

The View From Paris

Nov. 29—Below is the transcript of an interview with Jacques Cheminade.

“This is Tony Papert, co-editor of *EIR*, and I’m on the phone with Jacques Cheminade, former French Presidential candidate and the president of the party Solidarity and Progress *Solidarité & Progrès* in France, and an old, old friend of Lyndon LaRouche.”

Papert: Jacques, your President François Hollande was just in the United States, and met with Obama just as the Russian Su-24 bomber was shot down by Turkish fighter jets, bringing the world a big step closer to thermonuclear war. Now, our sources in the government—as do many other people—insist that Turkey’s President Erdogan and the Turkish Armed Forces would never have shot that plane down without the prior go-ahead from Obama. And indeed, in that discussion with Hollande, when he addressed this criminal shoot-down, Obama had no words of condemnation for Turkey, but said they had the right to defend their airspace.

You have been following and writing about,—and also very active on the ground politically,—in the French situation over this entire period. How do you view the current developments?

Jacques Cheminade: Well, Hollande—you have to locate him personally and in the situation where France is today. He’s not in a position of strength, and he’s not himself a strong character. So the French know very well that the main problem at this point is the Turkish border, where all the weapons from Da’esh are coming into the territory of the Is-

lamic State, and of course, the oil and the agricultural products are smuggled out, and make the money flow for Da’esh.

What I have said many times, is that if the Western states were truthful, they would shut off all the finances of Da’esh. They’re not doing it. They’re not intervening in the money-laundering of the Da’esh money by the banks. The only way to stop Da’esh is to cut their money flows, because the Islamic State is not a viable entity. It produces nothing. It’s like Nazi Germany. It cannot exist unless it extends its power to other territories, and unless it is allowed to go on with a smuggling strategy.

The French know that very well. But they are in a weak position. If you look at Hollande, first he went to the United States to meet Obama, because what he wants is to get the information from the NGA [the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency]—he wants that. Obama said, “Why not?” But the CIA and CENTCOM said “no.” And when the French asked them why, they said “Obama told us to say no.” The double game.

That’s one point.



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Russian President Vladimir Putin greets French President François Hollande in Moscow Nov. 26.

Hollande Turns to Moscow

The other point is that after that, Hollande went to Russia, and he went there not only with [Foreign Minister Laurent] Fabius, but also with [Defense Minister Jean-Yves] Le Drian. It's known that Le Drian and Fabius are opposed within the Hollande government. Le Drian is more favorable towards an entente with the Russians, and Fabius wasn't.

So what happened is, Hollande met Putin, and he said *tu* to Putin [the familiar form of address in French]. He never said *tu* to Obama. That's one thing to be noted. And what Hollande said is that we are willing to work with Russia, and we want to work with Russia. And Putin agreed. But Hollande said, "Don't bomb our friends in the Free Syrian Army"—*l'armée syrienne libre*, as it's called in France. So, Putin said all right, we're doing our best not to bomb them, but let's work together and exchange information.

And Hollande said, yes, we will exchange information, and we'll give you all the information we have. And Putin agreed.

So the people who are against Bashar [al-Assad] were freaked out by that. They said, "Oh, the French are giving information to the Russians; this is terrible. What's going to happen?"

Then, what Fabius said is very interesting. Fabius himself—everybody here is saying Fabius is backtracking—yesterday he looks like a feline, today he looks like a castrated cat. So, Fabius said that well, in the present situation, we have to work with the ground forces of the people who want to fight. So these are the forces that remain of the Free Syrian Army, the Sunni forces against Da'esh, and he added, why not the forces of the Syrian regime of Bashar?—and also the Kurds.

This is entirely new. It goes against everything that Fabius has said before. Because Fabius had praised—I think a year ago—the good work of the al-Nusra Front. But now he's saying, let the Russians bomb it. It's a big change. And Le Drian was standing there just next to Fabius, and this was for the Russians, in particular, a symbol.

The plug has been pulled on Fabius,—the front pages are full of it.

So the cooperation that Hollande said he wanted, international cooperation, has failed because of Obama. So now, Hollande said well, let's pursue coordination and work with the Russians. Now at this point, the information question is key, because the French are relatively blind,—because in France, the internal security, the internal counter-espionage, and the external coun-

ter-espionage, the DGSE, are separated. So they need information. They are trying to get information from the Americans, and they are trying to get information from the Russians, and they feel weak because they were blind, or relatively blind, before the terrorist massacre in Paris.

What they are saying now, is we should cooperate. Their eyes, in a certain sense, have been opened, even if it's for opportunistic reasons, but they have been opened.

A French 'Pearl Harbor' Effect?

What's very interesting—and this is not usually mentioned—is the reaction of the French population. They are putting up flags on their walls. Even people who had no flag, are putting up shirts or scarves with the three colors of the French flag. This patriotic reaction is not at all against the Muslims—it's against the terrorists, and people are saying that they can see the difference between these crazy people, financed through what they call here "international organizations," which means Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and others,—they see the difference between these people and the Muslims and Islam. This is a big question now. Even a lot of mosques in France are putting up French flags on their walls.

It's a very interesting situation.

It can go in either direction, because you remember that Chirac had opposed the American intervention in Iraq. And then I told people around Chirac: you should go ahead with Glass-Steagall, and the New Bretton Woods. They didn't do it. So the thing went nowhere.

Now it's the same for Hollande. He has an opportunity to go ahead. If he has the courage to go against Wall Street, and against the French and German megabanks, Deutsche Bank, BNP Paribas, also Société Générale—if he goes against them, he will change the situation. At this point, it doesn't look like it, but a lot of people are discussing the issue of national unity. National unity would be a good thing if it's based on principles. At this point it's not clear what it's going to be based on, or whether it's going to happen.

Papert: That's very revealing. And certainly, as you said, these are things which are not discussed in France, but they're things which are not discussed here either.

Cheminade: The French also, I should add, have been shaken by what happened in Greece, because [former Greek finance minister Yanis] Varoufakis told the French that first, these supranational forces are



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Jacques Cheminade addresses the General Assembly of his political party in Paris on Nov. 8, 2015.

going to hit Greece, but at the end of the process, it will hit France, and even Germany,—but France first. So the French know very well that if they go along with these interests, they are going to be destroyed by them.

They don't have the courage to go frontally against them, but the population, the French population, is more and more, let's say, conscious of what the French government should do, if it were was a sane government.

The Threat of world War

Papert: I began by noting that the Russian bomber was shot down by the Turks just as Hollande and Obama were about to meet. And as I said, our sources here, particularly in the U.S. military, on the one hand say what I said—that would not have happened without a go-ahead by Obama—and on the other, they're extremely agitated and concerned and active against what they see as a much more imminent threat of all-out war beginning between basically the United States and Russia.

You are close to many high people in the French administration, even if you are somewhat publicly a black sheep. Can you tell us more about that from your point of view?

Cheminade: What they say in private is that there is an imminent threat of World War III, and that with all these planes from various countries flying over Syria, anything can happen. They say it's even more dangerous than Ukraine. And also there is the possibility of a new

terrorist attack in France, or in any other country, but particularly in France, because they want to stop what I would call the Normandy approach of Hollande and Merkel. This is what they want to stop. They were furious against that, against the relative independence of Hollande and Merkel on this.

Papert: The Normandy approach to solution of the Ukraine crisis.

Cheminade: Yes, exactly. The Minsk agreement.

So this started in Normandy. It started before, by the way. It started in Brisbane [in November 2014] when Hollande asked Putin into his car, and said, I want to have a discussion with you. We don't agree, but I want to have a discussion with you. Putin was being boycotted by the other Western powers.

So Hollande is Hollande. He's not a man who has tremendous vision or courage, but in a certain way, he understands where he is. Also, around him is Pierre de Villiers, who's the head of the General Staff of the French Army, who's always in the pictures with him—he's the brother of Philippe de Villiers, a sovereignist,—and Benoit Puga, who is also a general who is the head of the military staff of Hollande. So he's surrounded by military forces, and the military forces are really pissed at what the United States is not doing.

That's what they say.

So you have a very interesting situation, potentially. It should not be underestimated, it shouldn't be overestimated, but it's a definite change, if you compare it to what was going on a few weeks ago, because of what happened in Paris.

Also, the Russians are saying, "We hope that it will be proto-Gaullist, or a type of Gaullist approach again in French foreign policy." So that's also on the table. It has not yet happened, but a potential has appeared. And the French population has to say that they have to organize themselves to defend their idea of the principle of a republic, and they understand quite well that that is what is threatened at this point.

Marianne, for example, is a French publication read by everyone in the government. I'm reading it now. What they say is that this was a sort of French Pearl Harbor, and they add that—I have it here—about Obama, they say of Obama, "he is too full of himself to care for the world." That's a quote.

Papert: [Laughs.] That's very polite.

Cheminade: It doesn't go far enough but as you say, it means that the people around government circles are pissed. They say that America today is an autistic country.

Papert: It's all Obama.

Cheminade: And they believe too much that Europe will do something. But nonetheless, the Europeans—including the French and the Germans, including Merkel and Hollande, who are not great humanists—but they feel that the chair on which they are sitting is about to fall over, and they have to do something.

The Potential

Papert: It's been short but I think very enlightening. Are there other things you think you should say before we close?

Cheminade: Yes. It was the Saudis. What a lot of people are saying now is that: if the Saudis finance al-Sisi, good. If the Saudis fear that Da'esh would go after them, good. If the Saudis buy our planes, good. But if the Saudis want to do something beyond their borders, we have to stop them, if they are playing games.

So, at this point, this is all they are saying, but they are saying it—and the same with Qatar. And Qatar, out of fear, has established certain controls of the financing of the jihadists, of the terrorists. So that, in a sense, is very limited, but it's significant nonetheless.

The main thing is the economic component. As long as there is not a move towards Glass-Steagall—and a lot of people are talking again about Glass-Steagall—and the return of the state against the financial forces, the City of London and Wall Street,—if this doesn't take place, what is potentially positive in what France is doing, will lead nowhere, as it led nowhere after Chirac's opposition to the war against Iraq.

I have to add that a lot of people are looking again at what I had said as the leading point of my presidential campaign, which was "A World Without the City and Without Wall Street." And they are thinking, yes, you were right. This is a world for peace through common development. This is win-win strategy, and this is what is necessary. So there is a rethinking of the whole French policy of the last, let's say 30 years, 40 years.

Papert: Thank you so much.

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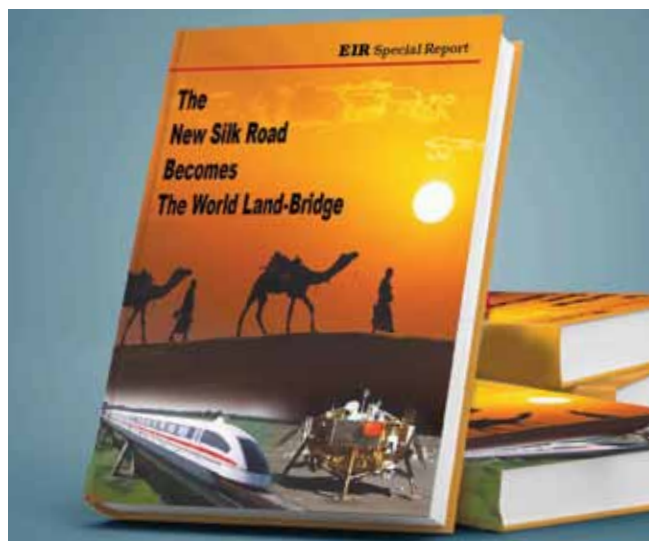
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