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**France and NATO:  
Change by Rapprochement?  
Asterix' quarrel with the Roman empire**

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## **Inhaltsverzeichnis**

Abstract	5
1. Introduction	7
2. Towards a Symbiotic Partnership with Washington	9
3. Towards Political Rapprochement with NATO	13
4. Towards Political-Military Rapprochement	18
5. Towards Nuclear Rapprochement	24
6. Conclusions	30



## **Abstract**

The central elements of the French concept of security are national independence, the construction of an European Europe and global ambitions, and the core its security paradigm is sovereignty. Security paradigms are general assumptions on the mechanisms of the international system, from which conclusions concerning the optimal security policy in a concrete situation can be drawn. My thesis is that France has reluctantly entered into a long process of change regarding its security paradigm, primarily in reaction to external challenges such as the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, the formation of a new security landscape and the globalization process with its effects on the mechanisms of the international system and the very understanding of security itself.

However, if we look at the European and transatlantic integration process France must cope with a growing ambivalence. On the European level France is more and more confronted with a federal integration logic, that is barely compatible with its idea of sovereignty in contrast to Germany, which has learned during four decades how national interests can be excellently preserved by pooling sovereignties. As to NATO, Paris on the one hand is pursuing a policy of change by rapprochement following the motto „if you can't beat him join him!“. On the other hand it is entering a transatlantic integration scheme at the very moment when the US is regarded as a dominant and hegemonic power that is to be contained.

In both cases French traditional understanding of national sovereignty is at stake. Whereas in the case of EU integration France is more willing to make concessions it stopped its process of re-integration with NATO because of Washington's reluctance to reform the Alliance corresponding to French ambitions of an autonomous Europe. However, the practical military cooperation is improving. Paris is preparing the ground for this by its radical military reform announced in February 1996 that not only leads to an all volunteer army specialized for interventions but has already resulted in new command structures for common operations with allies. In the nuclear field the cooperation with the UK and the US

grew in the 1990s but the main stumbling block remains France's reluctance to join the relevant bodies of NATO's integration structure. Hence, the rapprochement is a gradual one.

Does this gradual change of NATO policy fit in the French security paradigm? From a subjective point of view it does because the policy of rapprochement offers some advantages such as know-how transfer in sensitive areas, the recourse to NATO assets and capabilities thus widening the military room of maneuver and strengthening ESDI and a certain convergence of interests with the main European allies UK and Germany. But to get these benefits Paris had to invest politically. Now it seems at a crossroads dealing with growing constraints and dilemmas. At the same time France is looking for ways to build a new Rome corresponding to its ambitions. If this will be a European Rome or the renovated transatlantic one remains to be seen. Hence, the quarrel with the „hyperpower“ and symbiotic partner America will go on.

## France and NATO: Change by rapprochement? Asterix' quarrel with the Roman empire

### 1. Introduction

When one deals with French security policy, notably with regard to the Atlantic Alliance, one has to start with Charles de Gaulle, the creator of the Fifth Republic and the *spiritus rector* of France's dominant security paradigm. His *Mémoires d'Espoir* provide the central elements of the French concept of security, or, to use a more common notion, its grand strategy: national independence, the construction of a European Europe and global ambitions. As to supranational approaches such as the EC and NATO integration, they are perceived as merely undermining the independent French nation and transferring its security to others. Hence, the core of the French security paradigm is sovereignty and its underlying assumptions can be derived from the realistic school of thinking, for example in contrast to Germany's security paradigm of integration, that can be attributed to the liberal or institutionalist approach.<sup>1</sup>

Security paradigms are general assumptions concerning the mechanisms of the international system, from which conclusions concerning the optimal security policy in a concrete situation can be drawn.<sup>2</sup> If one once more compares French and German approaches and takes the different concepts of Europe into account, it becomes apparent that France is more a proponent of confederate structures and intergovernmental relations whereas Germany prefers a federal, more integration oriented approach. As both paradigms rest in deeply rooted historic experiences and traditions, changes only occur very slowly, if at all,

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<sup>1</sup> See Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'Espoir. Le renouveau 1959-1962*, Paris: Plon 1979, pp. 180ff; 211ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Axel Sauder, *Souveränität und Integration. Französische und deutsche Konzeptionen europäischer Sicherheit nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 1995, p. 36.

and in an evolutionary way, driven by the interaction of internal and external factors.

My thesis is that France has reluctantly entered into such a long process of change regarding its security paradigm, primarily in reaction to external challenges such as the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, the formation of a new European security landscape and - probably the most important factor - the globalization process with its effects on the mechanisms of the international system and the very understanding of security itself. At the same time, the German security paradigm is becoming more flexible as well, so that, especially after the change of government in October 1998, the probability of a reinvented Franco-German engagement in promoting European security is growing.<sup>3</sup>

However, if we look at the European and transatlantic integration process, France must cope with a growing ambivalence. On the European level France is more and more confronted with a federal integration logic, that is barely compatible with its idea of national sovereignty in contrast to Germany, which has learned during four decades how national interests can be excellently preserved by pooling sovereignties. As to NATO, Paris on the one hand is pursuing a policy of change by rapprochement following the motto „if you can't beat him, join him!“ On the other hand it is entering a transatlantic integration scheme at the very moment when the US is regarded as a dominant and hegemonic power that is to be contained.

In both cases French traditional understanding of national sovereignty is at stake. Whereas in the case of EU integration France is more willing to make concessions it stopped its process of re-integration with NATO because of Washington's reluctance to reform the Alliance corresponding to French ambitions of an autonomous Europe. So France is behaving like Asterix, who although having fought successfully against the Roman Empire he could not change its order running always the risk of

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<sup>3</sup> See Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Kontinuität oder Erneuerung? Paris und Bonn/Berlin nach dem Machtwechsel*, in: *Internationale Politik*, No. 4, 1999, pp. 47 – 54.



either being isolated in his Gallic village or absorbed in a greater entity. Whereas in the comic the Gallic village stands firm against the overwhelming power of Rome, in reality it was swallowed only to be reborn a couple of centuries later as a greater entity named France which is now supposed to pursue the mission to build a new Rome called Europe.

This paper deals with the French policy of change by rapprochement in four steps. First it looks briefly at the bilateral level following the question of how Paris eyes Washington. The following three chapters deal with the process of rapprochement on the political, political- military and the nuclear field. Finally, it ends with some tentative conclusions.

## *2. Towards a Symbiotic Relationship with Washington*

A symbiotic relationship is a relation between different beings who live together in order to enhance their common benefit. In a way, both partners depend on each other. You can exist under these circumstances only if there are no insurmountable contradictions and if there is enough complementary substance. In the past, the Franco-US relations were characterized by both, the will to cooperate and to cultivate the difference. When France did the latter - often in a pronounced way - this can be attributed to the similarities and common traits it is sharing with its counterpart such as

- revolutionary traditions,
- global ambitions,
- the pretense of uniqueness,
- a certain missionary zeal,
- an inclination to power policy,
- a preference for intergovernmentalism and
- a strong sense of national independence.

Thus, both countries share sovereignty as the main aspect of their security paradigm. However, American designs for integrated structures, be it in the Atlantic or the European context, were unacceptable to a considerable part of the French political class exactly because they were perceived as undermining French sovereignty. At the same time they strengthened the American hegemony. Washington either did not

take part and saved its freedom of maneuver, as in the case of European integration, or American supremacy was guaranteed, as in the case of NATO.<sup>4</sup>

While the US can act correspondingly without being forced to prove to the world its capabilities every now and then, France sometimes needs to play the troublemaker because it lacks the US strength by far. Although the world power status has gone some time ago, Paris still seems to harbor feelings of envy towards the indisputable and sometimes arrogant American power. In addition, Washington is the ideal scapegoat for French - and not only French - frustrations. Regardless whether positive or negative, there is a French fixation on the US that is not responded to by the big brother who often enough does not even care. Thus, you have to tease him sometimes harder even if he becomes mad. In the end the US knows, that France is a reliable ally after all, one only needs to look toward the crises of Berlin, Iraq or Kosovo.

French policy makers of course know very well that the US is what Madeleine Albright used to call an „indispensable nation!“ as far as France’s security is concerned. Although Russia is in a period of decline, Washington continues to be an important strategic balancer regarding the remaining residual risk that might emanate from this nuclear superpower. The US presence in Europe helps also to alleviate hidden concerns regarding a stronger Germany. Finally, without US military capabilities – not to speak of the political leadership - the European ability for crisis management is still restricted to some minor operations in the low intensity spectrum. On the other hand, Washington needs Paris as well for at least two reasons. First, without France there will be no progress in European integration and as a consequence no real burden sharing and the pending risk of re-nationalization of the European system. Second, France is a reliable actor once a grave security crisis occurs and it has one of the biggest shares of European intervention capacities at its disposal.

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<sup>4</sup> See Geir Lundestad, „Empire., by Integration. The United States and the European Integration 1945-1997, New York: Oxford University Press 1998, p. 147ff.

Even if France is acting more and more in a European context, some fields for more or less exclusively bilateral activities continue to exist. To start with the UN Security Council, this field of action is of utmost importance for Paris because it is one of the remaining two symbols of the French role in world security affairs. The status of a veto power enables France to play its own game and to stress the difference from the US. As a multilateral framework the UNSC is a useful instrument to contain US inclination for unilateral action. Against this background Paris was in a somewhat ambiguous situation during the 1999 Yugoslav war, fighting, on the one hand, during the discussions about a new strategic concept against an unrestricted global role for NATO and, on the other, participating in the circumvention of international law by sidelining the UNSC.<sup>5</sup>

Another still important bilateral aspect is France's status as a nuclear weapon state. Although the role of nuclear weapons has diminished since the end of the East West conflict, the question of proliferation is high on the international agenda. With respect to this and to strategic considerations both countries are meanwhile on the same wavelength after having quarreled about France's going nuclear in the 1950s and about different nuclear strategies thereafter.

A third imminent bilateral topic is Africa. Long time neglected by the US, diverging strategic and economic interests seemed to clash in the 1990s, when Washington became more involved on the „forgotten continent“ and especially in areas that the French used to regard as their „chasse gardée“. However, as the American engagement turned out to be rather modest, Paris reduced its own activities pursuing now a co-operative approach with the US and Great Britain especially in the area of African peace-keeping.

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<sup>5</sup> For the French policy in the Kosovo conflict see Simon Duke, Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Matthias Z. Karadi, *The Major European Allies: France, Germany and the United Kingdom*, in Albrecht Schnabel and Ramesh Thakur (Eds.), *Kosovo and the International Community: Selective Indignation, Collective Intervention, and the Changing Contours of World Politics*, New York: The United Nations University 2000, forthcoming.

According to Philippe Moreau Defarges,<sup>6</sup> France, once having experienced in the 1870/71 War with Germany that it cannot protect its territory alone, has learned some hard lessons from the US, be it the decline of the French plea for military assistance in 1940, the rearmament of Western Germany after the Second World War or the experience made during the Suez crisis. In all cases American interests prevailed and therefore France developed the following tactics to sharpen Washington's awareness of French interests:

- Demanding equal partnership regardless of the huge difference in power as in the directorate proposal of 1958;
- contesting American policy as for example in Africa or on the actual CTBT -issue;
- seeking real independence via autonomous military means, especially by an independent nuclear deterrence;
- balancing the US by cooperating with other great powers, such as Russia and China;
- building an autonomous European pole and/or
- behaving as a reliable and precious ally.<sup>7</sup>

These strategies for dealing with America are still valid. At the beginning of 1999 William Pfaff, referring to reciprocal reproaches such as spying on one's industry or unprincipled political behavior, noticed that between French and American officials a kind of reciprocal paranoia had installed itself.<sup>8</sup> More important than this day to day needling is the French feeling of overwhelming US power that might strengthen Washington's inclination to unilateral actions and thereby endanger French interests. Foreign minister Hubert Védrine invented the notion of „hyperpower“ in order to describe the unique breadth of American strength.<sup>9</sup> The difference to past bilateral quarreling is that for the first time the US is characterized as the primary international problem because of its reluctance to share power. The French recipe is the renovation of the world order of the 21<sup>th</sup> century by reforming, restructur-

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<sup>6</sup> See Philippe Moreau Defarges, *Les États Unis et la France. La puissance entre mythes et réalités*, Les notes de l'ifri, no. 14, Paris: IFRI 1999, pp. 17.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19 – 21.

<sup>8</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 8 February 1999, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 5 February 1999, p. 5.

ing and reinforcing international institutions. Correspondingly, President Chirac proposed seven principles to be reflected in the United Nations which are supposed to lead to a global „collective sovereignty“.<sup>10</sup>

### *3. Towards Political Rapprochement with NATO*

When France left NATO integration in 1966 it did so, for the three previously mentioned reasons. As to the goal of restoration of independence, it contained three aspects. The political one aimed at a greater room of maneuver, the strategic one aimed at obtaining an equal status with the „Anglo-Saxons“ and the military one aimed at forming a more coherent role for the French military. As to the European aspect, it was always seen as an integral part of a transatlantic system which, however, ought to be adapted to the new international environment. De Gaulle's strive for an autonomous Western Europe, be it via the Fouchet plans or the Franco-German Élysée Treaty, was primarily motivated by his interest to strengthen the French role towards the US while preserving the transatlantic link. When all efforts broke down, Paris, while remaining in the Alliance, completed its withdrawal from NATO integration in 1966. As the European partners were not yet prepared to follow the French lead towards an autonomous Europe, France had to go alone hoping that one day the restricting effect of the East West conflict would disappear.<sup>11</sup>

After two decades of being more or less a status quo power, the historic changes since 1989 have paved the way for a revival of the Gaullist idea of Europe.<sup>12</sup> For France it was out of question to rejoin the military integration. On the contrary, the end of the Cold War asked for a real reform of NATO and created the possibility for the build-up of an autonomous European security and defense entity. The need for this seemed all the more compelling against the background of German unification and the unpredictable future of US engagement. As to the

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<sup>10</sup> International Herald Tribune, 5 February 1999, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Frédéric Bozo, *Deux stratégies pour l'Europe. De Gaulle, les Etats Unis et l'Alliance atlantique*, Paris: Plon; 1966, pp. 211-219.

<sup>12</sup> Two institutional innovations occurred in the 1980ties: In 1983 Paris for the first time hosted a meeting of the NATO Council on the ministerial level and in 1988 it decided to attend NATO summits.

former, Paris, favoring strongly a CFSP in the Maastricht process, was a main proponent of the Treaty's pillar structure guaranteeing an inter-governmental approach. But although the strategic line of excluding any transfer of sovereignty on CFSP and the corresponding positions resembled the Fouchet plans, the evolutionary character of the CFSP left its ultimate definition as a policy open.<sup>13</sup>

As to the future role of the US, France at first refused to concede NATO a role out of area. Since NATO's London summit in 1990 Paris argued firmly against a politicization of what it believed was a pure military organization that should be confined to Article 5 tasks leaving the rest to the Europeans and the WEU as their future military branch situated outside NATO. Correspondingly, it only very reluctantly accepted the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), NATO enlargement and non-article 5 tasks for NATO. But the evolution of the violent conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a main factor in bringing about a certain rapprochement on the institutional level. In 1993 Paris started to attend meetings of the military committee when non-article 5 tasks were on the agenda, and two years later it resumed its seat completely. In September 1994 the French defense minister took part in an informal NATO meeting for the first time and later on in official ones.<sup>14</sup>

France's acceptance of a wider NATO role, however, has to be seen in the context of a European parallelism, i.e. each step towards NATO was combined with if not outflanked by progress in European security cooperation. For example

- Paris participated actively in the deliberations on the 1991 strategic concept of NATO and NATO officially accepted the goal of a European security and defense identity (ESDI) as well as an enhanced role of the WEU.
- The acceptance of a NATO role in regional crisis management in an OSCE and UN framework was matched by the Petersberg dec-

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<sup>13</sup> See Collette Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht. Politics and Negotiations to Create the European Union*, New York: Garland Publishing 1997, p. 159.

<sup>14</sup> See Hans-Georg Ehrhart, *Frankreichs Flirt mit der NATO*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, Nr. 2, 1996, pp. 144-148.

laration of 19 June 1992 that set out, on the basis of the Maastricht Treaty, the guidelines for the future of the WEU, whose member states declared their preparedness to make available military units for the so called Petersberg missions consisting of humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management including peaceenforcement under the authority of the WEU.

- NATO's basic decision of January 1994 to open up the Alliance for new members from Central and Eastern Europe was followed in May by the WEU offer of the status of „associate partner“ for those countries which had signed „Europe Agreements“ with the EU.
- The new NATO members Poland, Czeck Republic and Hungary became associated members of the WEU in May 1999.

While President Mitterrand pursued a strategy of building an autonomous European security and defense entity outside NATO via WEU, his successor finally changed this course in 1995. Europe's failure to react adequately to the conflict in former Yugoslavia, the reduction of military spending in the European partner countries and their firm will to place themselves „more than ever under American protection, incarnated by NATO“ already in 1993 led Chirac to the conclusion, „that if France wants to play a determining role in the creation of a European defense entity, it must take into account this state of mind of its partners, and reconsider to a large degree the form of its relations with NATO. It is clear, in effect, that the necessary re-balancing of relations within the Atlantic Alliance, relying on existing European institutions such as the WEU, can only take place from inside, not against the United States, but in agreement with it“.<sup>15</sup>

This analysis was supported by the experience of US reluctance to become fully engaged in the Bosnian conflict, so that Paris now seemed rather worried about US disengagement than about US hegemony. Thus, France perceived NATO no more as an obstacle but as a neces-

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<sup>15</sup> Chirac quoted in Robert P. Grant, France's New Relationship with NATO, Survival, No. 1, Spring 1996, p. 63.

sary instrument to ESDI. But it linked further steps of rapprochement beyond the decisions of 5 December 1995 with the scope of a real reform of the NATO command structure.<sup>16</sup>

With Hervé de Charette's announcement Paris chose the only option, that was realistic in terms of domestic constraints and of its political bargaining position with NATO. The maximalist stance of Mitterrand had turned out to be counterproductive and a complete reintegration would have been incompatible with the goal of reducing US influence by means of ESDI. A policy of step by step rapprochement, however, allowed an evolutionary process towards an autonomous European defense capacity while respecting French independence with regard to NATO's military integration. However, as the results were deemed insufficient and as Chirac, after his miscalculation of dissolving the National Assembly, was forced to govern with a more NATO critical socialist-led leftist government Paris froze this process in 1997.

This does not mean that France renounced to push its European approach by furthering CFSP. So the Petersberg tasks were integrated in the Amsterdam Treaty which among other things contains provisions leading to a strengthening of the European Council by placing the guideline competence for CFSP and defense matters, including WEU, in its hands. As to the Secretary General of the Council and High Representative of CFSP, in short Mr. CFSP, France achieved its aim that a personality of high international standing be chosen who could one day play a similar role as the Secretary General of NATO. A Strategy Planning and Early Warning Unit composed of personnel from the Council, the Commission, the member states and the WEU will be at his disposal. Thus, Amsterdam was another step in reforming the EU's future defense policy, but not more.<sup>17</sup>

The Kosovo crisis gave a new push to both French-NATO and European security cooperation. One reason for France's support of the side-

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<sup>16</sup> See Rede des französischen Außenministers bei der Ministertagung des Nordatlantikrates am 5.12.1995 in: Frankreich-Info, No. 37, 11 December 1995, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See Europäisches Parlament, Bericht über die Schaffung einer gemeinsamen Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union, A4-0171/98, 30 April 1998.



lining of the UN had to do with ESDI and the related French leadership ambition. Therefore it was determined to play a considerable role in the armed conflict right from the beginning. Consequently, France assumed the biggest European share of NATO's military activities, taking on 12.8 per cent of the air raids and 20.2 per cent of the reconnaissance photography.<sup>18</sup> Inside the alliance, many important decisions in selecting sensitive targets with civilian character to be bombed were made by the US, Great Britain and France.

Following the French understanding of political control, obtaining veto power over military operations was an unwritten precondition for intensifying Operation Allied Force.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless part of the military operations were conducted by the US outside the NATO framework behind the back of the allies not at least in order to circumvent a French veto. Thus, France learnt that its distrust in the ability of American cooperation were confirmed and, as Defense Minister Alain Richard put it ironically, that „there was another country not fully integrated into the alliance – the United States.“<sup>20</sup>

The war against Yugoslavia taught the Europeans a lot about their military deficiencies. The military technological gap between EU countries and the US is becoming a gulf endangering not only the interoperability with US forces but also the standing of the Europeans in the decision making process. Correspondingly, NATO's new strategic concept of April 1999 defined detailed guidelines for the modernization of the armed forces which the member countries vowed to implement.<sup>21</sup> This requirement met with French thinking of the importance of European military capabilities that has been translated into the controversial proposal of defining convergence criteria.

Driven by a change of the British ESDI approach and the French-British declaration of St. Malo<sup>22</sup>, the European Council decided at its Cologne

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<sup>18</sup> Le Monde, 23 June 1999, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> International Herald Tribune, 21 September 1999, p. 1, 7

<sup>20</sup> Cited in International Herald Tribune, 11 November 1999, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> See Erklärung von Washington and part IV of the Strategic Concept.

<sup>22</sup> See Peter Schmidt, Neuorientierung in der europäischen Sicherheitspolitik? Britische und britisch-französische Initiativen, SWP-AP 3088, Januar 1999.

summit to strengthen the European military means - especially concerning strategic lift, strategic reconnaissance, modernization of the armed forces as well as command and control - in order to become able to act autonomously in the whole range of the Petersberg tasks. Paris translated these demands in a more concrete action plan in July 1999, and London proposed a step-by-step plan in November 1999 leading to European military capacities and command structures. Furthermore a new step was taken towards the integration until the end of 2000 of those WEU capabilities into the EU that are necessary for the EU's new responsibilities in the context of the Petersberg tasks. Finally Javier Solana, who acted as Mr. CFSP since 18 October 1999, was also appointed Secretary General of WEU. Thus, from a political point of view, a two pillar structure of the Alliance could emerge that coincides with French ideas and interests.

#### *4. Towards Political-Military Rapprochement with NATO*

When French decision makers talk of the Atlantic Alliance, they usually mean a traditional military alliance of collective defense whereas NATO is equated with US dominated military integration. The end of the East West Conflict was perceived as a radical change which required a corresponding adaptation of NATO becoming again an international body with joint planning capabilities and common procedures, but no integrated military command. The strategy of change by rapprochement on the political-military level can be exemplified by several developments.

To start with the Eurocorps, the announcement of the La Rochelle summit in 1992 to extend the Franco-German brigade to a multinational corps produced some irritation in Washington because it was interpreted as a French attempt to undermine the military integration. Paris at first tried indeed to separate the German contingents from NATO command by arguing that the Eurocorps should operate only under WEU command. But it finally gave way to a solution tied down in a bilateral agreement between the commander of the Eurocorps and SACEUR that enables French forces to come under NATO's operational command in time of crisis provided certain conditions ( prior

Franco-German agreement, mission plan approved by France, corps be engaged as such) are fulfilled.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, Paris made a step towards NATO, on the other hand the Eurocorps „as such“ became not part of the integration system of NATO though the German contingent remained formally assigned to it. In the Toulouse declaration of May 1999 France and Germany agreed to transform the Eurocorps into a European Reaction Corps with a deployable headquarters (outside NATO) that could perform as a core element of European CJTF.<sup>24</sup>

Due to emerging conflicts in the Balkans, Paris in practice increased cooperation with NATO's military structures.

- For example, at first NATO and WEU naval forces operated separately in the Adriatic Sea until they were combined in June 1993 coming under operational control of NATO's integrated military command subject to the political authority of the Councils of NATO and WEU.
- In order to achieve better coordination in former Yugoslavia France established new military missions with NATO's integrated military structure and expanded its direct links to SHAPE.
- After having experienced the traps of a double chain of command in Bosnia France participated in the NATO led operation „Joint Endeavour“. A special land-forces deputy commander to the Allied Forces Southern Europe had to be created to give Paris influence on IFOR's operations.
- NATO's Extraction Forces established in November 1998 for the evacuation of the OSCE verifiers in Kosovo were its first exclusively European mission with France contributing the main share of the contingent as a lead nation.
- France not only participated intensively in operation Allied Force but it also accomplished influencing NATO's target planning from the highest political level. A report for the French Senate stated that France operated without any difficulties within the Alliance while being the advocate of „the primacy of politics“ over the military hi-

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<sup>23</sup> See Grant, op. cit., p.61.

<sup>24</sup> See Erklärung von Toulouse, 29 May 1999 and Interview with Alain Richard in Le Monde, 14 July 1999, p. 3.

erarchy.<sup>25</sup> So France came closer to NATO in practical terms but resisted to cross the Rubicon of reintegration.

Paris regarded the traditional military integration not only as incompatible with its concept of political control and autonomy, but also with the necessary military flexibility with regard to the new challenges of crisis management and the need for much more political consideration than in the case of the traditional Article 5 scenario of Cold War times. NATO's CJTF concept was therefore welcomed as a crucial innovation leading to both a true reform of NATO's military structure and an autonomous ESDI. But shortly after the 1994 Brussels summit differences emerged between Washington and Paris as to the role of the International Military Staff (IMS) in planning and organizing CJTF.<sup>26</sup>

In the French perspective there were two arguments that called into question the US position of merely adapting the IMS: First, it is too clumsy for the new type of missions, and second, an adequate political control over SACEUR is not guaranteed. Therefore Paris preferred CJTF to be implemented rather outside the integrated command by enabling also national or other multilateral commands to provide the headquarters, a position that was opposed to the US approach of using existing NATO commands.

In 1996 the NAC's Ministerial Meeting in Berlin arrived at a tentative compromise when stating „this concept (of CJTF, H.G.E.) will facilitate the mounting of NATO contingency operations, the use of separable but not separate military capabilities in operations led by WEU, and the participation of nations outside the Alliance...“. As to ESDI, it would be based on an „elaboration of appropriate multinational European command arrangements within NATO, consistent with and taking full advantage of the CJTF concept, able to prepare, support, com-

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<sup>25</sup> Le Monde, 6 July 1999, p. 6. US General Short confirmed this statement from an American point of view complaining that France was especially responsible for having delayed the expansion of Serbian targets until late in the air campaign. See International Herald Tribune, 22 October 1999, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> See Grant, op. cit., p.66ff.

mand and conduct the WEU-led operations.<sup>27</sup> The French Defense Minister welcomed the results as a huge step towards a „profound renovation“ of the Alliance.<sup>28</sup> However, it was merely a step.

- On the one hand, the US softened its position by becoming more open to modular concepts; on the other hand, France gave its consent to the primacy of NATO and the preservation of the integrated military structure.
- Further, a European chain of command was accepted, but within NATO by double hatting.
- Moreover, with the creation of a Political Coordination Group the Allies took the French wish into account to strengthen political-military cooperation and the political control of the NAC.
- And the creation of the Capabilities Coordination Cell as a body of military staff experts to support the Military Committee in developing guidelines for the non-article 5 contingency planning corresponded to the French interest in strengthening the MC at the expense of the integrated military structure.
- Finally, both the mechanisms allowing the Europeans the use of NATO assets and the question of the duration of the right of disposal remained open to discussion.<sup>29</sup>

Three years later the allies adopted a framework document on the release of NATO assets and US capabilities for the WEU, and France accepted the principle of non-automatism as well as the possibility of a withdrawal of these assets.<sup>30</sup> Thus, CJTF can be interpreted as an ambiguous approach confirming the adaptability of NATO and the rapprochement of France as well as the French strive for a more autonomous Europe.

The French strategic goal to qualify NATO's military integration to the benefit of ESDI was also expressed by its efforts to make the new power sharing between Europe and the US visible. A first success was

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<sup>27</sup> NATO Final Communiqué, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Berlin, 3 June 1996. Press Communiqué M-NAC-(96)63, para. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Millon, Vers une nouvelle alliance, *Le Monde*, 11 June 1996, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> See SIPRI Yearbook 1998, p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> The term „NATO assets,“ usually embraces real NATO capabilities such as the military staffs or AWACS and US capabilities such as strategic lift and C4ISR. See Kori Schake, Amaya Bloch-Lainé and Charles Grant, *Building a European Defence Capability*, *Survival*, No. 1, Spring 1999, pp.31f.

the new definition of the European Deputy SACEUR's responsibilities who acquires a distinct role at normal times and in the context of WEU-led operations in relation to the forces to be made available to the WEU.<sup>31</sup> Although the French ambition to install an equal European SACEUR responsible for non-article 5 tasks beside the American SACEUR responsible for collective defense failed Paris succeeded in obtaining a certain amount of visibility in the case of European-led CJTF.<sup>32</sup> But this achievement was blurt by the failure to Europeanize NATO's Southern Command (AFSOUTH). This undertaking was of high importance for Paris for three reasons:

- First, it was seen as a symbol of re-balancing the American influence and of strengthening ESDI against the background of the ongoing reform of the NATO command structure.
- Second, France has strategic interests in this highly volatile region as have other European players who initially supported the French ambition.
- Third, after its rapprochement with NATO which was perceived as a prior concession, Paris believed that the US owed this Command to France.

Whereas the Berlin compromise was the ultimate concession and the end of a process for Washington, for Paris it was just the beginning. This is not the place to discuss why even the compromise formula – a rotating French-Italian-Spanish command, the 6<sup>th</sup> fleet under US command - of this initiative failed.<sup>33</sup> The essential point in our context is that France reacted to the US position by freezing the process of rapprochement with NATO. However, this did not mean that the project has been skipped and that there was no possibility for bilateral US-French military cooperation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Until recently the DSACEUR used to be a British General. In December 1998 London and Berlin agreed to let the command rotate with a German general whereas the Germany consented to enter a rotation scheme with Great Britain regarding the former „German turf., of Chief of Staff. See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 18 December 1998, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> See Peter Schmidt, Frankreichs Verhältnis zur NATO: Annäherung oder Implementierung gaullistischer Prinzipien, unpublished paper, January 1996, p.11.

<sup>33</sup> See to this Jean-Pierre Froehly, Frankreichs neue NATO-Politik, Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift, No. 3, 1998, p. 268f. See also Joseph Fitchett, Early Elections in 1997 Halted France's Long Journey Back Into NATO, International Herald Tribune, 3 July 1998.

<sup>34</sup> See International Herald Tribune, 7 October 1997, pp. 1, 12.

Already the Petersberg declaration of 1992 identified the objective of developing operational capacities. In the meantime, new institutions were set up, such as a planning cell, a satellite center, a situation center, a military committee and forces answerable to the WEU (FAWEU) comprising 2,600 units (battalion, air squadron and ship levels) from 24 nations, including associate partners and observers. They include seven multilateral formations ranging from the Eurocorps, the German Dutch Corps, the Multinational Division Central, the United Kingdom-Netherlands Amphibious Force, Euromarfor, and Eurofor to the Spanish-Italian Amphibious Force.<sup>35</sup> To guarantee political control and strategic guidance the German EU presidency has proposed in a report annexed to the Conclusions of the European Council of Cologne

- meetings of the General Affairs Council including, if appropriate, the defense ministers;
- the creation of a standing political and security committee, which, as Chirac put it, „should be to the European Union what the Atlantic Council is to NATO“;<sup>36</sup>
- the setting up of a military committee and
- the creating of a military staff including a situation center.<sup>37</sup>

At the first official meeting the EU's Foreign and Defense Ministers decided in November 1999 that these two committees will be created in 2000.<sup>38</sup> While these institutional renovations are meeting French basic ideas of an autonomous European defense entity Paris wants to make sure that, in contrast to the military committee, there is no double-hatting in the political and military committee, thus apparently shying too close political relations with NATO.<sup>39</sup>

##### *5. Towards Nuclear Rapprochement*

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<sup>35</sup> See Stephan de Spiegeleire, *From Mutually Assured Debitation to Flexible Response: A New Menu of Options for European Crisis Management*, unpublished paper, Paris 1998, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Chirac on 26 August 1999, <http://www.info-france-usa.org/news/statmnts/chi2608.htm>

<sup>37</sup> See Europäischer Rat in Köln am 3. und 4. Juni 1999, *Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Bulletin*, No. 49, 16 August 1999, S. 532 – 335.

<sup>38</sup> See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 November 1999, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Le Monde*, 26/27 September 1999, p. 6.

At the nuclear political level one can also state a tendency of rapprochement, especially if one takes into account the whole period of time starting from the 1950s. According to recent research findings US President Truman in January 1952 authorized the storage of nuclear-capable delivery vehicles at strategic air command bases in French Morocco without informing France.<sup>40</sup> The American refusal to support French military nuclear ambitions and to inform Paris of nuclear planning regarding US nuclear weapons stationed on French soil had a catalytic effect on the French nuclear program that had already been started in the Fourth Republic and thereafter accelerated by de Gaulle.

Neither the proposal of a nuclear Multilateral Force (MLF) nor the British-US Nassau agreement were acceptable because both were equal to dependence upon Washington in an issue of vital importance. Following Pierre Lellouche the Nassau agreement strengthened French opposition against a British EC membership<sup>41</sup>, already casting a light on a possible European function of an independent „force de frappe“. In addition, the new US nuclear strategy of „flexible response“ was incompatible with French strategic thinking. The attainment of the nuclear status allowed Paris in 1966 to bring the process of leaving NATO's integrated military structure to an end and to pursue an independent defense policy.

In the 1970s and 1980s some steps of rapprochement were undertaken albeit rather from the side of US and NATO. To begin with NATO's 1974 Ottawa declaration in which the foreign ministers of the Alliance for the first time publicly referred to the French and British nuclear forces and declared that they contributed to the strengthening of NATO's deterrence. Furthermore a French-US covert nuclear connection evolved since 1973/74 transferring to Paris know-how in areas such as MIRV-technology, electromagnetic hardening, solid fuel technology and underground testing. In addition in the mid-1970s the French chief of general staff and SACEUR began a dialogue on the respective

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<sup>40</sup> See International Herald Tribune, 21 October 1999, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>41</sup> See Pierre Lellouche, *Légitime défense. Vers une Europe en sécurité au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle*, Préface de Charles Millon, Paris: Editions Patrick Banon 1996, p. 56.



nuclear planning that led to a certain coordination although not comparable to the cooperation within the Nuclear Planning Group.<sup>42</sup>

Also Mitterrand's famous speech in the German Bundestag when he ardently lobbied in favor of NATO'S double track decision should be mentioned. Another aspect was the evolution of French nuclear strategy animated by the introduction of tactical (so called „pre-strategic“) weapons towards a sort of „flexible response“ *à la française* that led to greater room of maneuver in the field of nuclear as well as conventional cooperation. Finally, leaving aside the internal strategic debate in France and the intensifying bilateral security relations between Bonn and Paris it is sufficient in our context to recall the 1986 Franco-German declaration which stated that the French President will consult the German Chancellor on a possible use of nuclear forces if time allows.<sup>43</sup>

The change of the international security landscape since the end of the last decade led to a devaluation of nuclear forces. This process found its expression in NATO's strategic concept of 1991 which radically reduced the reliance on this kind of weapon. NATO's and France strategic thinking converged as the former's nuclear war fighting approach was superseded by the political purpose of deterrence. Now notions such as „sufficiency“ and „prestrategic“ cherished by Paris became generally accepted within the Alliance and elsewhere so that France could leave its nuclear Maginot line.

While NATO adapted its nuclear force posture by reducing the number of its prestrategic forces by 80 per cent and by removing all warheads assigned to these forces from the NATO inventory, France embarked

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<sup>42</sup> See Richard H. Ullman, The Covert French Connection, Foreign Policy, No. 75, Summer 1989, pp. 3 – 33.

<sup>43</sup> See for this Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Die europäische Herausforderung. Frankreich und die Sicherheit Europas an der Jahrhundertwende. Baden-Baden: Nomos; 1990, pp. 19 – 22 and 40 - 45. As for the new nuclear consensus in France in the 1990s see Pascal Boniface, France And the Dubious Charms of a Post-Nuclear World, in David G. Haglund (Ed.), Pondering NATO's Nuclear Options. Gambits for a Post-Westphalian World, Kingston: Queen's University 1999, pp. 152 – 155. German proposals to define adequate consultation procedures were declined by Mitterrand. See Hubert Vedrine, Les mondes de François Mitterrand, Paris: Fayard 1996, pp. 413 – 414.

on the train of nuclear arms control and disarmament once so distrusted by the guardians of the Gaullist orthodoxy. In 1992 it adhered to the NPT and it became the first nuclear weapon state to embrace the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Paris became member of the Treaties of Rarotonga and Pelinbada which call for the denuclearisation of the South Pacific and Africa. On the unilateral level it disarmed its gravity bombs and its Pluton short-range missiles, mothballed the successor Hadès missiles, reduced the number of nuclear armed squadrons and submarines, decided to close its launching base for intermediate nuclear forces at the Plateau d'Albion and reduced the state of alert of the strategic forces.<sup>44</sup>

The rationale behind this shift in French nuclear policy was multifaceted ranging from strategic over financial and technical to political aspects. Despite all international changes the principle value of nuclear forces remained undisputed. Following a French strategic thinker they still have a function for the very survival of the nation, national identity, crisis management, bargaining power, anti-hegemonic compensation and political influence in Europe. As to the latter point, the then under-secretary of defense Jacques Mellick stressed in a colloquium on the future of nuclear weapons that there will be no post-nuclear era because of

- still existing security risks,
- the uncertainty of US presence in Europe and
- the emerging European defense.<sup>45</sup>

A few days before President Mitterrand had turned a page in French nuclear policy when he asked at a European summit meeting whether a European nuclear doctrine was conceivable. Shortly after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty he posed the question of a European role of French nuclear forces provided that the CFSP project materializes. In this context Mellick mentioned four options:

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<sup>44</sup> See Hans.Georg Ehrhart, Die Gemeinsame Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik der EG und die Nuklearwaffenfrage, in Oliver Thränert (Hrsg.), Die EG auf dem Weg zu einer Gemeinsamen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, Bonn: Forschungsinstitut der Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung; 1992, pp. 51f.

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.* pp. 54f.

- status quo based on indirect deterrence („dissuasion par constat“),
- American-like extended deterrence,
- concerted deterrence and
- common deterrence presupposing the existence of an adequate European political entity.<sup>46</sup>

In 1992 France intensified nuclear dialogue with Great Britain. Three years later Foreign Minister Alain Juppé rekindled the discussion of linking the French nuclear arsenal to European security. First in January and then in September 1995 he stated publicly that the future role of British and French nuclear arms must be thought over and a new form of concertation especially with Germany should be developed in the nuclear field. In January 1996 Paris announced at a NAC meeting in Brussels its readiness to enter consultations with NATO on questions of a common nuclear strategy, and the 1997 – 2002 defense plan stated that European cooperation on deterrence implies a dialogue with the US within the Alliance. Finally in December 1996 the Bonn and Paris governments agreed in a Common Strategic Concept to engage in a dialogue on the role of nuclear deterrence in the context of a European defense policy.

So what does France mean when it talks of „concerted deterrence“ and which significance does this approach have for its alliance policy? Concerted deterrence means, as Juppé cautiously put it, „a dialogue between two equal partners...on a subject touching upon their common future existence“.<sup>47</sup> This coordinated policy which has nothing to do with common decision making could in theory embrace a variety of relevant topics such as doctrinal questions, nuclear arms control and disarmament, cooperation in fields of the nuclear environment (i.e. non-nuclear areas relevant for the credibility of nuclear deterrence such as C4ISR, delivery vehicles or Theatre Missile Defense), a consultation mechanism for crisis management with eventual nuclear implications,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. pp. 55ff.

<sup>47</sup> Address of Primeminister Alain Juppé on 7 September, Französische Botschaft, Frankreich-Info, No. 27, 1995, pp. 1 – 8.

military planning or the adoption of a common European nuclear strategy.<sup>48</sup>

Leaving aside Chirac's short-term motives such as diversionary tactics because of the storm of protest provoked by nuclear testing the strategic goal is to give the French nuclear weapons a role within the emerging ESDI which from the Paris point of view is not imaginable without a nuclear component. In this context Paris wants to achieve both enhanced legitimacy and European burden-sharing. The former is necessary because of the diminishing role of nuclear weapons in the new security environment and their dwindling acceptance in the European and especially German public. Obvious reasons for the latter are the reduction of nuclear submarines implying a coordinated approach with Great Britain, the option of a NATO style dual-key arrangement with France keeping national control over the air based nuclear weapons and its partners providing for the delivery systems, the search for political support in the case of a reversal of US nuclear policy in Europe, and the primarily financially motivated need for cooperation in technologies of the nuclear environment at a time of diminishing defense budgets and rising investments in the restructuring of the conventional force posture.<sup>49</sup>

As to NATO Paris has made it perfectly clear that a reintegration in the NPG and its subcommittees is out of the question. What is imaginable is coordination with the NAC. Some thoughts were given to the creation of a nuclear planning group within the WEU by the Gaullist defense expert Francois Fillon,<sup>50</sup> but this idea was unheeded by the European partners as was the offer of concerted deterrence. For Germany the latter makes sense only within NATO. If Paris wants to offer an addi-

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<sup>48</sup> See Lellouche, *op. cit.*, pp. 265 – 269. See also Bruno Tertrais, *Nuclear Policies in Europe*, Adelphi Paper 327, March 1999, pp. 61ff.

<sup>49</sup> See François Fillon in *Relations Internationales et Stratégiques*, No. 6, 1992, pp. 116f. See also the contribution of Xavier Villepin who argues in favor of a European concerted deterrence, *ibid.*, p. 128 and Tertrais, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup> See François Fillon in *Relations Internationales et Stratégiques*, No. 6, 1992, pp. 116f. See also the contribution of Xavier Villepin who argues in favor of a European concerted deterrence, *ibid.*, p. 128 and Tertrais, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

tional nuclear umbrella so why not doing so inside the Alliance?<sup>51</sup> The French answer could be: That depends on the nature of the Alliance.

France's nuclear rapprochement with the US was underlined by cooperation with Washington in the exchange of simulation data,<sup>52</sup> the opening of US nuclear weapon laboratories for French scientists and the support for a high-performance laser lab near Bordeaux.<sup>53</sup> As to the proliferation issue both countries are finding more and more common ground. On the one hand, Paris has problems with some elements of the US counterproliferation approach because of a sometimes suspected hidden agenda and out of concern that this policy does not lead to diminished credibility of the „force de frappe“. On the other hand, it identified NBC proliferation as a major challenge in its 1994 White Paper and views cooperation among allies in this area as absolutely necessary. This was reflected by France's co-chairing with the US of NATO's Defense Group on Proliferation which was created following NATO's 1994 Brussels summit, but also by its efforts to address the proliferation issue in the WEU.<sup>54</sup>

Despite all the steps outlined above the French rapprochement with the US and NATO in the nuclear field is rather modest. The bilateral cooperation with the US is primarily driven by Washington's concerns with regards to strengthening the international nonproliferation regime and improving safeguards of French nuclear arms. While the new international environment pressed Paris to join the nuclear arms control and disarmament process the technological gap advised to cooperate with Washington. Nuclear concertation takes place neither in the NAC nor in the WEU. The bilateral dialogue with London is continuing but with no

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<sup>51</sup> See for the French German debate Franz-Josef Meiers, *Europeanization, NATOization, Globalization. The Shift in French Foreign and Security Policy from a German Perspective*, in *Les relations franco-allemandes: états et perspectives*, sous la direction de Hans Stark, Paris: IFRI; 1998, pp. 31 – 37.

<sup>52</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 18 June 1996, pp. 1, 10.

<sup>53</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 20 September 1995, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> See Robert Grant, *Counterproliferation and International Security. The Report of a US-French Working Group*, Arlington: US-CREST; 1995, pp. 23f. For the US – French nuclear cooperation see Martin Butcher, Otfried Nassauer and Stephen Young, *Nuclear Futures: Western European Options for Nuclear Risk Reduction*, BASIC - BITS Research Report 98.5, December 1998, pp. 27f.

tangible results in the nuclear field,<sup>55</sup> and the discussion with Berlin on concerted deterrence faded away shortly after it had begun. Foreign minister Fischer's no-first-use initiative indicated that the doctrinal divergences have intensified since the Schröder government took office. Nevertheless Paris has undertaken a certain rapprochement also in this field. Although the timing of Juppé's offer is disputable France made known to its partners that it is willing to cooperate on the nuclear issue. It also made clear that the nuclear dimension remained both the core of France's defense policy and of an autonomous European security structure.

## *6. Conclusions: All Roads Lead to Rome*

The goal of containing US power does not preclude cooperative relations between Paris and Washington. This is all the more true, if the relationship is of an asymmetric nature and major security interests can be preserved only by the US and NATO. Furthermore a strategy of cooperative engagement usually bears better chances to change the international environment provided you have something to trade with. Hence, France adapted its approach towards NATO during the 1990s following the strategy of „change by rapprochement“ that Egon Bahr designed at the beginning of the 1960s for the long-term unification process of Germany. Its essence consists of three elements: acknowledging the realities, waving a net of bi- and multilateral relations and thereby gradually changing the realities in favor of the strategic goal. A French editorialist put it like this: „To be more European tomorrow, one has to be more Atlantic today“.<sup>56</sup>

It is obvious that there has been a rapprochement with the Alliance on the political, the politico-military and even the nuclear level. While the political rapprochement with NATO has been frozen the practical military cooperation is improving. Paris is preparing the ground for this by

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<sup>55</sup> See Butcher, Nassauer and Young, op. cit., pp. 25ff. On possibilities and difficulties of nuclear cooperation before 1989 see Yves Boyer, Pierre Lellouche and John Roper (Eds.), *Franco-British Defence Co-Operation: A New Entente Cordiale?*, London/Paris: Routledge 1988, pp. 3 – 43.

<sup>56</sup> Jean-Claude Casanova, „Dissuasion concertée“, *L'Express*, 28 Septembre 1995, p. 26.

its radical military reform announced in February 1996 that not only leads to an all volunteer army specialized for interventions but has already resulted in new command structures for common operations with allies. In the nuclear field the cooperation with the UK and the US grew in the 1990s but the main stumbling block remains France's reluctance to join the relevant bodies of NATO's integration structure. Hence, the rapprochement is a gradual one. Varying on a subtitle once used by Peter Schmidt<sup>57</sup> I would say that Paris is pursuing both rapprochement with NATO *and* (instead of *or*) implementing Gaullist principles.

Does this gradual change of NATO policy fit in the French security paradigm? From a subjective point of view it does because the policy of rapprochement offers some advantages. First, it facilitates know-how transfer in sensitive areas such as simulation. Second, the CJTF compromise although not fully satisfying for Paris enables the recourse to NATO assets and capabilities thus widening the military room of maneuver and strengthening ESDI. Third, a certain convergence of interests with the main European allies UK and Germany could be established. Fourth, the legitimacy of the „forces de frappe“ might have been strengthened. Fifth, France got more influence on the reformation of NATO and its missions. Sixth, it has prevented the emergence of an Alliance with too strong a German influence.

But to get these benefits Paris had to invest politically. Now it seems at a crossroads dealing with growing constraints and dilemmas. To mention only a few:

- The reunified, stronger and more assertive Germany suggests an acceleration of the EU integration process, but how to preserve one's relative national sovereignty at the same time?
- The US is the only real world power worth this name with a tendency to unilateralism, but how to balance Washington without European integration?

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<sup>57</sup> Peter Schmidt, op. cit., p. 1.

- Having left NATO's military integration for the sake of national sovereignty, how realistic is an approach that in essence aims at a strong Europe with weak institutions (intergovernmentalism)?
- Or to put it the other way round: Is it imaginable to forge strong European institutions without changing the French security paradigm of national sovereignty?
- On the military level one might ask: If the nuclear dimension is an integral part of ESDI, is not there a risk of duplication with NATO arrangements similar to that which is already emerging on the conventional level which could give support to isolationist and unilateralist circles in Washington and end up in US military disengagement thereby enhancing the urgency of European integration?
- Such a contingency could eventually be countered by France's return in NATO's integration, but again: Would this be compatible with the Gaullist security paradigm?

Despite all these dilemmas I think that the French security paradigm has entered a process to change. It is doing so slowly and incrementally, driven by the changes of the international environment and by the spill-over effects of other European integration areas such as the monetary union. At the same time France is looking for ways to build a new Rome corresponding to its ambitions. In this respect, much will depend on the political will of France's European partners to implement the decisions of the European Council of Cologne and Helsinki on the strengthening of the Common European Policy on Security and Defense. If the outcome will be a European Rome or the renovated transatlantic one remains to be seen. Hence, the quarrel with the „hyper-power“ and symbiotic partner America will go on.