
French Military Reform and



F/A-18 and Mirage 2000s being refueled, Southern Watch.

U.S. Navy (Tom Pickett)

NATO

Restructuring

By RONALD TIERSKY

Downsizing and restructuring are part of a NATO-wide trend. In France, all components of the armed forces are affected, including the nuclear *force de frappe*. Three factors are shaping European militaries: the demise of the Soviet Union; budgetary constraints, especially in the realm of Euro-integration versus security (to meet Maastricht “convergence criteria”); and new missions which are replacing the old.

The issue is: will revamped, professional, quick-reaction forces be up to new missions or will budget cuts result in a hollow military organization? Success will depend on relaunching strong economic growth and the government’s determination to withstand current tensions until a single European currency is introduced and less constrained budgets return.

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Economics and Defense

When Jacques Chirac succeeded socialist François Mitterrand in May 1995 questions were raised over the balance of continuity and change in French foreign and defense policy as well as over European integration. Similarities and differences between neo-Gaullist and socialist policies sometimes do not conform to stereotypes. On the one hand, European integration

downsizing and return to the integrated command was provoked by the Maastricht commitments

and security policies under Mitterrand were quite realistic from the beginning, leading to unexpected continuity. On the other, since Gaullism has always been more a disposition than a policy, the neo-Gaullist policy of Chirac, like de Gaulle's own stance, is a remarkably flexible pragmatism based on a few principles, above all the pursuit of national interests.

These aspects of integration are connected with Chirac's military reform and turn toward the NATO command in European security policy. His downsizing and restructuring of the armed forces and return to an integrated command—long recommended by military leaders (who realized how much technology and training the French military were missing)—was provoked by the need to finance Maastricht commitments. It was also a reaction to inadequate military performance in the Gulf War and in Bosnia, where French technology, weapons, interoperability, and the constraints of a conscript army all caused difficulties. Chirac has launched a wholesale recasting of security, defense, and military policies that Mitterrand had only begun. Examples of Mitterrand's intentions were European agreements to build advanced satellite intelligence capabilities and a large transport aircraft—both designed to reduce the Continent's dependence on American products.

Only weeks after taking office Chirac, determined to revive French defense efforts, broke with Mitterrand's moratorium on nuclear testing. A series of six underground tests met worldwide protests against French "arrogance." This included much-resented

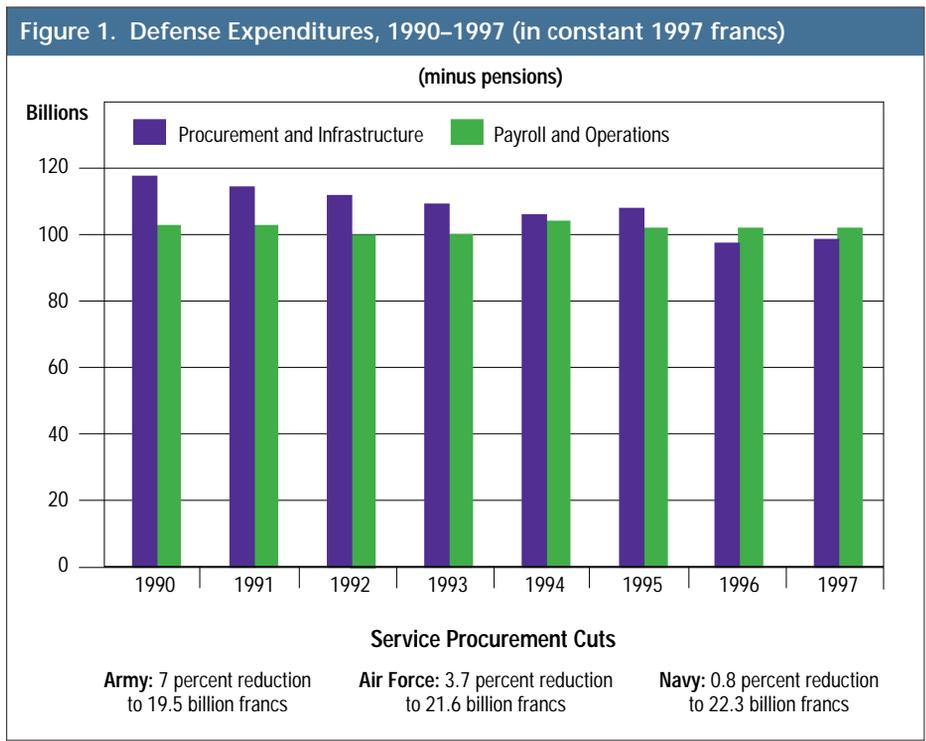
criticism from most members of the European Union (EU), though publicly Britain and Germany kept silent. The tests, conducted in the isolation of French Polynesia, had been conceived from the start—yet badly explained—as the last. The objective was to perfect software for simulations as was done by the United States which would help ensure the long-term reliability of the *force de frappe* without future testing.

These tests were completed in time for Chirac's state visit to Washington in January 1996, which allowed him to tell a joint session of Congress that his nation was ready—together with the United States—to lead the diplomatic campaign for a comprehensive test ban treaty. France, given certain guarantees by the United States, also accepted a provision prohibiting even very low-yield testing under the so-called "zero-yield option." The French also worked to get the Russians and Chinese to accept this provision.

In the U.N. General Assembly, 158 countries voted in favor of a resolution on the test ban treaty while three voted against (India, Libya, and Bhutan) and five abstained (including Syria, Lebanon, and Cuba). Chirac announced that France would join the other declared nuclear powers (four in all) by signing the treaty on September 24, the earliest possible date.

Downsizing

During his last few years, Mitterrand's attention to military reform had been piecemeal and the cohabitation government led by Eduoard Balladur (1993–95), despite issuing a white paper, did not make widespread reform an immediate issue. Military adaptation to post-Cold War conditions lagged behind Britain and Germany. By contrast, the reforms announced in February 1996 were a general plan that affects all services and every type of weapons system. The size, capabilities, and budget of the military, including the *force de frappe*, are being significantly streamlined (figure 1). Though the government is taking the same actions as most EU and NATO members (including the United States), France's excessive unemployment rate (over 12 percent) and slow increase in GDP



Tanker *FS Var* and
aircraft carrier
FS Clemenceau.



U.S. Navy (John Bouvia)

Helicopters in
Goma, Zaire.



Combat Camera Imagery (Va Gempis)

(around 2 percent) for over a decade have exhausted popular patience, with the result that strikes and demonstrations against downsizing have contributed to the general debate on the economy.

Reform was not an easy political decision. Downsizing represented even more job losses for an economy in which successive levels of unacceptable unemployment (2 million, 2.5, then 3) have been reached. Furthermore, because the military is based domestically near towns that have become economically dependent on them, especially in France's "rust belt" of the north and east, more localities

will be distressed by installation closures than in other countries.

The French and other Europeans increasingly see Maastricht as the cause of unemployment and austerity. The single currency project (the *Euro* scheduled to appear in 1999) is threatened by growing popular resistance. Moreover, weak economic growth and smaller tax receipts mean that military

reductions, especially joint projects, have had to go further than in prosperous economies. For France, Germany, and other European members of NATO this vicious cycle must be broken. The problem is relaunching strong growth while sticking to Maastricht.

Chirac's plan of February 1996 for downsizing and modernization, combined with similar British and German

efforts, outlines the European military of the future. His model is the British military, which he has publicly praised. The gap between British and French performance during Desert Storm was not lost on the new French president, not to say the high command. The reform plan calls for moving from a Cold War, central front, defensive force to a rapid-reaction military that can be combined with the British and a German quick reaction conventional force that is also in the works. This fundamental reconfiguration plus the declaration that France is prepared to discuss all matters within NATO, even nuclear deterrence, indicates that in principle Chirac is serious about returning to an integrated command. Some organizational reforms proposed by France, however, such as European command of Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), are problematic. As a result, despite Chirac's NATO-friendly goal, serious disagreements appear to be locked in negotiation.

The Chirac reform shrinks the military from about 500,000 to 350,000, or—excluding the gendarmerie—from 400,000 (about half being 10-month conscripts) to 250,000. This constitutes a manpower cut of one-third and budget cut of one-fifth, though some analysts think the new army will be more expensive. This smaller force is to be built around four elite units with a capacity for rapid deployment to face ad hoc crisis situations which planners see as the most likely missions.

Chirac is also abandoning the longstanding Gaullist goal of maintaining self-sufficiency in all categories of weapons, especially in those areas where French manufacture has been particularly weak or nonexistent: satellite intelligence; command, control, and communications equipment; and strategic lift. There are also projects such as satellite intelligence (Helios) that the French want to share only with Europeans, thereby creating a capability independent of U.S. assets.

This in turn drives restructuring of the defense industrial base, with several state-sponsored mergers of nationalized and private-sector companies. However,

Key Elements of the AFSOUTH Debate

Progress on NATO internal adaptation has slowed. After extremely promising efforts to strengthen the NATO military structure, progress has been slowed by demands to convert AFSOUTH at Naples from a U.S.-led to a European-led command.

Theater commands are key. The role of NATO regional commanders has been enhanced significantly since the end of the Cold War. As NATO broadens its focus, adding crisis management operations to its core mission of collective defense, it is the theater commander who has been called upon to deal with conflict at the regional level. The United States has but one major subordinate commander in Europe, at AFSOUTH. Therefore the proposal to make AFSOUTH a European-led command would weaken the Alliance by weakening the U.S. leadership role in regional affairs at a time when that command is becoming increasingly important.

Negotiations have been difficult. The AFSOUTH issue has become difficult to manage for at least three reasons. As a result, a high level effort may be required to break the deadlock. The reasons are:

- The United States believes the changes it accepted in strengthening the role of the Deputy SACEUR (who is a European), adding other Europeans in command positions, and empowering the Western European Union (WEU) were important enough by themselves to warrant French reintegration into the unified command.

- Some Europeans interpreted articles 5, 7, and 8 of the June 1996 Berlin communique, which call on the parties to identify headquarters to support the European security and defense identity (ESDI), as a de facto pledge to transform AFSOUTH into a European command. The United States considers that interpretation a misreading of those articles.

- The issue was elevated in the autumn of 1996 by an exchange of correspondence between Presidents Clinton and

Chirac, with Chirac calling for two regional NATO commands that would be “entrusted to Europeans” and Clinton responding that the United States should retain command of AFSOUTH. The exchange of Presidential correspondence has made subsequent lower level negotiations very difficult.

Progress in adaptation. Setting aside the AFSOUTH issue, there has been significant progress in the area of NATO adaptation—that is, strengthening of ESDI in NATO. For example:

- Three-fourths of the most senior NATO general officer positions in Europe are now held by Europeans.

- NATO-designated positions at all NATO headquarters in Europe were reduced from 18,354 in 1990 to 12,919 in 1996. This has resulted in a corresponding budget reduction from U.S. \$621.6M (1990) to U.S. \$482M (1996).

- WEU has been empowered to lead combined joint task forces in cases when the North Atlantic Council so decides.

- The European Deputy SACEUR could command such WEU-led operations.

- Mechanisms have been established to strengthen political control over military operations, something long sought by the French.

U.S. military strength remains crucial. The military assets and capabilities that the United States makes available to AFSOUTH warrant a U.S.-led command:

- The Sixth Fleet—which includes a carrier battle group, an amphibious ready group, and several submarines, all backed by U.S. Atlantic Fleet—is the single most important asset of AFSOUTH. The seamless connections created by dual hatting the U.S. commander of Naval Forces Europe and CINCSOUTH can be critical in time of crisis.

- U.S. air assets in Italy and Turkey have been critical to operations such as Deny Flight, during which in a typical week the United States flew 43 percent of the air missions.

- The importance of U.S. leadership and expertise in managing modern C⁴I systems was demonstrated in the Bosnia operation.

- The growing need for advanced systems to counter ballistic missile proliferation targeted primarily at the AFSOUTH region will require continued American leadership and capabilities.



AMX-30 tanks outside Al-Salman during Desert Storm.

U.S. Air Force (Dean Wagner)

Given its strategic importance, AFSOUTH will remain a strong symbol of trans-Atlantic resolve. U.S. leadership will be essential at least until there is evidence that European leadership would be backed by European capabilities and resources commensurate with the importance of the region. With the recent and projected trends in European defense investments, it cannot be foreseen when adequate capabilities and commitment of resources would become a reality.

U.S. leadership is indispensable.

A review of the recent history in the Balkans, Aegean, Persian Gulf, and Middle East indicates the indispensable nature of U.S. diplomacy and military engagement in key regions surrounding the AFSOUTH area of operation. In the case of Bosnia, for example, European powers in NATO were unwilling to undertake the follow-on Stabilization Force (SFOR) without significant U.S. participation. In Desert Storm AFSOUTH played a critical supporting role which was enhanced by the U.S. command.

The region is vital and volatile.

An assessment of future prospects for these same areas suggests that they are both highly unstable and vital to both U.S. and European interests. In command of AFSOUTH, the United States is positioned to strengthen its

diplomacy with military capability, and a U.S. commander at AFSOUTH will be one demonstration of that military capability. It will be in the interest of NATO for the United States to have this combination of diplomatic and military clout. The U.S. command at AFSOUTH enhances the ability of NATO to stabilize crises in the Mediterranean basin.

Because of the volatility of the region and the historical importance of AFSOUTH, there is a strong convergence of interests in maintaining an effective U.S.-led command. By its nature, the NATO command structure is intended to respond to risks that threaten the shared interests of all NATO members.

U.S. public is concerned. There remains considerable support for NATO among the U.S. public, the Congress and the academic community. There is also support for a U.S. leadership role and for increased burden-sharing. Given the increasingly operational nature of AFSOUTH, and the military and political requirement to have American forces engaged as a key part of future operations, loss of the command would probably be seen by the U.S. public as loss of U.S. leadership. As a result, U.S. public support for operations in this critical region would

decline, along with support for NATO in general.

Simple command arrangements are best. The U.N. operation in Bosnia reinforces the lesson that complex command arrangements can contribute to failed operations. The thrust of NATO's command structure review has been to simplify lines of command. The solution to the AFSOUTH political problem should not result in complex command arrangements that could fail in time of crisis.

Summation of arguments. The arguments for retaining a U.S. commander at AFSOUTH are:

- AFSOUTH has emerged as a very important region in NATO and must remain a strong symbol of trans-Atlantic resolve and capabilities.

- By its nature the NATO command structure is intended to respond to risks that threaten the shared interests of all NATO members.

- This is the only U.S.-led regional command in Europe and losing it will weaken U.S. operational and political support for NATO.

- Significant measures have already been taken to enhance ESDI within NATO.

- Removing the command link between AFSOUTH and Sixth Fleet will increase reaction time in crises.

- IFOR/SFOR demonstrates the continued need for U.S. leadership in the area.

- Successful U.S. diplomacy in this vital region has been strengthened by the U.S. command at AFSOUTH.

- U.S. command at AFSOUTH can help stabilize tensions throughout the Mediterranean.

- NATO responses to new ballistic missile proliferation threats against the AFSOUTH area will benefit from a U.S. command.

- U.S. command facilitates participation by partner countries, including Russia.

- U.S. command maximizes the effectiveness of modern C⁴I assets.

- Complicated command arrangements, such as a bifurcated regional and functional command at AFSOUTH, can harm NATO responsiveness in crisis.

JFQ

—From *Allied Command Structures in the New NATO* (Washington: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, April 1997)

Figure 2. Military and Civilian Personnel: 1995 and 2015 (projected)

	1995		2015	
Army	military	239,100	military	136,000
	civilian	32,400	civilian	34,000
		<u>271,500</u>		<u>170,000</u>
	9 divisions, 129 regiments		85 regiments in 4 forces	
	927 heavy tanks		420 heavy tanks	
	350 light tanks		350 light tanks	
	340 helicopters		180 helicopters	
Navy	military	63,800	military	45,500
	civilian	6,600	civilian	11,000
		<u>70,400</u>		<u>56,500</u>
	101 vessels (-SNLE) with 2 aircraft carriers and air group		81 vessels (-SNLE) with 1 or 2 aircraft carriers and air group (+3 Hawkeyes)	
	6 nuclear-fueled and 7 diesel-powered submarines, 15 first-rate frigates displacement: 314,000 tons		6 nuclear-fueled submarines, 12 first-rate frigates displacement: 234,000 tons	
	33 sea patrol aircraft		22 sea patrol aircraft	
Air Force	military	89,200	military	63,000
	civilian	4,900	civilian	7,000
		<u>94,100</u>		<u>70,000</u>
	405 combat aircraft		300 modern Rafale aircraft	
	86 transports		52 modern transports	
	11 C-135 tankers		16 tankers	
	101 helicopters		84 helicopters	
Gendarmerie (paramilitary)	military	92,230	military	95,600
	civilian	1,220	civilian	2,300
		<u>93,450</u>		<u>97,900</u>
	with over 300 armored cars and APCs, plus patrol boats, helicopters, etc.			
Common Services	military	18,130	military	12,600
	civilian	29,780	civilian	27,000
		<u>47,910</u>		<u>39,600</u>
Totals	military	502,460	military	352,700
	civilian	74,900	civilian	81,300
		<u>577,360</u>		<u>434,000</u>

Changing Adversaries and Structures

Conventional military strategy is being reoriented from defense of the central front within a divided Europe to general security problems, including terrorism. For example, the much-decried Eurocorps, theoretically operational since 1995 as a force whose purpose is strategic defense, may after an inauspicious beginning become the core of an after-implementation force

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body. The Chirac plan is not a mere shrinkage of numbers and budgets but part and parcel of a cooperative allied restructuring of major EU military capabilities in which national force levels, capabilities, and strategies are in theory being harmonized—and made more Europeanized.

The less lustrous causes of downsizing are also clear: France, like other European powers, simply cannot mount full-blown military operations; and in the Gulf War it learned some difficult lessons. France had trouble deploying 12,000 troops during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, whereas Britain deployed double that number quickly despite having an overall smaller army. The French were also a less effective force (for example, they were unable to fly fighter-bomber raids at night for lack of radar). French units were obliged to rely on American logistics and intelligence.

By 2002 a French force of some 50-60,000 troops is scheduled to be deployable—quickly and at great distances. No longer will typical operations consist of a few hundred soldiers jerry-dispatched to former French Africa to put down a coup or replace a failing president. Germany, as already noted, is also developing a crisis reaction force of 55,000 to be in place by 1999. With the British and other EU forces, a European rapid reaction force of 250,000 is foreseeable.

government repositionings, some budget driven, have created serious Franco-German friction in joint projects. French arms exports will likely suffer, adding to unemployment and balance of trade difficulties.

Military reform stretches from soldiers to the nuclear deterrent. Professionalization meant, first of all, abandoning conscription. This decision did not raise as much controversy as one might expect, especially given histori-

cal, social, and ideological commitments to conscription as patriotic, republican, and egalitarian on the part of the right and the left. Opinion polls, however, found that almost 70 percent favored ending conscription—another case of waning ideological attachment in a “normalized” France. An all-volunteer army is planned by 2002.

Even the once sacrosanct *force de frappe* has not been spared. The 18 land-based Albion Plateau (Provence) missiles stood down last summer. One leg of the nuclear triad, albeit the least useful, was dropped along with a doctrine that France would not renounce any weapon possessed by other states. Both air-launched missiles and, importantly, nuclear submarines remain—a fleet of four submarines will be operational early in the next century. Chirac also decided to dismantle the short-range Hadès missiles as a gesture to German sensibilities.

Playing the NATO Card

The Franco-American dispute over AFSOUTH—the NATO command with headquarters in Naples—has led to a rancorous diplomatic exchange. This dispute is much larger than the issue of the nationality of one commander. The fact is that long-term issues are at stake. AFSOUTH is not an isolated case in creating a new NATO. In itself, there is no reason why it should be a sticking point in NATO reform, or whether France finally returns to the integrated command structure.

Seen in proper context, AFSOUTH is just the latest episode in a broader attempt—French though also European—to develop a “more visible” European security and defense identity (ESDI) within the Alliance. Thus this debate resulted from the larger June 1996 NATO Council European agreement with Washington to build ESDI inside NATO rather than the earlier European plan for a free standing Western European Union (WEU) force that would be a military arm of the European Union (EU)—WEU working with NATO but outside it.

The French have tried, with frustration, to make the case in politico-military negotiations with the United States for greater European leadership balance inside a NATO structure which will include ESDI. But this new balance is also a French code word for limiting American participation in the integrated command and especially what they see as “American unilateralism” in the way NATO functions. The French campaign over AFSOUTH has been

largely a struggle inside NATO for the Europeanization of security and defense matters in Europe after the abandonment of plans for a free-standing WEU-ESDI because events in Bosnia prove, even to the French, that there was a continued need for American leadership in European security affairs.

But the French stand on AFSOUTH has received only half-hearted support from its main politico-military partners, Britain and Germany. This is because, while London and Bonn also can find Washington overbearing, they believe that American leadership is more important than playing dare-devil diplomacy to counterbalance Washington's influence in NATO. Bosnia proved that the United States is, in President Clinton's words, the “indispensable nation” for European security.

The French demand on AFSOUTH arose from three security policy events during Chirac's first twelve months in office. The first was his unexpected success—applauded all around—in prodding Clinton to lead the two days of air strikes needed to bring an end to fighting in Bosnia, thus intimidating the Bosnian Serbs into a truce and an eventual peace agreement. The second was the announcement of a plan for wholesale military reform. Paris was lagging behind other nations in overhauling its forces and Chirac's bold design aimed at organizing a rapid-reaction, downsized, leaner-but-meaner military within five years. The third was a seemingly un-Gaullist decision to bring France back into the integrated command structure that Chirac announced in the wake of the Dayton accords during a February 1996 speech to a joint session of Congress that referred to the “necessary” leadership role played by the United States. “NATO,” he proclaimed on Capitol Hill, “simply doesn't work without American leadership.”

Integrated Command

Chirac accepted that Europe's inadequacy in political coordination, determination, logistics, intelligence, and communications meant that any European defense identity must be created inside NATO. The French then had to insure that a European dimension of NATO-ESDI—would be as genuine

and visible as possible. Franco-American antagonism was thus inevitable in that Chirac was determined to advance ESDI in NATO just as he had convinced Washington to take the lead in Bosnia. Many changes occurred before the clash over the French proposal to turn AFSOUTH into a rotating European command. This was in fact the last serious issue and most observers assumed that France would compromise prior to the NATO summit in summer 1997.

AFSOUTH became a test of wills. Washington thought the French proposal unacceptable: too much too soon. In Paris U.S. unwillingness to negotiate—President Clinton's flat no—was seen as a lack of reciprocity for the Atlanticist policy and attitude changes that Chirac had initiated. In June the new cohabitation government formed with Lionel Jospin's Socialists—who have never been accused of being pro-NATO—contributed to speculation that a deal on reorienting the integrated command structure would not be immanent. Ultimately, Paris will want to see European leadership positions in NATO regardless of the AFSOUTH debate. And France wants to achieve this shift in equilibrium and be seen by the United States and especially by Europe as having achieved it.

Thus the ambivalent support of his tactics and plans by Europeans worries Chirac. Britain and Germany, like other nations, clearly recognize France's military and economic weaknesses as well as perceive the domestic political fragility of Chirac's presidency and parliamentary coalition. They must doubt whether France could actually deliver on its grasp for greater leadership, whether vis-à-vis America or inside the European Council. For Europe as well as the United States, the Chirac gambit on AFSOUTH may indeed be over-reaching and asking for too much too soon.

As for Franco-American diplomacy, misunderstandings over what France wants as well as the precipitous escalation of the issue by Chirac to the presidential level in an exchange of letters that became public created a crisis atmosphere. For example, contrary

to first impressions made last August, Paris never asked for the AFSOUTH command for themselves alone. They proposed a rotating European command. The French say, furthermore, that they never envisaged European control of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, but that their proposals always assumed mechanisms to hive off the fleet in such a way that it would remain under U.S. command. And France also conceded

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that American doubts about European command experience, competence, and credibility were relevant and demanded answers. The Europeans, they assert, could get up to speed in two or three years. Therefore they asked for agreement in principle with implementation over time and thought that this was a quite reasonable request.

U.S. policy, for its part, has three principles: military optimization must take precedence over any politically-motivated award of extra positions, which is an honored NATO tradition; there must be an unbroken U.S. chain of command over the Sixth Fleet stationed in the Mediterranean and the most important asset in AFSOUTH; and there must be no politico-military constraints on American action in extra-NATO security responsibilities, missions that only the United States can take on, in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

NATO Leadership

American officials willingly accept the idea of a new NATO leadership configuration which comports with a more visible ESDI. In fact, although often ignored by the focus on AFSOUTH, Europeanization has already occurred as demonstrated by the appointment of a powerful European deputy commander at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). But AFSOUTH has taken on greater importance since the Cold War. Some specialists agree that in

an operational sense this command is probably more significant than SHAPE because the Mediterranean and adjacent areas have become a region of potentially more serious security problems than central Europe.

Thus a more visible ESDI inside NATO is not only institutionally possible and politically desirable, it has to an extent already happened. The problem is the “extra” French proposal about AFSOUTH which came after the initial negotiations were concluded. Washington felt wronged by this added demand while Paris argued that successful conclusion of the initial talks did not preclude further proposals. America criticized France by stressing that command responsibilities ought to reflect national capacities and genuine contributions to NATO. This throws French commitments into doubt and indirectly asserts that only the United States can carry out the AFSOUTH mission. Americans point out that the French, although they started to rejoin integrated command institutions over the last year, have not yet shown their commitment by formally earmarking forces for NATO. The United States, in other words, was wary of stated intentions that may or may not be fulfilled.

French proposals for NATO restructuring might seem set in a sort of traditional geopolitical thinking that de Gaulle summed up with the aphorism: “A nation has neither permanent enemies nor friends, only permanent interests.” Whether that was true in the 1960s, it may be less pertinent today in a world where major conflicts seem unlikely and economic competition has replaced force as the primary instrument of achieving national power. As for the absence of a Gaullist pedigree, even Chirac does not mind being seen as an Americanophile. Nevertheless, the defense of French national interests and European integration may yet require taking on one’s friends.

France tends to stereotype U.S. foreign policy as sometimes neo-Wilsonian and other times *Realpolitik* Washington-style. However European-derived American realism is paradoxically less in favor among our allies

than American idealism because the “objective factors” approach—power and the capacity to use it for policy ends—nearly always results in U.S. dominance. “Gaullism for everybody” is an intrinsically dangerous maxim for weaker powers.

The history of this century favors American reluctance in the face of enthusiastic European demands to be more visible and in control of security on the Continent. Through two world wars, the Cold War, the Gulf War, and Bosnia, Europe has needed U.S. military power and guarantees. Not surprisingly French negotiators in the AFSOUTH dispute want to talk less about the past than the future. Seen from that perspective, Franco-American friction over this command can be, if not resolved, at least understood. Some French officials have admitted that their AFSOUTH proposal was too much too soon. But for Paris it is not unthinkable, let alone wrong, to adopt a conflictual attitude even with a most important ally, to re-open negotiations for a good purpose. The problem is that Chirac perceived restructuring, particularly of AFSOUTH, against the backdrop of Bosnia. He forced his luck and lost, at least for now. He either miscalculated or just chose badly, perhaps because he was poorly informed by his advisors on the U.S. commitment in this matter. JFQ