

lost in starting a major re-examination by all the NATO countries, but particularly by the most powerful, of the functions of the alliance, and how they can best be carried out. . . .

In the British case, Mr. Nott will no doubt cobble together a compromise for the moment. The Rhine army will survive with a few minor adjustments; the RAF [Royal Air Force] will get its Tornados; the Navy will be allowed to keep some of its through-deck cruisers but be forced to give up others. The "savings" of £6,000 million thus achieved will permit the Trident nuclear programme to go forward. But savings of this kind over a decade or more are not going to solve the fundamental problem for us or for anyone else. If we are to combine economic and military stability in Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s something more radical, and on a NATO-wide basis, must be devised.

The "radical" solution proposed by the Royal Institute and John Nott is to revert to *less expensive and less advanced technologies*. Nott's April 1981 Defense White Paper insists that "we have too full an equipment programme for the financial resources available for defense. . . . The demands of meeting an ever-increasing threat will pull toward solutions which are sophisticated and therefore expensive. On the other hand, the limitations of money must pull toward simpler and cheaper solutions if the necessary range of equipments is still to be provided."

A defense analyst cited by the *Sunday Times* May 24 called for building cheaper tanks for the Rhine Army. "That is one area where we really can learn from the Soviets. They want a lot of them so they build them cheap; it is a classic example of their substituting clever design for high technology."

Lawrence Freedman, top defense analyst for the Royal Institute, added: "Our trouble is that we have tended to go for quality all the way through. Obviously we need some high-quality equipment, but I'm coming round to the view that quantity rather than quality must now be re-stressed."

Warsaw Pact tanks now deployed in Central Europe alone outnumber NATO tanks nearly 3 to 1. Moreover the commonplace of Soviet "quantity, not quality" is fast becoming a relic of the past, as Soviet military technology is now recognized to be equal or superior to that in the West in many areas. The Soviet Union places a particular emphasis on the most-advanced technologies and basic physics research which will lead to the weapons of the 21st century—laser and particle-beam weapons. Once breakthroughs in these technologies are achieved, what good will Britain's cheap tanks be—even if there are a few more of them?

FRANCE

Will Mitterrand keep the force de frappe?

Despite assurances to the Reagan administration by the visiting French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson that "continuity" will prevail in French policy, and soothing words to State Department and other channels that French-U.S. relations could well improve under Giscard's successor, the actual picture is very different.

"There will be no Franco-German axis" under the new regime of Socialist President François Mitterrand, Cheysson told *Le Monde* in a May 28 interview. With these words the Mitterrand government put an end to the alliance that kept the world at peace during four years of Jimmy Carter's presidency, and, it was hoped, would do so during Alexander Haig's tenure at the State Department.

A general review of France's military role is now under way: from the continued development of the *force de frappe*, France's independent nuclear capability, to arms exports and internal military reforms. This must be seen in the context of a foreign policy which gives Latin American guerrilla supporter Régis Debray official foreign policy advisory status; a shift in Middle East policy toward close ties with Iran, Libya and Israel; and a shift in Africa policy which will mean support for Libya-backed liberationist movements.

The policies of previous Gaullist or Gaullist-inspired governments have made France the third most powerful military force in the Atlantic Alliance. Combined with the U.S. strategic strike force, the conventional military forces of West Germany, and some aspects of the British military, the French *force de frappe* is a crucial component of Atlantic Alliance capabilities.

Out of the Franco-German alliance arose a division of labor in which the Federal Republic of Germany built up its conventional armed forces, while France concentrated on its strategic and tactical nuclear forces. The outcome, for France, was a strategic force of five missile-launching nuclear submarines, with a sixth under construction; a force of approximately 50 Mirage VIs equipped with H-bombs and 18 ground-to-ground missiles buried in the southwestern Albion plateau, and a tactical nuclear force comprising five regiments of Pluton missiles and a tactical air force of three squadrons of Jaguars and two squadrons of Mirage IIIs equipped with the AN-52 nuclear weapons.

While there has been much talk about other countries in the alliance being incapable of meeting the 3 percent target for military spending in relation to GNP, under the Giscard government that reached 3.85 percent this year with nearly an 18 percent increase in defense spending over the 1980 figure.

Hyperinflationary threat

Mitterrand and his defense minister, Charles Hernu, have promised to keep up the French defense effort, and even have some people believing that they will increase it. Leaving aside for a moment the question of whether this is actually the government's intention, other decisions already taken by the Socialist government make a stepped-up defense effort impossible. Within a few months we will start to see the toll that a near doubling of French interest rates, currently hovering just above the U.S. prime rate at 22 percent, will take on small and medium-sized firms—the indispensable fabric for any military program. At the same time, a massive program of social spending has been started, without a corresponding program to increase overall production of national wealth, which will rule out any possibility of keeping up the French military effort without resorting to the printing presses.

These are some of the economic factors that must be taken into account when the Mitterrand government pledges, as it did last week, to build an additional two nuclear submarines as part of the strategic *force de frappe*. As that decision was announced, there was a decision to end the previous government's plan to develop a longer-range Hades tactical missile to replace the Pluton, whose range is only 75 kilometers.

The same government maintains a careful ambiguity as to its intentions with respect to the neutron bomb. The Giscard government had developed a capability to produce and deploy a French neutron bomb, although it suspended any final decision. Defense Minister Charles Hernu had halted all nuclear testing on the Pacific island of Muroroa, but after a quick review, ordered testing to resume. However brief, the suspension has given rise to fears in French military ranks that the neutron bomb will never be developed.

A further indication of major changes taking place behind the veil of "continuity" is a purge of over 300 officers and civilians working in military functions relating to sensitive intelligence and scientific evaluations work.

'Morality in exports'

Foreign Minister Cheysson reacted to the Israeli bombing of the French-built Osirak nuclear research reactor in Iraq with the statement that the French government will use this event as the opportunity for a full review of French nuclear exports, throwing into

jeopardy nuclear cooperation agreements with such nations as South Korea, Brazil and Egypt.

At the same time, the Mitterrand government has announced its intention to "put morality into arms exports," a policy graphically illustrated at the international air show at Le Bourget last week, where Mitterrand put in an appearance. Prior to his arrival, the French president ordered that all "offensive" French aircraft be removed from display and that aircraft equipped with weapons be disarmed. An executive from the Northrop Corporation was overheard remarking to his dumbfounded French colleague: "You wanted your Jimmy Carter. Well, now you've got him."

Any significant cut in French arms exports would have dramatic consequences for the economy of the world's third largest exporter in that field, and would increase the real cost burden on the economy for the R&D on new weapons systems for French use. Annual arms exports now amount to 30 billion francs, a full 5 percent of the country's total exports. The receipts from those sales are the principal prop for French military industry, ensure France's independence in terms of its own military equipment, and provide employment for 900,000 industrial workers.

The most serious blow to the military has been the government's cancellation of the expansion of the military camp and maneuvers area in Larzac, an extension which the French military has been fighting for for over a decade. In 1970, Defense Minister Michel Debré authorized the ground army to acquire 13,500 hectares near its already existing camp at Larzac. Reversing that decision had become a cause célèbre of the environmentalist and disarmament movements, who have organized countless civil disobedience protests over the years to stop the project.

Like all so-called symbolic acts, the government's decision indicates a fundamental policy commitment, one further illustrated by Charles Hernu's long-standing proposals for "democratization" of the army, described in his 1975 book *Soldier-Citizen*. Hernu, a close political associate of Mitterrand for 20 years, calls for greater "rights and liberties" for those doing their military service, broader grounds for conscientious objector status, the creation of an ombudsman to give expression to grievances from the ranks, and the elimination of military courts. Hernu has also authorized the distribution in the barracks of the extreme left daily *Libération*, barred by previous governments. All this points to the development in France of a Dutch-style long-haired, pot-smoking army.

Further purges of the military will hardly be necessary, since, as one general put it, "If the soldiers' committees reappear in the army, there will be many of us who will resign, without making much noise, but without any illusions either."