumbersome, defense-minded thinking which manifested itself after World War I, and he cautioned against fighting a future war--as too many generals were prone to do--by the anachronisms of the last. After the vivid lesson of 1940, the embittered deGaulle knew that France could again be physically overrun unless she finally developed, as deGaulle had consistently proposed, a lean, highly mobile, professional fighting force. He abhorred the myopia and irresponsible behavior of his political predecessors and former military superiors, and determined that the debacle of World War II rested squarely on their shoulders.⁸ Therefore, as the new President of France, deGaulle sought a strong, flexible, purely professional force capable of effective offensive action. In modern terms, this meant a force with nuclear weapons. DeGaulle had said that "France must retain her will, her countenance and her army in accordance with the conditions of the times. (This) means that it must have atomic weapons. (They) are our first aim in the field of defense."⁹

The conditions for adopting an independent nuclear strategy did not present themselves until 1962. While the Algerian crisis continued, emphasis remained on building an atomic bomb, preparing the first nuclear detonations, and developing rudimentary delivery systems. DeGaulle replaced Michel Debré with Georges Pompidou as Premier of France and

began to oversee defense policy more directly.¹⁰ At the same time he reorganized the Ministry of the Armed Forces to facilitate his direct command and control.¹¹ In July, after Algeria gained its independence, deGaulle concentrated on Europe where his principal interest lay.¹² As Professor Lawrence Scheineman said, deGaulle was a "mainlander" rather than a "colonial."¹³ In November, the Gaullist UNR won its first clear majority in parliament, providing deGaulle a freer hand in strategic planning.

DeGaulle cannot take full credit for formulating France's independent nuclear strategy. He borrowed ideas from several strategists, but three deserve special mention: Generals Pierre Gallois, Andre Beaufre, and Charles Ailleret.¹⁴

Gallois formulated a persuasive strategic concept that deGaulle ultimately accepted. Gallois' theory, delineated in his book, The Balance of Terror (1961) was called "proportional deterrence." The gist of it was that any nation which possesses a nuclear strike capability automatically assumes equal status with the superpowers. A middle-size nation like France need not have a huge stockpile of nuclear weapons. It was enough that she have, for example, a few submarines capable of launching nuclear missiles. This small force would permit France to inflict unacceptable harm on an adversary, thereby deterring that power from considering a nuclear blow against France. Gallois drew several conclusions from this theory. He determined that no country

will help defend another if, by doing so, it risks nuclear reprisal from a third. Alliances were meaningless except in minor non-nuclear conflagrations since the stakes in a nuclear environment were too high. Nuclear proliferation among nations were acceptable and even desirable since it might restrain the superpowers from using nuclear weapons, thereby tempering their adventuristic diplomacy.¹⁵ By deploying her force de frappe throughout the country, France would have a sufficiently resilient retaliatory capability to sustain any enemy first strike and still be able to deliver a devastating counterstrike.¹⁶

Beaufre synthesized much of Gallois' "stimulating but flamboyant and less precise writings" into a systematic doctrine.¹⁷ He supported "proportional deterrence" and the force de frappe by identifying two benefits. First, the possession of nuclear weapons by an independent third power, such as France, added deterrent backing to a probable ally, such as the United States. Second, if France were not formally allied to either superpower, this could deter both superpowers from committing any rash act. For example, if the Soviet Union were contemplating a provocative act somewhere in the world and felt reasonably sure that the United States would acquiesce, what could possibly stop her? One possible restraining influence would be doubt about the French reaction. In this regard, Beaufre argued, nuclear power actually contributed to world stability: "Its very

existence introduces a germ of stability and doubt that helps to re-establish in part the deterrent strength of the entire system."¹⁸ To put it in still a different perspective, Beaufre said, "A conventional armaments race produces instability, whereas a nuclear armaments race produces stability."¹⁹

Ailleret had gained fame in the early 1950s as an articulate advocate of nuclear weapons and, for his efforts, enjoyed a meteoric rise until he became in 1962 Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces. He was a loyal Gaullist, a strong nationalist, and an enthusiastic supporter of "proportional deterrence."²⁰ Like deGaulle, he tended to justify the force de frappe in non-military terms. For example, he argued that this strategic nuclear deterrent would be more economical than a larger conventional force. It was also able to provide France with more prestige within the Atlantic Alliance and give her a marked military superiority over Germany.²¹

Ailleret's major contribution to "proportional deterrence" was twofold. He articulated a narrow argument that "massive retaliation" was the only credible way in which France could implement "proportional deterrence" and was later to outline the concept of défense tous azimuts (global defense). In June 1964, during a speech at the NATO Defense College, Ailleret surprised his audience by insisting that there could be no distinction between general (total

nuclear) and limited warfare in Europe. In the words of the American strategist Carl Amme, Ailleret "did not make a distinction between 'major' aggression and 'limited' aggression but between 'marked aggressions' and 'apparent aggressions' (frontier incidents of all sorts)."²² Ailleret said that France would employ "massive retaliation" to thwart any aggression except that which could be clearly identified as a frontier incident. To France, there would be no such thing as a limited European war and the concomitant use of limited force. He said that "aggression by the Soviet Union against Western Europe, whether by conventional or nuclear means, must be met by immediate strategic nuclear strikes against the war potential of the Soviet Union."²³

DeGaulle concurred with Ailleret and also believed that all-out countervalue (countercity) strategy rather than one of selective limited counterforce (hard, pinpoint military targets) was at once more credible and cheaper for France. France knew that a French counterforce capability, aimed at hard military targets would be prohibitively expensive and perhaps even beyond the French command of the art.²⁴ A month after Ailleret's speech, he also articulated France's formal justification for "massive retaliation" and "proportional deterrence" when he said that:

to attack France would be equivalent, for whomever it might be, to undergoing frightful destruction by itself. Doubtless, (our) megatons . . . could not equal . . . those that Americans and Russians are able to unleash. But once reaching a certain nuclear capability, and with regard to one's direct defense, the proportion of respective means has no absolute value.²⁵

In short, deGaulle concerned himself with developing the minimum capability essential to ensure a credible all-out nuclear strike against a potential enemy. His emphasis was strategic rather than tactical, and he never ruled out the possibility of a French first strike. He did not dwell on the obvious destruction that France herself would probably suffer in the process. He was banking on the psychological deterrence of his strategy and hope that a potential enemy believed in France's willingness to use the force de frappe.

One subtle corollary of "proportional deterrence" was the "trigger" theory. Implicit in this notion was the belief that France could force a hesitant ally, like the United States, to assist with nuclear weapons if France boldly executed a first nuclear strike or immediately retaliated against an aggressor such as the Soviet Union. Although Gallois and Beaufre rejected the "trigger" argument as unrealistic, no one could completely ignore it.²⁶ Professor Wolf Mendl said that "the French, more than the British, Americans and the Russians, think that the function of nuclear weapons is principally in the psychological field."²⁷ So far as deGaulle is concerned, Mendl seems to have been correct. If one believed that the cold war could not appreciably escalate without degenerating into a nuclear confrontation, then military objectives would never be achieved by customary means. Victory would come through prolonged political, economic and social stress, but--in deGaulle's view--only

if a "belligerent" had a nuclear capability as a last resort.²⁸

DeGaulle's budding nuclear strategy met with general opposition outside of France and especially in NATO. DeGaulle had known since the beginning of the Kennedy administration that the United States was modifying its traditional stance for the defense of Western Europe from "massive retaliation" to the more nebulous strategy of "flexible response." He objected to this change and insisted that the pledge of "massive retaliation" was the only credible strategy to deter the Soviets. Anything less was an open invitation for piecemeal Soviet conquest of Western Europe.

Secretary of Defense McNamara first outlined "flexible response" at Ann Arbor, Michigan in June 1962, saying that the United States would pursue a counterforce rather than countervalue strategy within a context of "flexible response."²⁹ The United States would use its nuclear weapons against hard military targets but would spare populations. This did not comfort Western Europeans who felt that this refinement in strategy only lessened NATO's deterrent credibility. "Flexible response" implied that American tactical nuclear weapons would be deployed and used only in retaliation. This disturbed deGaulle and Europe in general. The Americans envisioned one likely scenario: The Russians would launch a concentrated conventional attack into Western Europe. NATO would then offer conventional response. The Soviets would break through, and NATO would then employ tactical nuclear weapons against selected counterforce targets. A pause would ensue and attempts

be made at negotiations. Finally, the campaign would end.³⁰ DeGaulle rejected this scenario since there could never be any assurance that limited, tactical nuclear warfare would not escalate into general, strategic nuclear warfare. He argued that this dilemma was the necessary result of near nuclear parity and competition between the superpowers. He believed that if the United States thwarted a Soviet attack into Western Europe by "massive retaliation," the Soviet Union would respond in kind on the American homeland. DeGaulle felt that the United States would never risk total annihilation for the defense of France, Western Europe, or any other area. At best, the United States might engage in a limited European confrontation, possibly with low yield tactical nuclear weapons. This implied that the small European heartland would serve as the superpowers' battlefield, thereby sparing their respective homelands. This was intolerable to a European. At worst the United States might abstain from participating in a European crisis or even make an American-Soviet deal permitting limited Soviet seizure of Western European territory. For these reasons, deGaulle viewed the American commitment to NATO as neither credible nor worthwhile.

DeGaulle said in his Memoirs of Hope that "from the moment when the Soviets had acquired the wherewithal to exterminate America, just as the latter had the means to annihilate them, it was unimaginable that the two rivals

would ever come to blows except as a last resort. On the other hand, what was to prevent them from dropping their bombs in between their two countries, specifically on Central and Western Europe?"³¹ The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 seemed to re-enforce deGaulle's anxieties, although he did not voice them until several years later. This crisis, like a rash of others which involved the United States outside of Europe, again proved to deGaulle that the Americans had risked involving their French ally in a nuclear holocaust over an incident of only peripheral concern to France.³² The incident did demonstrate, however, that the threshold of nuclear activity had been raised exceedingly high. If the cost of a nuclear engagement in defense of Western Europe had become comparably high, American hesitation might invite Soviet intervention.³³

Because of this, deGaulle concluded that France would lose little by withdrawing from NATO. France would avoid military imbroglios but could reasonably expect that the United States and NATO might still come to French aid. France was presumably important to other Western nations, and allies had assisted France in the past. Moreover, why should she subject herself to imbroglios through NATO? Other NATO members also seemed to dislike "flexible response," and deGaulle may have hoped that France's ultimate withdrawal might spark a chain reaction among those nations.

Regardless of her withdrawal from NATO, France could

continue to maintain French troops in Germany. This was desirable for both political and military reasons: French prestige and the protection of the French frontier.³⁴

As a final justification for withdrawal from NATO and for the implementation of an independent French nuclear strategy, deGaulle attacked NATO for its several internal deficiencies. Not only was NATO inadequate strategically, its administrative structure was poor. He cited numerous examples, including NATO's inability to assist in the solving of the Cyprus war in 1963.³⁵ Furthermore, membership in the organization was not binding, and there was no guarantee that members would necessarily demonstrate a united front in case of attack. One could already see internal conflicts between Denmark and Portugal or Turkey and Greece.³⁶ In short, NATO was structurally inadequate.

From 1966 to 1969, France never quite severed the umbilical cord to NATO. France continued to benefit from NATO's early warning communications and air defense networks, while permitting her NATO associates to use French pipelines and airspace.³⁷ It was apparent that without the eyes and ears of NATO--especially NATO's air defense warning system--the force de frappe was impotent.

Two significant shifts in deGaulle's nuclear strategy came about during this period: the one toward even greater independence, and the other toward retrenchment and dependence. In December 1967, Ailleret wrote a provocative article for

the French military journal, Révue de défense nationale. In essence, Ailleret was pointing toward the day when France would have her own ICBMs with thermonuclear warheads. His postulate was that France must have a "défense tous azimuts"-- that is, the capability to strike anywhere in the world with thermonuclear force. He argued that there was really no current threat but that France should prepare herself to thwart aggression from all points of the compass (tous azimuts).³⁸ DeGaulle shocked and offended foreign leaders when he concurred with Ailleret's thesis.³⁹ Implicit in tous azimuts was the possibility that the United States might choose to occupy France, ostensibly against her will, to prevent the Soviet Union from doing the same.⁴⁰ Thus, with new ICBMs, France could resist such action by either superpower by threatening nuclear reprisal.⁴¹ Ailleret's neutralist proposal was an aberration from the French tradition and proved to be short-lived. It was not short-lived, however, because deGaulle had repudiated Ailleret but because of two dramatic events which occurred in mid-1968.

In May, a rash of student riots in France symbolized basic disapproval of the government's priorities. The rioters, representing a variety of political factions, objected to the cost of France's nuclear program and chided the government for its apparent indifference to domestic needs. Then in August the Soviet Army invaded Czechoslovakia and overthrew the government of Anton Dubcek. These two events

set back France's nuclear program by several years and completely nullified tous azimuts.⁴² The Czech incident shook the French people who saw that the Russians were still capable of bold action and remained a formidable power.⁴³ DeGaulle was no longer free to concentrate on his goal of world grandeur at the expense of economic and social reforms at home. Moreover, the invasion of Czechoslovakia raised serious doubts about the total reliance of the force de frappe, since that particular incident could have escalated into a "spillover" or, to use Ailleret's term, "apparent" aggression. It was clear to the French high command that conditions within the military establishment were ill-suited in 1968 to decisive conventional or limited nuclear warfare.⁴⁴

DeGaulle exhibited an understandable, if not characteristic, closeness to NATO after Czechoslovakia. At the NATO ministerial conference of November 1968, France signed the NATO communique which said that "any Soviet intervention in Europe . . . would create an international crisis with grave consequences."⁴⁵ At about the same time, Pierre Messmer, the Minister of the Armed Forces, said that France would remain unequivocally within the Atlantic Alliance.⁴⁶

After Ailleret's untimely death in 1968, General Michel Fourquet became Chief of Staff. In March 1969, a month before deGaulle resigned from office, Fourquet delivered a major policy address to a French military audience which represented yet another adjustment in French nuclear strategy.

Fourquet formally rejected "massive retaliation" as "tout ou rien" (an "all or nothing" strategy). He also rejected "flexible response." In the place of both strategic alternatives, Fourquet spoke of "graduated response," since there might be occasions when France, not wishing to use the full power of her force de frappe, would want to "test" the enemy's intent.⁴⁷ The best instrument for this "test" would be tactical nuclear weapons. It is significant to note that Fourquet did not recommend their employment in an isolated context or as a manifestation of limited warfare. Limited warfare remained unacceptable as a distinct strategy. Presumably, conventional army troops would use tactical nuclear weapons to support the effectiveness of the force de frappe. These tactical weapons could help the army contain an advancing enemy, break through heavy obstacles, or mop up isolated pockets of resistance.⁴⁸ Thus until the very end deGaulle and his senior assistants remained committed to the force de frappe and never acknowledged anything less as the central strategy for the defense of France.

FOOTNOTES

¹Amme, op. cit., p. 32.

²Challener, op. cit., p. 50; DeGaulle violated the second principle in 1940 when he disobeyed lawful civil authority at Vichy and established his own government in exile in French Equatorial Africa.

³Roosevelt and Churchill overruled deGaulle on several strategic questions, including details surrounding the North African and French campaigns.

⁴Perhaps deGaulle's suspicion of alliances is clearer when compared to the American view. The United States has tended to dominate alliances in the twentieth century and has also enjoyed considerable success with them. Moreover, the United States has not viewed alliances as an encroachment on its sovereignty. Independence to the Americans has meant freedom from foreign pressure--such as the Axis Powers or the Communists--and this pressure could best be alleviated by inter-Allied cooperation. To deGaulle, independence was a legitimate anxiety and had a more literal meaning, especially in the wake of near defeat in World War I, capitulation in 1940, and American predominance in NATO.

⁵Challener, op. cit., pp. 245-256.

⁶DeGaulle, The Edge of the Sword, op. cit., PREFACE.

⁷Charles DeGaulle, The Army of the Future (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1941), p. 37.

⁸Kulski, op. cit., pp. 92, 94, 96.

⁹Charles DeGaulle, DeGaulle: Implacable Ally, ed. by Roy Macridis (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 137; DeGaulle rejected the traditional French Doctrine of the "nation in arms." This Doctrine placed emphasis on a relatively small career or professional force and a well-trained back-up reserve force which could be mobilized in time of national emergency. The value of this force was not only that it provided a huge reservoir of reserve manpower but that it served as the spirit and embodiment of the entire French population united in their resolve against a common enemy. The tradition had lasted since 1792. DeGaulle's objection to "nation in arms" was that France could be overrun before she could set the wheels of mobilization into motion or, if she could somehow mobilize the reserves in

time, the force would be vulnerable either to nuclear attack or a tragic war of attrition as was the case in World War I. His philosophical abandonment of the "nation in arms" concept was a bold innovation and represented a major renovation in French strategic thought; Challener, op. cit., pp. 245-256; Anthony A. Smith, "Concepts of Military Strategy in the Fifth Republic of France" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, School of International Service of the American University, Washington, D. C., 1970), pp. 12, 145.

¹⁰Douglas W. Johnson, France (New York: Walker Co., 1969), p. 154.

¹¹Challener, op. cit., pp. 88-91.

¹²DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, 1958-1964, op. cit.; DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit.; DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, March 17, 1964-May 16, 1967, op. cit.

¹³Ambler, The Government and Politics of France, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁴Gallois influenced deGaulle's thinking on French nuclear strategy more than any other individual. He was the first to develop a cohesive nuclear strategy. Gallois retired from the Air Force as a full general in 1960. Beaufre spent considerable time in NATO assignments and led the abortive Suez expedition in 1956. He retired from the army as a full general in 1960. He is the most prolific writer of French military strategy. Ailleret served as Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces from 1962 until killed in an air crash in 1968. DeGaulle greatly respected Ailleret's judgment and accepted much of his advice. Ailleret put down the "General's putsch" in Algeria in 1961 and captured General Salan, the ringleader. Fluent in Russian and a former military attaché to the Soviet Union, Ailleret harbored a basic distrust of the Russians; Smith, op. cit., pp. 45-49.

¹⁵Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 172.

¹⁶Challener, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

¹⁷Edward A. Koladziej, "French Strategy Emergent: General Andre Beaufre - A Critique," World Politics, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (April 1967), 417.

¹⁸Beaufre, NATO and Europe, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁹Andre Beaufre, Strategy of Action (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 54.

²⁰Smith, op. cit., 51-52.

²¹Ailleret was an inmate at Buchenwald in World War II and retained a latent fear of a resurgent Germany; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 31.

²²Amme, op. cit., p. 36.

²³Halle, op. cit., pp. 413-428.

²⁴Kulski, op. cit., p. 97.

²⁵DeGaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, March 17, 1964-May 16, 1967, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

²⁶Smith, op. cit., 235.

²⁷Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 207.

²⁸DeGaulle rejected limited and revolutionary warfare. France had had bitter experience with guerrillas in Indo-China and Algeria and deGaulle perceived that France, shorn of so much of her empire, was neither physically nor temperamentally suited to engage in any future military confrontation short of an all-out general war. Moreover, anything less could signal to an adversary France's doubtful nuclear resolve; F. O. Miksche, "Western Europe: Security Through Integration," Orbis (Spring 1969), 164; Elizabeth Stabler, "French Foreign Policy," Current History, Vol. 50, No. 296 (April 1966), 232.

²⁹Brodie, op. cit.

³⁰Amme, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

³¹DeGaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor, op. cit., p. 201.

³²Challener, op. cit., p. 24.

³³Carmoy, op. cit., p. 270.

³⁴Amme, op. cit., p. 69; France's two divisions in Germany are located in Baden-Wurtemberg along the eastern bank of the Rhine River. The fact that deGaulle insisted on keeping French forces in Germany but outside the jurisdiction of NATO suggested his concern was primarily French prestige. However, in keeping with his policy of "massive retaliation," except for border incidents, the retention of

French troops immediately east of the Rhine made sense. It is noteworthy that deGaulle was vague as to where France would fight and just where she defined the border. Was it the Elbe or the Rhine?

³⁵Mendl, "Perspectives of Contemporary French Defense Policy," The World Today, op. cit., 53.

³⁶Brandes, "Will France Withdraw from NATO," Student Research Thesis, U. S. Army War College, op. cit., 6.

³⁷Goodman, "The World Through DeGaulle's Looking Glass," Orbis, op. cit.

³⁸Edmond Combaux, "French Military Policy and European Federalism," Orbis (Spring 1969).

³⁹Alastair Buchan, "Battening Down Vauban's Hatches," Interplay, Vol. 1, No. 10 (May 1968).

⁴⁰Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

⁴¹Tous azimuts had two political advantages. With ICBMs, France could prove that she was also able to offer a nuclear "umbrella" to a needy nation anywhere in the world. Tous azimuts would also show that France was free of restrictive alliances and capable of following a neutralist defense policy; Ambler, The Government and Politics of France, op. cit., p. 220; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 142; It is hard to accept that the French government really believed that it was alone and that the United States was France's potential enemy. The British strategist, Alastair Buchan, caustically remarked: "If you (France) turn your state into a Vauban fortress, the rest of the international community may treat you as we treat porcupines--with respect, but with neither deference, affection or confidence."; Buchan, "Battening Down Vauban's Hatches," Interplay, op. cit., 7; The ICBM project would cost France an annual outlay of \$1.5 billion, starting in 1968; Buchan, "Battening Down Vauban's Hatches," Interplay, op. cit.

⁴²Ambler, The Government and Politics of France, op. cit., p. 220.

⁴³Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

⁴⁴Although deGaulle's overriding concern was for his force de frappe, he did foresee other military tasks for France. The Army had two auxiliary missions. Its force de manoeuvre (maneuver troops) was responsible for land warfare and was to be fitted with tactical battlefield nuclear weapons starting in 1968. Its main purpose was to assist the force de frappe as close to the enemy as possible. It would attempt to canalize the enemy and concentrate him to present the most lucrative target for the force de frappe. In addition, its value would be to check enemy "spillovers" or acts of "apparent" aggression; Smith, op. cit., 278-281; In addition, there was the force défense opérationnelle du territoire. Its mission was defensive. It was a combination of gendarmerie and national guard which was to protect the sites of the force de frappe, re-enforce the force de manoeuvre, and, if necessary, fight an insurgency like the résistance of World War II; Smith, op. cit., 311.

⁴⁵Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 263.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 164; DeGaulle differentiated between NATO and the Atlantic Alliance. He never professed to have left the latter; Challener, op. cit., pp. 250-251.

⁴⁷Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 84.

⁴⁸Amme, op. cit., p. 38.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

French strategy throughout the Fourth Republic presupposed a policy of European cooperation.¹ Except for its rejection of EDC, the French government sought a role of leadership in such integrative organizations as NATO and the Common Market and had even made overtures to her European neighbors to exchange nuclear information of a non-military nature.² Throughout this period, the Gaullist opposition was ever-present but never strong enough in parliament to obstruct the prevailing spirit of the integrationists. Although France had opted for a military nuclear program by 1957 and the French premier had ordered the development of a prototype atomic bomb in April 1958, the military high command did not formulate an attendant strategy to match the embryonic nuclear deterrent. Moreover, the pre-Gaullist governments assumed that they would contribute a French bomb to NATO, simultaneously enhancing the organization's strength and French influence in it.³ Most political leaders and military officers were deeply committed to NATO.⁴

It was Charles deGaulle who finally synthesized France's foreign and defense policy into a deliberate, long-range national strategy. He was the first recent French leader capable of gaining parliamentary majorities to advance

a cohesive strategy as exemplified in the passage of the two lois de programme. Furthermore, he was the first French chief of state to announce an unqualified decision to build not only a prototype atomic bomb but also a deterrent system, an ambiguous matter in the Fourth Republic.⁵ Differing from his predecessors from the Fourth Republic in that he ultimately repudiated NATO, deGaulle blocked the French movement toward European integration and replaced supranationalism with nationalism. He was the antithesis of Pierre Mendès-France, one of the most respected moderates of the Fourth Republic, who had said in 1954 that "No nation, however glorious its history, can base its authority on the respect inspired by the past. The sacrifices made and the battles won long ago are an example to us but cannot be the currency of our diplomacy."⁶

DeGaulle wished to keep France in the forefront of world affairs, no matter what the cost, and concerned himself with neither international teamwork nor with authentic European integration. Instead he backed French nationalism and the assertion of French independence. Firm toward both the United States and the Soviet Union, he resisted many NATO as well as Soviet demands. For example, he opposed non-proliferation and was never an apostle of world disarmament.⁷ Although a nuisance to both the superpowers and his European neighbors, deGaulle nonetheless enjoyed popularity at home during most of his tenure as President.

For almost 11 years, deGaulle generally represented the prejudices, frustrations, and aspirations of the French people. Politically astute, he charmed his countrymen into permitting him the large degree of executive power that he needed to achieve stability for planning and implementing long-range policies. His finesse in resolving the Algerian crisis is especially impressive and represented the zenith of his political skill. Throughout most of this period, deGaulle provided the French people with prestige and success abroad amid peace and prosperity at home. The French public only began to challenge specific programs and deGaulle's preoccupation with foreign affairs in 1968.⁸ Although there had been constant debate in parliament over such programs as the French nuclear deterrent, France's independent strategy, and the rejection of European integration, most Frenchmen--regardless of political party--enjoyed deGaulle's personal accomplishments at home and abroad.⁹ To be sure, deGaulle felt that these successes were due to his charismatic leadership and that he was indispensable to France.

DeGaulle was not only instrumental in regaining for France greater respect among the major powers; he also made an impact on the Third World. He showed this "bloc" that a nuclear power need not be subservient to a superpower and that a middle-size nation could pursue an independent destiny. He conveyed to these countries that, by attaining their own nuclear deterrent, they enhanced both their security

and prestige. Furthermore, he demonstrated in his relations with the major powers that, so long as France was a nuclear power, France could expect to enjoy a major international role. Therefore the force de frappe was central to Gaullist diplomacy. For example, deGaulle saw the French deterrent as an equalizing agent vis-a-vis West Germany, offsetting German superiority in population, territory, wealth, and resources.

By contrast, deGaulle's military justification of the force de frappe was never convincing. His best argument was that a nation must assume full responsibility for its own defense, that this responsibility can never be delegated to another, and that alliances were unreliable. His doubts about the American nuclear "umbrella" and rationale for "proportional deterrence" were also difficult to refute. Short of nuclear war, no nation would have evidence to confirm or deny deGaulle's proposition.

In analyzing deGaulle's behavior in international affairs, it seems that the French President had planned from his first days in office to pursue an independent path outside the confines of NATO. He was willing to "integrate" with other nations only if this would let France gain equality with the superpowers or domination over lesser states. His apparent willingness to "share" nuclear secrets, research, planning, and custody of weapons within NATO served no purpose but to expedite the French nuclear program. Despite Gaullist

rhetoric, there is no evidence to suggest that "le grand Charles" ever desired nuclear cooperation or interdependence. Indeed, deGaulle ignored Eisenhower's recommendation in 1959 that a high-level British-American-French planning committee be formed at the level of deputy foreign minister to discuss overall global strategies.¹⁰ DeGaulle infuriated Eisenhower by not offering constructive suggestions to match his scathing criticisms of NATO. According to Elliot Goodman, the letters that deGaulle and Eisenhower exchanged in 1959 to reconcile their differences over NATO merely revealed the Frenchman's indifference to the organization: "In his letter of 31 August 1959, Eisenhower tried to keep his anger under control. He reminded his French counterpart that twice before deGaulle had promised to send a detailed memo about suggestions for reorganizing the alliance but that he had never done so."¹¹ In May 1961, Kennedy agreed to name top-level military officers to participate in a joint nuclear planning group, and again deGaulle refused to cooperate. In June 1965, deGaulle refused to join the newly formed NATO Nuclear Planning Group.¹² The explanation for deGaulle's truculence is that the French leader believed these councils would keep France subordinate and that deGaulle had given-up on NATO.¹³

On what military grounds could deGaulle have insisted that France pursue an independent strategy when he had admitted on several occasions that the military threat to Western Europe had subsided? Like Germany, France could have saved

a great deal of money by remaining in NATO, thereby obviating the duplication of military hardware or dependence on French assets alone in all aspects of defense. Although he had disagreed with the strategy of "flexible response," deGaulle need not have abandoned NATO for military reasons. Alliances had not proven altogether satisfactory in French history, but deGaulle still considered them important. He knew that NATO was not a supranational organization and, under the North Atlantic Treaty, France could have withdrawn at any time. There was no provision in the Treaty which demanded that the force de frappe be placed under NATO control nor any which prevented France from launching the force de frappe, even though her allies may have disapproved. It is clear that NATO, with its several shortcomings, still provided an adequate framework through which France could answer her military needs. It was not a military but a political straight jacket that deGaulle wanted to remove at all costs.

DeGaulle received much worldwide attention for his nationalistic antics but achieved few lasting or concrete benefits. In the eyes of the European integrationists, deGaulle was regressive. He opposed world disarmament and non-proliferation and obstructed all attempts at European federalism. Moreover, he failed in most of his official pursuits: the establishment of political-military hegemony in Western Europe, the destruction of United States predominance in Western Europe, the establishment of France as the major

East-West arbiter for detente, and the attainment of leadership within the Third World.

Why did deGaulle fail? Surely, his behavior was selfish and opportunistic. But more than unpopular among his counterparts, it was often self-defeating. Three examples help to demonstrate this. Soon after his return to power in 1958, deGaulle refused to let the CEA cooperate with EURATOM in the peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy.¹⁴ He rescinded the Fourth Republic's policy of sharing non-military secrets with European allies, thereby ending French leadership in this field. As a result, West Germany filled the void and superseded France as the most powerful European nation, as measured by the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.¹⁵ In a second example, deGaulle should have recognized that France could not alone achieve a workable detente between the superpowers, merely through his personalized public diplomacy with the Soviet Union. Even with the force de frappe, France was not that prominent a nation and could not earn the title of "honest broker."¹⁶ In fact, the Soviets viewed deGaulle's efforts as meddlesome, serving to complicate rather than aid Soviet-American rapprochement.¹⁷ The Soviets knew that they could only resolve the real issues through direct contact with the United States.¹⁸ Finally, France's diplomacy failed because deGaulle asserted himself in a heavy-handed manner. Ironically, France would have probably achieved a reasonable degree of political-military influence

on the Western European continent, since she was the only nuclear power. Unfortunately for France, deGaulle alarmed the European nations by such "all or nothing" schemes as Europe des Patries. As a result, these neighboring nations continued to look to the United States and even to West Germany for leadership. It was West Germany, in alliance with the United States, that enjoyed the dominant role among the continental nations of Western Europe by 1966 as well as political cordiality with its neighbors.¹⁹ The only circumstance which would have led the Western European nations to place their military trust in France would have been the certainty that France was as militarily strong as the United States. That was impossible, and deGaulle knew it.²⁰

Unfortunately, deGaulle's military justification for an independent nuclear strategy was also weak. The principal arguments against "proportional deterrence" center around two questions. Could France, a relatively small nation, survive a first strike blow long enough to launch a counter-attack? Could France evince a credible resolve for launching her force de frappe when this could well mean national suicide? This debate continued throughout deGaulle's presidency. France's territory is small--some 700 by 400 kilometers. It is doubtful that France had either the space or technological reflex to launch her force de frappe with the necessary dispatch. Raymond Aron, the distinguished French sociologist and writer, shared this view when he refuted Gallois' thesis

that a country's territory ceases to be a concern when it decides to employ its strategic deterrent.²¹ Furthermore, France is clearly liable to greater intimidation from the Soviet Union than is the United States, since the Soviets could destroy more of France in a first strike blow and follow-up with a ground invasion. An observer can well challenge the French resolve with the weight of such heavy odds against her.²²

"Massive retaliation" or "proportional deterrence"--which are essentially the same thing--is a limiting strategy. The United States had rejected the strategy in the early 1960s since it had proved to be ill-suited in many kinds of conflict. The United States deemed the strategy inappropriate during the Korean War (1950-1953), the Battle of Dienbienphu (1954), the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Rebellion (1956), the Quemoy-Matsu disputes (1954, 1958), and the Lebanon incursion (1958). It became evident that a nation might face situations serious enough to warrant the commitment of military power but not serious enough to risk general or even limited tactical nuclear warfare. DeGaulle had concluded that France would never again become engaged in a military struggle other than for the last-ditch defense of the French homeland. Had he thought otherwise, his strategy and military posture would have been irresponsible and inexcusable. His previous military experience would have reminded him that, in modern warfare, a major power must diversify its military assets and prepare itself for every likely military contingency.

DeGaulle concentrated on his force de frappe, as his conventional forces--army, navy, and air force--gradually deteriorated except as they supported the nuclear program.

Nonetheless, no one can prove that one theory is preferable to another until tested, or perhaps unless it violates established principles of warfare. "Proportional deterrence" is one of those unproven, though theoretically sound, strategies. Nevertheless, a coterie of French strategists, intellectuals, and anti-Gaullist critics oppose deGaulle's independent nuclear strategy. Although they represent many viewpoints or, more precisely, shades of a viewpoint, they concur that France should employ its military arm within NATO or a similar European defense coalition. Aron, for instance, had enthusiastically supported the French deterrent but only in alliance.²³ Jules Moch, a former minister of the armed forces during the Fourth Republic, argued a more radical line by repudiating the entire concept of an independent national deterrent.²⁴ The political league Club Jean Moulin called for France to press for a totally integrated nuclear deterrent, similar in concept to the EDC and to be shared by all Western Europeans, and that French foreign and defense policy should depend on a multinational European force.²⁵ General Paul Stehlin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force from 1960 to 1963, insisted that the key to realistic defense in Western Europe is a refurbished Atlantic Alliance with equally strong pillars on both sides of the Atlantic; moreover, he asserted that France could still

retain custody of her own nuclear deterrent within this arrangement. Like Beaufre, Stehlin also argued for a stronger role for the Europeans in decision-making.²⁶ Maurice Faure, a Radical minister, stated that the best hope for a European defense coalition lies in a merger of the British and French nuclear deterrents. This would help to center the pendulum of power between the United States and Europe.²⁷

DeGaulle's strategy of "proportional deterrence" was more fiction than fact; it was never implemented. Even after deGaulle quit NATO, France could not work in a total vacuum. She depended on her former NATO allies for liaison and intelligence. Moreover, unlike Switzerland, France was in no position--geographically or by tradition--to be neutral. For a realistic defense, France needed her neighbors, especially West Germany, to provide her the thick shield behind which she could launch the force de frappe.²⁸ Paul Reynaud wrote: "What I find humiliating is not the fact of having an ally more powerful than oneself, but benefiting from an alliance while refusing it the collaboration it required. And this, alas, is precisely our case."²⁹ Certainly, dependence on allies was crucial to Ailleret's thesis when he said that France wished to "test" an enemy's aggression as either "marked" or "apparent." Ailleret considered Germany, rather than France, the "test" area. France would therefore need the concurrence of West Germany for permission to maneuver French forces in that country as well as coordination with

other allied forces before launching nuclear weapons.

One can debate the intangibles and illusive scenarios of various strategies. Let it suffice to say that "proportional deterrence" was an "all or nothing" strategy which ipso facto had inherent shortcomings. DeGaulle's inordinate emphasis on the force de frappe placed the fate of the navy and especially the army in the balance.³⁰ With the exception of a few nuclear submarines, these two branches of service had received a secondary role within the French military structure; and, by 1968, the effectiveness of France's conventional land and sea forces was in doubt, for the modernization of these forces had lagged since the end of the Algerian crisis. The budget and size of the conventional forces dwindled, morale was low, and the rivalry among branches remained intense.³¹ Even the tactical nuclear weapons system, the Pluton, earmarked for the army in 1968, was behind schedule by years.³² The army dropped in strength from 721,000 in January 1963 to 325,000 in 1970; and it must have distressed career officers to realize that the French Army was no longer the backbone of the Republic.³³ In 1967, Messmer admitted that the plan for updating the force de frappe and other forces was three years behind schedule and that there was little likelihood of making up lost time.³⁴

Adding to the French military woes were the riots of 1968. The subsequent reduction of the defense budget greatly curtailed the French nuclear program which, in turn,

had profound effect on the credibility of any independent nuclear strategy. For example, France's second generation delivery system for the force de frappe (IRBMs) was to start replacing the Mirages in 1968. This did not occur and, when these systems began entering the inventory in 1969, their number was reduced to 17 or 18 separate units, a cut of one-third.³⁵ The Pierrelatte isotope separation plant had not yet produced any enriched uranium, necessary for thermonuclear warheads, until 1967 and the planned Pacific tests were suspended in 1969. Finally, France had no tactical nuclear capability at all when deGaulle left public office.³⁶

By the end of deGaulle's presidency, France's overall military strategy was one-sided and her military programs seriously lagged. The French Mirages were approaching obsolescence, and her nuclear submarines as well as second generation IRBMs and tactical missiles had not yet become operational as originally planned. France had neither a strong strategic nor tactical deterrent. In short, deGaulle's military establishment faced huge costs and lacked credibility, and it remained very much dependent on the military strength of the United States and the Western European nations.

Significant domestic restraints resulting from the riots of 1968 required a shift in military priorities. Concerned with growing economic problems, the French electorate was less willing to give deGaulle carte blanche for the force de frappe. In the parliamentary elections of June 1968, the public mandate was for a restoration of civil order and

a reordering of the government's programs.³⁷ It had become apparent to parliament that deGaulle's original diagnosis that the nuclear deterrent would prove cheaper than a large conventional force, coupled by ready reserves, was wrong; this was exemplified in overrun costs in 1968 and 1969, largely for the nuclear program.³⁸ The Club Jean Moulin determined in a private study in 1968 that France's defense spending, because of the cost of maintaining and updating the force de frappe, would continue to escalate at an intolerably high rate and in excess of the rate of growth of the GNP. This implied that the government would have to pare drastically its defense projects and expenditures in line with other national activities.³⁹

By the time that deGaulle left office, France could no longer afford such a costly military program. While many Frenchmen appreciated France's role as an independent nuclear power and deGaulle's decision to diversify, by developing tactical nuclear weapons and a stronger conventional force, to complement the force de frappe, they were not willing to pay for it. France had reached a crossroads and would have to choose between the original "pure" strategy with total emphasis on a modern, continually updated force de frappe and sanctuary under the American nuclear "umbrella" while concentrating on a strong conventional force supplemented by tactical nuclear weapons. France could not afford to have it both ways.

Upset at the unfortunate turn of events, both at

home and abroad, and aware that he was losing his "magic touch" with his fellow countrymen, deGaulle delivered what was tantamount to an ultimatum. In April 1969, he demanded a mandate through national referendum to approve his proposals for reforms in the government as well as endorsement of his standing policies. The people rejected his proposals, and deGaulle promptly resigned. Soon thereafter, he died at his home, Colombey-les-deux-Eglises, in November 1970.

DeGaulle's independent nuclear strategy had been basically political and diplomatic, and always a dubious military deterrent. The strategy, lifted by the sheer force of deGaulle's strong leadership, permitted France to act for a relatively short period as an influential and prestigious world power. The force de frappe enhanced France's international influence and grandeur, but it never proved that France had become even remotely independent militarily. Modest as it was, the force de frappe provided many Frenchmen with a renewed sense of pride and self-confidence after years of disorder and failure. To a limited extent, deGaulle also proved to the world that a middle-sized nation could dabble in affairs of world significance, provided that it possessed its own strategic nuclear deterrent.

In the long run, the strategy accomplished little except to satisfy deGaulle's appetite for world publicity and personal pomp, since France realized none of her tangible stated objectives in the international arena. The French

President had learned by the end of his days that France could not and would not squander so much of her wealth on the strategic nuclear deterrent and that the future of both his force de frappe and an independent nuclear strategy were tenuous. What seems likely is that France will not be able to pay indefinitely for the luxury of her independent and isolated deterrent and will have to look for a new national defense strategy. Reason suggests that France could expect to solve many problems by choosing some sort of military coalition. NATO in its present form is probably not the answer. Since France surely cares for her national security, however, she will explore all means of defense. With her magnificent history and culture, France would hardly suffer a loss of prestige if she again moved toward military union in an alliance of nations.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Blondel and Godfrey, op. cit., p. 180.
- ²Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 54-58.
- ³Gladwyn, op. cit., p. 29.
- ⁴Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 47.
- ⁵Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., pp. 150, 170.
- ⁶Hoffman, In Search of France, op. cit., pp. 345-346.
- ⁷Hassner, op. cit., 14; Although deGaulle must have shared the basic desire for lasting world peace, he refused to use disarmament to achieve that end so long as the United States and Russia remained strong nuclear threats.
- ⁸Kulski, op. cit., pp. 37, 76.
- ⁹Alfred Grosser, Franco-Soviet Relations Today (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1967), pp. 135-137.
- ¹⁰Quigley, op. cit., 158.
- ¹¹Goodman, "DeGaulle's NATO Policy in Perspective," Orbis, op. cit. 697.
- ¹²William G. Christensen, "Charles deGaulle in NATO," Student Report, U. S. Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala. (January 1966).
- ¹³Amme, op. cit., p. 35.
- ¹⁴The European Agency for Atomic Energy (EURATOM) was established in December 1957. Patterned after the European Coal and Steel Community (the forerunner of the Common Market), the purpose of EURATOM was to help develop nuclear energy as a fuel source for the civilian needs in Western Europe. EURATOM was ultimately absorbed into the Common Market Organization; Carmoy, op. cit., pp. 102-122.
- ¹⁵Ibid., pp. 379, 342.
- ¹⁶Miksche, "Western Europe: Security Through Integration," Orbis, op. cit., 161.
- ¹⁷Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 3.

- ¹⁸Hassner, op. cit., 57.
- ¹⁹Reynaud, The Foreign Policy of Charles DeGaulle-- A Critical Assessment, op. cit., p. 121.
- ²⁰Cleveland, op. cit., p. 141.
- ²¹Raymond Aron, The Great Debate: Theories of Nuclear Strategy (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 102; The USSR claims the capability to knock out all French population centers in excess of 200,000 souls in one blow; Carmoy, op. cit., p. 289.
- ²²Kulski, op. cit., p. 118.
- ²³Aron, The Great Debate: Theories of Nuclear Strategy, op. cit., p. 120.
- ²⁴Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 177.
- ²⁵Grosser, Franco-Soviet Relations Today, op. cit., p. 111.
- ²⁶Paul Stehlin, "The Evolution of Western Defense," Foreign Affairs, XLII (October 1963), 81-84.
- ²⁷Kulski, op. cit., p. 147.
- ²⁸Comboux, op. cit., 147-158.
- ²⁹Reynaud, The Foreign Policy of Charles DeGaulle-- A Critical Assessment, op. cit., p. 114; Reynaud was a one-time admirer of deGaulle and backed his plea in the 1930s for the revitalization of the French military establishment. He also served as the ill-fated Premier of France in June 1940 when the Germans invaded his nation.
- ³⁰Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 113.
- ³¹Smith, op. cit., pp. 343-345.
- ³²Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 114.
- ³³Challener, op. cit., p. 164; Moreover, the territorial forces, the DOT were also below quota strength.
- ³⁴Carmoy, op. cit., p. 345.
- ³⁵Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 198; The 27 Systems were still not fully operational by mid-1973. LeRedoubtable, France's first nuclear missile submarine,

launched in March 1967, had not become operational until 1971. France's second nuclear submarine, Le Terrible, launched in December 1969, was still not in operation in late 1972; France, French White Paper on National Defense, Vol. 1 (New York: Ambassade de France, Service de Presse et d'Information, 1972), p. 1; There is growing doubt that France's Mirages, still very much in the inventory, are any longer capable of penetrating increasingly sophisticated Soviet Electronic counter-measures and air defense systems; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., pp. 180-184.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 185-190.

³⁷Ouston, op. cit., pp. 240-245.

³⁸Mendl, Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, op. cit., p. 114.

³⁹The cost of the missile program, under the first loi exceeded the original budget by 75 percent and the cost of nuclear submarines alone was running over by 83 percent; Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 198; Because of the force de frappe, much of the civilian sector became "militarized," and this was objectionable to many. For example, in 1968, 60 percent of the electronics industry, 70 percent of the aerospace industry, and 55 percent of the atomic research industry had directed themselves toward defense; Mendl, "Perspectives of Contemporary French Defense Policy," The World Today, op. cit., 180-184.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe an immense debt to Dr. Donald J. Mrozek, Professor of History at Kansas State University, for the many hours he spent in assisting me in this project. His critical analysis of my draft chapters, assistance in revision of the text, and continual encouragement during a most difficult time were most helpful and an invaluable service.

To my loving wife, Nancy, I owe a special debt of gratitude. Her love, encouragement and patience during the past six months have been a particular source of inspiration to me.

Lastly, my thanks to Mrs. Sharon Schreiner for her conscientious assistance in proof-reading and typing this thesis.

DEGAULLE AND THE FRENCH INDEPENDENT
NUCLEAR STRATEGY

by

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B. A., Stanford University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1974

This thesis analyzes French nuclear strategy during the presidency of Charles deGaulle (1958-1969). It traces the development of the French nuclear program from its inception in the Fourth Republic (1945) to deGaulle's articulation and implementation of an independent nuclear strategy (1964-1969).

The French military nuclear program received only limited attention and direction from the civil or military hierarchy of the Fourth Republic, and the program drifted. Although the pre-Gaullist decision to construct a prototype atomic bomb came in April 1958, the alliance-oriented leadership of the Fourth Republic planned to commit the French deterrent to NATO, thereby strengthening the organization and France's influence in it.

Unlike his predecessors, deGaulle assumed the presidency of the new Fifth Republic with an all-encompassing national strategy in which the embryonic nuclear deterrent was to have a major role. He recognized, however, the need to resolve the two internal problems before this strategy could be implemented. He proceeded at once to frame a new Constitution for France which provided him the political leverage and stability to inaugurate a cohesive, long-range nuclear strategy. Moreover, he resolved the Algerian Crisis, which divided his countrymen and cost France unacceptable sums in blood and treasure. By granting Algeria independence in 1962, deGaulle helped to reunite the French people while

reorienting them toward Europe and his main goal for France: greatness in world affairs.

DeGaulle believed that, by acquiring a nuclear deterrent, France would gain several benefits: a degree of equality with the superpowers, major influence in international diplomacy, and renewed pride, self-confidence, and unity at home. He therefore considered the French nuclear deterrent (force de frappe) essential in both national and international politics. Although deGaulle at first attempted to operate within the confines of NATO, this was his only realistic alternative until 1964 since the developmental force de frappe was not yet an operational reality. Nevertheless, starting in earnest after Algerian independence, deGaulle sought to use the fledgeling force de frappe as the fulcrum for lifting France to leadership of a political and military coalition within Western Europe, to the exclusion of the United States. In 1966, when deGaulle's force de frappe had become fully operational, he withdrew France from NATO and adopted an autonomous nuclear course for the duration of his presidency.

Although the political-diplomatic justification for his independent strategy was paramount, deGaulle also articulated a military rationale for French non-alignment. His military strategy, called "proportional deterrence," provided that France would unleash the full might of her nuclear deterrent against an attacking enemy. Although the force de frappe had a limited capability compared to the forces of the superpowers,

it would presumably deter an adversary since France could still inflict serious damage.

The value of the French nuclear deterrent was dubious. Although deGaulle, armed with his force de frappe, enjoyed momentary prestige on the world stage, the lasting impact of his efforts was minor. He did help to restore political and economic stability as well as pride and self-confidence at home, but he failed to achieve his announced tangible goals abroad. Most significant, the force de frappe still lacks worldwide credibility as a sufficient deterrent or strike force.

French government publications of deGaulle's major addresses and statements as president provided valuable information for this study, as well as deGaulle's personal works: Edge of the Sword, Army of the Future, War Memoirs, and Memoirs of Hope. The most valuable secondary commentaries were Wilfrid Kohl's French Nuclear Diplomacy and Wolf Mendl's Deterrence and Persuasion.