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8 April 1966

**LEADERSHIP AS AN ELEMENT OF NATIONAL
POWER (A CASE HISTORY OF DE GAULLE)**

By

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USAWC RESEARCH ELEMENT
(Research Paper)

✓ Leadership As An Element of National Power
(A Case History of de Gaulle)

by

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
8 April 1966

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SUMMARY

Charles de Gaulle was raised in an atmosphere both military and academic and was imbued at an early age with strong feelings for the glory and history of France. This early environment was to play an important part in de Gaulle's later years.

The period from 1940-1947 saw de Gaulle rise from an army general to become the leader of the Free French and subsequently the President of the Fourth French Republic.

Following his return to power in 1958 de Gaulle successfully led France from the brink of civil war and economic chaos to the position of a world power.

His somewhat stubborn and single-minded approach to solving France's problems has had a serious affect on both France and the Free World. His decisions and actions apparently have always been made with the thought in mind that only he could return France to her rightful position of a world power.

After considering these facts it becomes apparent that the leadership of Charles de Gaulle is an element of the national power of France and, therefore, those who are assessing the national power of any nation should, at least, consider that leadership may be one of the elements.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH PAPER

Present-day textbooks which discuss the component factors that make up national power do not list leadership as one of the factors. The Army War College lists the following as component factors: Location, size and shape, climate, raw materials and industry, population, political and social organization, moral and spiritual values, and military strength. Again, leadership is not included as one of the elements of national power.¹

This research paper will show that leadership in a country during a specific period of time can be a definite and positive element of national power and should be considered as such. It is not intended that leadership should always be included as an element or factor, however, it is an element that should be considered in assessing any national power.

Although many significant actions and opinions of and about de Gaulle have been omitted an attempt is made to highlight those incidents or events which have a direct relationship to the stated title.

¹"Handout Material, Course 4," US Army War College, 3 Jan. 1966, p. 8.

SCOPE

As a vehicle for developing this research paper, a case history of Charles de Gaulle is used with a review of his effect on France--internally and externally--and on the national security of the United States.

SEQUENCE OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

It would be impossible to assess the power of de Gaulle's leadership of France without first reviewing his formative years. The environment in which he was raised and those people who influenced his life are important elements which help to reveal why de Gaulle has acted as he has and does. This review provides the key to much that follows.

A review of the critical period from 1940 to 1947 after his formative years will show his actions to liberate France and return her to the position of a world power.

In Chapters 4 and 5 de Gaulle's effect will be considered both internally within France and externally on other nations of the world.

The final chapter will deal with the conclusions drawn from the case history and a look to the future or the author's speculation.

It should be noted that any study of de Gaulle at this time is a continuing thing and does not end with the final chapter of

this paper. The effects of de Gaulle on France will remain even after de Gaulle himself has left the scene.

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

DE GAULLE THE YOUTH

Charles de Gaulle was born on November 22, 1890 in the home of his grandfather in Lille, France. His youthful years were spent in Paris where his father, Henri de Gaulle, was a Professor of Philosophy, Mathematics, and Literature in the Jesuit College on the rue de Vangerard. Henri de Gaulle was a staunch Catholic who gave up a promising military career to offer his services as a teacher to the Jesuit Fathers.

Charles de Gaulle grew up in an atmosphere that was both religious and military. His mother, Jeanne Maillot, came from a military and literary family which had first been linked with the de Gaulles early in the nineteenth century. Modern psychiatrists deny there is any proven link between interbreeding and degeneracy, although some historians have been inclined to see in the frequent de Gaulle-Maillot intermarriages the origin of a streak of misfortune which has dogged the family. One of de Gaulle's own brothers was a paralytic and one of his three children was mentally retarded and died before she was twenty-one.¹

Young Charles received from his earliest years an intensive religious education, which was interspersed frequently with

¹Nora Beloff, The General Says No, p. 20.

weighty discussions on military affairs and the honor of France. He was reading the history of France before he was five years old and showed an instinctive desire to understand the past of France and to recreate her glories in his own time. He has many times admitted that nothing in his childhood made a greater and more lasting impression on him than the past glories of France.

De Gaulle's early readings included a book written by his uncle, the first Charles de Gaulle. A passage from that book was always on de Gaulle's desk at school and was to play an important part in his later life. "When an army is overrun by a surprise attack no one questions the rank or the right of the man who raises the flag again and utters the first call to resistance."²

De Gaulle was a reserved youth, almost shy but at the age of ten he was taking command of boys four and five years his senior and they were obeying his orders without question. It was not that he was taller than they, or that he looked older or that he knew more of all the games they played that put him above the others. He simply had an instinctive and powerful gift of leadership.³

By the time de Gaulle reached his teens he was developing as a scholar. He took a great interest in Shakespeare and Goethe while his interest in philosophy was avowed by the works of Socrates, Plato and Kant.

²Stanley Clark, The Man Who Is France, p. 19.

³Ibid., p. 20.

In his father's extensive library he was reading the works of Fredrick Nietzsche when boys his age would have found them far beyond their comprehension. He was influenced considerably by the French philosophers, Descartes and Bergson, the latter being a frequent visitor to the de Gaulle home.

It was perhaps to his father and Henri Bergson that Charles de Gaulle owed most in the molding of his character.⁴

At the age of nineteen Charles de Gaulle left school to enter the military college of Saint-Cyr. At that time it was required that every cadet officer at Saint-Cyr undergo a year of military service as a soldier in the ranks.

His year in the ranks was unimpressive to say the least. In the 33rd Regiment of Infantry he was remembered as a lonely unsociable soldier who rarely mixed with his comrades off-duty. He did attempt to interest them in the things that interested him, namely, the history and the glory of France. He arranged impromptu lectures and persuaded some of his friends to visit the historical spots in the area.⁵

At the completion of the year de Gaulle had not left much of a mark on the army, but the army had taught him a valuable lesson in understanding the thinking and reasoning processes of the ordinary man in the ranks.

⁴Beloff, op. cit., p. 21.

⁵Clark, op. cit., p. 24.

At Saint-Cyr de Gaulle was an obvious non-conformist appearing to do as little as possible. He was, however, well-groomed and never guilty of deliberately flouting regulations. During this time he was developing his talents as a writer and, under assumed names, contributing verse and prose to literary reviews.

In 1912 de Gaulle graduated from Saint-Cyr and to the surprise of many stood in the top ten of a class of seven hundred cadets. This standing in his class afforded him the opportunity of returning to the 33rd Regiment of Infantry where he had served as a soldier in the ranks and which was now commanded by Colonel Philippe Pétain.⁶

DE GAULLE THE SOLDIER

De Gaulle desired to serve under Pétain both for his outstanding qualities of leadership and for his military outlook which was almost as revolutionary as de Gaulle's own.

De Gaulle's outstanding abilities were quickly recognized by Pétain and in addition to his other duties he was designated as the regimental lecturer for history and tactics.

The unit went to the front in the fall of 1913 as a highly trained fighting force. De Gaulle distinguished himself and was highly decorated. He was wounded on four separate occasions, and on the last occasion was captured by the Germans.⁷

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

⁷Ibid., pp. 33-44.

De Gaulle proved to be a very uncooperative prisoner and repeatedly attempted to escape from each of the five German camps he was in. After his final unsuccessful escape attempt he was transferred to the infamous Fort IX at Ingolstadt where recalcitrant prisoners were sent for greater security.

At Ingolstadt, where escape was next to impossible, the idea came to him that it might prove useful to study the whole course of the war and to pinpoint the mistakes made by both sides. In his notebooks he set down the minutest details of bad planning and bad execution. This extraordinary work, which possibly saved his sanity, was later to set him on the road to world fame as a military writer and a strategist.

Following the war de Gaulle married Yvonne Vendroux and served successively in Poland, at Saint-Cyr, with the General Staff and in Germany.

While in Germany de Gaulle wrote his first book, La Discorde chez L'ennemi in which he analyzed the causes of the German defeat. De Gaulle's fiercest attack in the book was on the unmoderation of the German people, and particularly of their leaders. He showed that the German leaders had all subscribed to Nietzsche theories of the new Master Race, which in following its own glorification is convinced that it is serving the general interest, regarding the masses as contemptible, and will not stop in face of

the suffering of humanity.⁸ La Discorde chez L'ennemi made Frenchmen take notice of Charles de Gaulle and the book even sold well in Germany. One man, Pétain took particular notice of the book and wrote to the publisher. "Frenchmen would do well to listen to him with care, for the day will come when France will call for him in gratitude."⁹

De Gaulle returned to Paris from a tour in Lebanon in 1932 and wrote a book analyzing the conclusions he had reached from his foreign experiences. Le Fil de l'épée declared that it was essential that the whole power of the French Empire be mobilized for the defense of the country. De Gaulle showed that he had broken with the old system of a static defense which his superiors clung to with blind faith.

The Edge of the Sword is de Gaulle's personal credo of what it means to lead, both in the military and political arena. In the five essays contained in the book he cites his personal aspirations and code of conduct, his philosophy of authority, and his feelings about national pride and esprit. De Gaulle clearly demonstrated in this book that he was a wise man, but in France in 1932 there were all too few who understood.¹⁰

During the next few years de Gaulle served as Secretary-General of the Council for National Defense. He became aware

⁸Charles de Gaulle, as told by Stanley Clark, The Man Who Is France, p. 53.

⁹Clark, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁰Charles de Gaulle, The Edge of the Sword, pp. 7-10.

that the French leaders, military and civilian, were not really aware of the growing strength and aggressiveness of the Germans. These same leaders planned only for a static defense for France with no offensive capability. De Gaulle, as a lieutenant colonel, did everything within his power, even going over the heads of his superiors, to convince the leaders of the necessity for organizing and equipping armored divisions. The famous message from General Foch to headquarters in 1914 was fully in agreement with de Gaulle's belief that attack is always the best defense. "My center is giving, my right is falling back, the situation is excellent. I shall attack."¹¹

The War Council decided in December of 1938 to equip two armored divisions as envisioned by de Gaulle, but it was already too late as the Germans already had twelve.

The following year the Germans rolled over Poland and in early 1940 the end for France was in sight.

De Gaulle was promoted from colonel to major general in the Spring of 1940 to command one of the armored divisions he had fought so hard to organize. He and his men could claim possibly the only significant advance in the Battle of France. However, it was too little too late. The battle was lost and the French Army had practically disintegrated.

As a result of the French military collapse, de Gaulle had fled to London and by June 18, 1940 had begun to plan how to

¹¹Clark, op. cit., p. 77.

lead the French back to victory along side the allies, and how to restore France to her rightful role as a world power.

CHAPTER 3

THE YEARS 1940-1947

THE FREE FRENCH

De Gaulle arrived in London in the Summer of 1940 in an R.A.F. fighter aircraft. The British promptly gave him offices, money, and radio facilities to stimulate as many Frenchmen as possible to go on with the war.

Shortly after his arrival in Britain he received a letter from Jean Monnet:

You are wrong to form an organization which might appear in France as under British protection. I fully share your wish to prevent France from abandoning the struggle. But it is not from London that the effort of resurrection can begin.¹

De Gaulle did not need to be reminded that he must on no account appear to the French as England's puppet. Being the enfant terrible among the crowd of exiled dignitaries became for him an imperative daily duty.

Throughout the war, the General had two principal aims: first, to prepare for the peaceful take-over of a France ready to assume her place as one of the world's great powers; and second, to preserve the French Empire.

Accepting, as his overriding war-aim, the revival of France as a great power, de Gaulle had little sympathy with the concept

¹Stanley Clark, The Man Who Is France, p. 28.

of a collective allied purpose; to smash Nazism and restore European democracy.

De Gaulle contacted Churchill and it was arranged that the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) would broadcast a message from de Gaulle to the French people as soon as it was known that Pétain had asked the Germans for an armistice.

I, General de Gaulle, speaking from London, invite the French officers and soldiers who may be in British territory, now or at a later date, with their arms or without their arms--I invite the engineers and the workers skilled in the manufacture of armaments who may be, now or in the future, on British soil--to get in touch with me.

Whatever may come, the flame of French resistance must never be extinguished; and it will not be extinguished.²

In this manner de Gaulle started to build up the Free French Forces which at this time numbered fewer than two hundred men.

The Americans were completely indifferent to de Gaulle and Roosevelt did little to change this attitude toward the Frenchman. Churchill looked upon him as a courageous idealist while Roosevelt regarded him as a nuisance and an embarrassment. Both men sought an alternative to de Gaulle--as leader of the Free French--in such leaders as Catroux, Darian and Gerard but none came forward. This probably influenced the British to recognize de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French on June 28th. The United States did not recognize him until 1944.

²Ibid.

It was during those first days in London that the attitude of de Gaulle crystallized and hardened so far as the conduct of the war was concerned. His first considerations were always of France with the common effort of the allies second.³

In early August the British government and de Gaulle reached an agreement on the organization, utilization and conditions of service of the Free French Forces. Churchill described de Gaulle as "recognized by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom as head of all Free Frenchmen, wherever located." Churchill added,

I take this occasion to declare that His Majesty's Government is determined, when the Allied arms shall have won the victory, to insure the complete restoration of the independence and greatness of France.⁴

De Gaulle had become accredited to a foreign government without ever having been a member of his own Parliament and without ever having received a vote of confidence of his own people.

De Gaulle was to see many setbacks and many successes during the war years. He was to find himself many times to be denied information and council on matters strictly concerning his position. Roosevelt had written to Churchill: "In my view it is essential that de Gaulle be kept out of the picture and be permitted to have no information whatever, regardless of how irritated and irritating he may become."⁵

³Charles de Gaulle, The Call to Honor, War Memoirs, p. 105.

⁴Nora Beloff, The General Says No, p. 37.

⁵Clark, op. cit., p. 182.

This attitude of the Allies only made de Gaulle more determined than ever to focus his attention on his primary target--the rebirth of France.

The Roosevelt administration allowed themselves to lose sight of the great importance of the de Gaulle name in the common fight against Germany. France was the key to the struggle with Hitler, and France, represented by all the freedom fighters who planned to take over key points once the liberating armies had landed, recognized and trusted only de Gaulle--not Churchill, nor Roosevelt, nor any of the allied Generals.

Just prior to the invasion of France the allies were still incapable of believing that a Provisional Government of France, under de Gaulle, was as representative of France as any that could be found.⁶

RETURN TO FRANCE

Immediately prior to the allied landing in Normandy, Eisenhower showed de Gaulle the proclamation which he intended to make to the French people, and in which, in effect, he took over control of the country but allowing them the freedom, after the war, to select their own government.

De Gaulle was adamant and refused to make an address with the other allied leaders which might be construed as approval of the

⁶Ibid., p. 186.

proclamation. De Gaulle made a memorable appeal to the people of France, later in the day, "to take up the final struggle and gain the victory."

Eight days after the initial landings de Gaulle returned to France. His reception should have again shown Roosevelt and Churchill that for France at that time there was only one leader. The plans for an allied military government were quietly scrapped as the Gaullists had the apparatus in France ready for the take-over.

By the 25th of August 1944 there were no followers of Pétain in any of the departments of France. All France was his. Only he could say that by his exertions and his will he had retained for France the honor of being able to declare: "Beaten, we had been robbed of our provinces, forced to pay reparations, but we have never lost our independence."⁷

In the three months following the liberation de Gaulle's government swiftly requisitioned the Renault car works, took control of the Paris Gas Company, and nationalized the coal mines and merchant marine. No country, other than a Communist state, had so quickly taken into public control so many different enterprises. But, the problems of France were many with two million (captured) Frenchmen still in Germany, the loyalty trials to worry about, the problem of constitutional reform and the question of French participation in the early meetings of the United Nations.

⁷Ibid., p. 202.

During this period de Gaulle had led France to membership in the Big Five of the United Nations with veto power in the Security Council, he had obtained a French occupation zone in Germany and a seat on the Supreme Allied Council in Berlin.

Even with these achievements and the forming of his government on November 22, 1945, he faced a stormy period of quarrels and intrigue between the various political parties in the nation. De Gaulle felt that he could not lead France back under these conditions with the existing type of government and resigned on January 15th, 1946. To his cabinet at the War Ministry de Gaulle remarked, "I have decided to resign my position as President of the Council. My decision is final and irrevocable."⁸

De Gaulle had realized that what stood in his way in the drafting of the new constitution was his position as President of the Council. He feared the drafters of the constitutions suspected him of ambitions of dictatorship and would, therefore, insert in the constitution clauses which would keep the president as merely a figurehead.

De Gaulle was determined to return to power only when called to the post by the people of France and under conditions which would provide him the necessary power to lead France back to the status of a great power. He was to wait over twelve years for that call.⁹

⁸Beloff, op. cit., p. 33.

⁹Edward S. Furniss, France, Troubled Ally, p. 28.

RETURN TO POWER

During his twelve year retirement de Gaulle had plenty of time to ponder the nature of power and the type of Europe, France could sponsor. He could no longer hope to build French authority on its overseas possessions. If France was to recover great-power status it must be on continental, not imperial, foundations. He would, therefore, depend on German support. Thus he had to adjust himself to the thinking of Germany in the singular, instead of the Germanies and give up his earlier aim of restoring the pre-Bismackian states and principalities. His purpose, nevertheless, remained constant: a group of nations clustering around himself and France, dominated by France's power and prestige and enabling him, de Gaulle, to speak in their name, as the representative of Europe.¹⁰

By 1958 the people of France had grown tired of twenty-five cabinets and seventeen Presidents of the council--during a twelve year period--none of which had done anything to restore the position of France as a world power or to improve the economic position of the country.¹¹

The Fifth Republic, then, came into being essentially for four reasons. First, the governments of the Fourth Republic had been unable to end the nationalist rebellion in Algeria which

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 22-40.

¹¹Dorothy Pickles, France, The Modern World, pp. 100-117.

left France in imminent danger of either civil war or else a dictatorship set up by dissident elements of the army supported by those portions of the civil population that were determined to keep Algeria, French. Second, de Gaulle, in the opinion of a majority of his countrymen, was the only man who could restore law and order in a democratic France as he had always disliked the system of government of the Fourth Republic which he believed encouraged weak government. He would never have agreed to return to power unless he had been authorized to change the constitution. Third, there was no positive agreement on the kind of constitution that was needed and the emergency was so serious that there was not time to sit down and thrash the matter out as had been done in the Fourth Republic. Lastly, during the last century and a half, it had become French habit to draw up a new constitution rather than revise an old one.¹²

Leading Frenchmen of all political views except the extreme Left now began to call for the General's return. And, finally President Coty was persuaded that no other course remained.

The President's appeal to the National Assembly to vote de Gaulle into power succeeded on June 1, 1958.

For General de Gaulle, it was the culmination of one of the longest and most difficult strategical and tactical exercises he had ever conducted. With great emphasis on his personal leadership

¹²Furniss, op. cit., p. 342.

he had planned for his return in the same methodical manner in which he planned his military exercises and campaigns.¹³

It is interesting to note why so many French people felt such confidence in de Gaulle, a man near seventy, who had not been in power in twelve years. One reason was certainly that his absence from power meant that he was not associated in people's minds with the many postwar failures of French politicians. Another reason was his reputation as a national hero who had once before saved the republic, first by leading a resistance movement in exile and then by restoring Republican, democratic government during the period 1944-1946 when he headed the provisional government of liberated France. Further, as a soldier, he might be expected to have more authority over the army leaders in Algeria.¹⁴

¹³Roy C. Macridis, "The New French Politics," Yale Review, Spring 1963, pp. 353-355.

¹⁴Don Cook, Floodtide in Europe, pp. 70-73.

CHAPTER 4

DE GAULLE'S EFFECT ON FRANCE

De Gaulle's next seven years can be divided into three separate phases. The first phase, lasting about two years, was a consolidation of power in which General de Gaulle concentrated on setting France's internal affairs in order and on transforming the French government into a Gaullist government.

In the second phase de Gaulle concentrated his efforts--and in particular his skill at concealing his ultimate aim--toward ending the war in Algeria. It took three years from his first offer of self-determination until the final shooting ended and Algeria became independent. Peace was thereby restored to France for the first time in twenty-five years.¹

As phase three commenced France was unencumbered by war and had a thriving economy and a stable government. This third phase which will be discussed in Chapter 5 can be described as de Gaulle's foreign policy era.

The first two phases described above will be discussed in this chapter with an additional section on the status of France today.

¹Dorothy Pickles, France, The Modern World, p. 101.

THE CONSTITUTION

In his new constitution of the Fifth Republic de Gaulle set out with one main determination: that the new constitution must establish where power and authority would lie in France.

De Gaulle has spoken often of his experiences in 1940 where nowhere could power be identified--not in the hands of the President, the Premier, the National Assembly, the Ministers of War, or the Generals of the Armies. In the Fourth Republic, power was divided, resting basically with the National Assembly which in turn was so fragmented that no premier was able to govern for long.²

Although much is left vague and unclear in the constitution of the Fifth Republic, the powers of the National Assembly were curbed and limited and have been separated from the powers of the executive branch of the government. Absent is the clarity of separation of powers which exists in the American constitution. But, the new French constitution did declare that the President of the republic would name the prime minister, approve his choice of ministers and preside over cabinet meetings. Technically, the National Assembly cannot vote the government out of power although nobody knows what would happen if it repeatedly voted against a prime minister who chose to ignore its action. Also, the president, but not the prime minister, holds the power to dissolve

²Edward S. Furniss, France, Troubled Ally, pp. 351-355.

the Assembly. The constitution at first appeared to provide a president who would be a kind of supreme arbitrator of French affairs. However, de Gaulle has turned the office into one of supreme power, bending and altering the constitution to suit his own concepts. All this had been possible because, up until this time, he has had the support of the French people.³

Leaders of traditional political parties criticize de Gaulle for his habit of bypassing Parliament, where opposition to him is relatively strong, and referring important matters to referenda, relying on his great popularity with the general public. They believe that he was deliberately cultivating his popularity by frequent tours of the provinces, by television appearances, and with the aid of government directed radio and television service heavily biased in favour of the official point of view. By effectively reducing the role of the parliament he was effectively transferring the whole focus of political life from the elected assembly to the President. And, as on 19 December 1965, de Gaulle was again elected for a seven year term as president--there is no indication that this trend will change.⁴

THE ALGERIAN SETTLEMENT

Prior to his return to power in 1958 de Gaulle had not openly expressed any opinion on a settlement for the Algerian

³Don Cook, Floodtide in Europe, pp. 89-92.

⁴Raymond Aron, France, The New Republic, pp. 20-32.

crisis. It was, therefore, possible for Frenchmen who disagreed bitterly about Algeria to persuade themselves that de Gaulle would be on their side and not on the side of their political opponents.

When de Gaulle returned to power the situation had reached total military and political deadlock. He had made up his mind by September 1959, perhaps earlier, that Algerian independence was inevitable. His task to persuade his fellow-countrymen was to prove difficult. The real problem was to find a way of negotiating a settlement on conditions that would both reassure the French and satisfy the Muslims.⁵

The General slowly brought his countrymen to realize the Algerian independence was inevitable. He accomplished this by frequent tours of provincial towns and villages explaining his policy for Algeria. At the same time the terrorist attacks on the homes of prominent Frenchmen, meant to intimidate those who had expressed liberal views on Algeria, had the opposite effect.⁶

Finally by March 1962 delegates of the French Government and the Muslim Algerian nationalist movement, the National Liberation Front (FLN), agreed to a cease-fire, provided the French and Algerian peoples accepted the accompanying conditions in a referendum. By then almost everyone in France realized that only a few Algerians would vote to remain French.⁷

⁵Cook, op. cit., pp. 92-99.

⁶Stanley Clark, The Man Who Is France, pp. 231-236.

⁷Furniss, op. cit., pp. 322-331.

The conditions of the agreement were intended to safeguard the essential interests of both sides. The French wanted to protect those Europeans who wanted to stay in Algeria, to retain France's economic rights in the Saharan oil fields and to be able to use certain military bases in Algeria. The Algerians were concerned that the meaning of independence should be carefully defined and that French economic and technical aid would be available during the first difficult years.⁸

France accepted the agreements by referendum in April 1962 while Algeria did so in July and became an independent Republic on July 3, 1962.

Few Frenchmen believe that anyone but General de Gaulle, with his highly respected leadership, could have succeeded in bringing about a cease-fire in the conditions in which it took place.⁹

FRANCE TODAY

There are reasonable doubts that de Gaulle will serve out the full seven year term of office. It's quite likely that he would decide to retire at some moment during a second term when he believes that he has accomplished most things that he can accomplish. He would most likely want to leave while his power over the country was still complete and his choice of a successor were to be elected to the presidency. But at that time political life,

⁸Pickles, op. cit., pp. 104-107.

⁹Viansson-Ponte, The King and His Court, pp. 87-90.

as evidenced by the recent election, will become active again in France, and no successor will be able to wield the power and decide policies with the autocratic force and single-minded indifference to opinion that dominates France today.

There is frequent grumbling and dissatisfaction in France over internal problems such as wages, prices, rents, social security and the rest. De Gaulle leaves these disagreeable problems to his prime minister. When he does deal with the economic status of France, it is generally a television report to the people telling them how well off they are.

The fact is that they are well off. Since his return to power in 1958, French social security allowances for families have increased from \$1.8 billion to \$3 billion annually. There has been a 25 percent increase in the French gross national product. Five out of every seven French homes now have refrigerators and washing machines. The government is spending twice as much today as it was spending in 1958 on expansion of an admittedly poor telephone and telecommunications system. Direct-dial phoning is now complete in France and is being extended to the rest of Western Europe.¹⁰

In the last two years another 1,500 miles of the French railway system has been electrified. In 1962, some 700,000 Algerian French flocked back to France in the wake of the ending

¹⁰French Embassy, The First Five Years of the Fifth Republic of France, pp. 6-7.

of the Algerian War and they were absorbed into the booming French economy with scarcely a ripple. By the end of 1963, only 5,000 Algerian repatriots were listed as unemployed. French gold reserves which were practically exhausted when de Gaulle took over have increased to over \$5 billion today. Additionally, the Franc has become one of the world's soundest currencies.¹¹

The government's power of direction over the French economy is enormous. A Frenchman uses gas, electricity, water, coal, railroads and buses which are owned and operated by the state. A portion of the gasoline in his car comes from government-owned supplies. The car itself may well have been manufactured by the state-owned Renault factory, which provides one-third of the French automobile output. A Frenchman smokes cigarettes which are manufactured or marketed solely through a nationalized French tobacco monopoly. He is insured by a state-owned insurance company, keeps his money in a bank which is probably owned or controlled by the government, and if he is a manufacturer and wants to borrow money for plant expansion, then the government is his main source of credit.¹²

Public dissatisfaction with this or that price increase or wage decision does not signify any ground swell of political opposition to de Gaulle. The only two Gaullist programs which have been subject to much public criticism are French aid to its

¹¹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹²Cook, op. cit., p. 309.

former African colonies and other undeveloped nations and the expensive atomic program to build an independent nuclear force.

De Gaulle, paradoxically, has contributed to another healthy change in France and that is in French politics. The 1965 campaign has shaken France out of a political calm in which it slumbered during the first seven years of Gaullism, and Frenchmen have rediscovered a passion for public debate of political issues. Universal suffrage and television were the instruments of this change, but it was de Gaulle, perhaps unwittingly, who made it possible. And the long era of political stability that the Presidential system seems to promise has convinced many Frenchmen that after de Gaulle there will be no déluge.¹³

¹³"European News," Newsweek, 13 Dec. 1965, p. 42.

CHAPTER 5

DE GAULLE'S FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS EFFECTS

THE GRAND DESIGN

As early as 1959 de Gaulle's "Grand Design" or "Grand Strategy" for Europe appeared in the final volume of his memoirs written prior to his return to power:

To guarantee French security in Western Europe by preventing the rise of a new Reich which might again threaten it;

To cooperate with East and West and, as need occurs, to make necessary alliances with one side or the other without ever accepting any kind of dependence;

To transform the French Union into a free association in order to avoid the still unspecified dangers of its disintegration;

To induce the states along the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees to form a political, economic and strategic bloc;

To make this organization one of the three world powers, and, if need be, the arbiter between the two Soviet and Anglo-Saxon camps.¹

Significantly, he makes no mention of the Atlantic Alliance since it plays no part in the aims of his policy. On the contrary, the Atlantic Alliance is to fade away so that Europe--under French leadership--may take its place in the scheme of world affairs.

De Gaulle does not permit advance debate on his big foreign policy decisions. These he makes alone after watching, waiting

¹Don Cook, Floodtide in Europe, p. 315.

and mediating. He listens, but does not consult, and seldom reveals his decisions in advance even to his closest advisors.

His veto of British entry into the common market is a classic example of his independent decisions for France.²

THE COMMON MARKET

The Common Market meetings had been going on in Brussels for eighteen months and it appeared to many that Britain would be admitted and that the difficulties of British entry could be overcome.

Edward Heath, Britain's tireless Common Market negotiator, flew to Paris for a meeting with France's Couve de Murville and asked him point blank, if anything at de Gaulle's Monday press conference (January 14, 1963) would alter the picture and was there any basic reason of principle why the negotiation could not go forward and succeed? Couve de Murville replied that he knew of nothing that would happen to affect the negotiations and he saw no reason why the remaining difficulties could not be overcome. Couve de Murville's comment can be explained as a statement of complete innocence of understanding or of subtle diplomacy. In view of de Gaulle's methods, his foreign minister's comments must be construed to have been made in complete innocence.³ For

²Viansson-Ponte, The King and His Court, p. 43.

³Cook, op. cit., p. 275.

on the following Monday de Gaulle made his now famous press conference which follows in part:

One was sometimes led to believe that our British friends, in applying for membership in the Common Market, agreed to change their own ways even to the point of applying all the conditions accepted and practiced by the Six, but, the question is to know if Great Britain can at present place itself, with the Continent and like it, within a tariff that is truly common, give up all preference with regard to the Commonwealth, cease to claim that its agriculture be privileged and, even more, consider as null and void the commitments it has made with the countries that are part of its free trade area. That question is the one at issue. . . .

It must be agreed that the entry first of Great Britain and then of those other states will completely change the series of adjustments, agreements, compensations and regulations already established between the Six, because all these States, like Britain, have very important traits of their own. We would then have to envisage the construction of another Common Market. . . .

It is foreseeable that the cohesion of all its members, who would be very numerous and diverse, would not hold for long and that in the end there would appear a colossal Atlantic Community under American dependence and leadership which would soon completely swallow up the European Community.

This is an assumption that can be perfectly justified in the eyes of some, but it is not at all what France wanted to do and what France is doing, which is strictly European construction.⁴

De Gaulle did not actually veto British entry that day.

This was a matter of formal diplomatic negotiation and procedure to be carried out by Couve de Murville in Brussels two weeks later.

⁴Charles de Gaulle, Major Addresses, Statements and Press Conferences, pp. 211-216.

Only recently--June 1965--the French walked out of the European Common Market and it would appear that the basic disagreements concerned the agricultural problem, in which France has a predominant interest; and, the majority rule, whereby any member country's vital interests could be overruled by the majority. Many observers feel that the basic issue is really de Gaulle's total dislike for supranationality and his feeling that the Commission is not and should not be a government and that it should not adopt the trapping of a government.⁵

How long the crisis in the European Common Market will last depends on whether de Gaulle will settle for a gentleman's agreement--giving him most of what he wants--or insists on total spelled-out victory or, as the least desirable alternative, the Common Market could collapse completely.⁶

De Gaulle's veto of Britain was truly the beginning of de Gaulle's one man foreign policy. The list of similar acts is great: rejection of the multilateral nuclear force project; the decision to withdraw the French delegation from the Geneva disarmament negotiations; refusal to take part or pay for the United Nation's peace-keeping operation in the Congo; withdrawal of the French fleet and French naval officers from NATO; recognition of Red China; support of neutralism in Southeast Asia; refusal to

⁵Richard E. Mooney, "De Gaulle and Europe," New York Times, 25 Oct. 1965, p. C16.

⁶"Frost Over Europe," The Economist, 30 Oct. - 5 Nov. 1965, p. 670.

participate in discussions with the Russians over Berlin; rejection of any East-West nonaggression pact; refusal to permit the stockpiling of American nuclear weapons in France unless they were placed under French control; and, the fixing of various deadlines against his Common Market partners for the conclusion of various economic agreements. These all came from secret decisions taken by de Gaulle alone and then handed to various ministers as the instructions of the Head of State.

NATO

Let's turn to another area where the power of de Gaulle in France has turned the attention of all the world's major powers-- NATO.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949 and the signers agreed to membership for a period of twenty years. From Paris, de Gaulle has indicated that France will file formal notice with NATO shortly after January 1, 1966 that she will de-integrate all French forces from NATO by 1969 when the present treaty becomes a subject, but not a requirement, for revision.

In a press conference on September 9, 1965 de Gaulle stated:

As long as we judge that the solidarity of the Western peoples is necessary for the eventual defense of Europe, we will remain the allies of our allies, but at the expiration of the commitments we accepted formerly, that is to say, by 1969 at the latest, the subordination known as integration will end, so far as we are concerned.⁷

⁷Charles de Gaulle, as quoted by US News and World Report, 13 Dec. 1965, pp. 55-56.

Some of de Gaulle's antagonism toward the United States is said to have been based on a belief that the United States had been offering the appearance of some German control over nuclear weapons while in reality keeping the final decisions in Washington.

The cornerstone of de Gaulle's grand plan is that Russian aggression against Western Europe almost certainly would not take place and even if it did, the United States would defend Europe with nuclear and other weapons--even if France was not a member of NATO or even if NATO or a substitute collective-security arrangement did not exist.

Short of a major East-West crisis, de Gaulle has planned to continue to maneuver against the United States--not only because of his dislike for the United States but because he has been determined to build up French influence and prestige and has been convinced that the all-powerful United States image throughout the world has stood in his way.

Additionally, France has already announced her intention to demand that American air bases in France should be put under French command. It is confirmed that France means to end a situation that permits foreign forces to operate from her territory without regard for French sovereignty over French soil.⁸

⁸Waverly Root, "Paris to File NATO De-Integration," Washington Post, 7 Oct. 1965, p. A19.

The French remember the two instances in which American planes flew from France to the Congo during the United Nations intervention there of which France disapproved.

Probably de Gaulle's chief complaint with NATO is that it is dominated by the United States and her nuclear force. This simply does not fit into his picture of a strong Europe led by himself and France.

Informed sources see little chance that de Gaulle would succeed in destroying an integrated NATO. The most he could be expected to accomplish would be to take France out of the alliance. Further, there are few who see any possibility that de Gaulle could organize a European grouping around France, which lacks the power base and resources to become the leader of an effective alliance.⁹

The Germans discount the idea of a Gaullist Europe and need only to look to Berlin to realize the value of link to the United States.¹⁰

GERMAN REUNIFICATION

Two significant areas for continuing study are de Gaulle's recognition of Red China and the type of association he will pursue in the future with both the Red Chinese and the Russians.

⁹"If de Gaulle Could Have His Way in Europe," US News and World Report, 13 Dec. 1965, p. 56.

¹⁰Albert Miller, "De Gaulle Shows His Hand," Swiss Review of World Affairs, Nov. 1965, pp. 7-9.

While only guesswork or crystal balling could foresee what will occur in these areas a few comments for conjecture appear in my conclusions.

Lastly, we must look briefly at the French, or de Gaulle, foreign policy toward the reunification of Germany.

De Gaulle considers the German problem a European problem to be solved by Europeans, meaning that the United States should not be involved. The Russians are far from hostile to this approach as any split in the Atlantic Alliance is to their advantage. De Gaulle is well aware of the threat of a strong Germany and remembers well the three German invasions of France during the past century. With a strong conventional German army already in being and the possibility of some sort of access to nuclear weapons for the Germans, not only France and Russia but other Western and Eastern Europeans will carefully watch the trends in the next few years, for reunification has replaced European unity as the No. 1 political concern of the new German generation.¹¹

FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS

At this point it would be beneficial to review de Gaulle's "Grand Design" appearing earlier in this chapter and we see that the General has been unwavering in his approach to his foreign policy objectives regardless of any opposing public opinion.

¹¹Theo Sommer, Foreign Affairs, Oct. 1964, pp. 112-125.

Just what are de Gaulle's ideas for the Europe of the future? A recent issue of US News and World Report indicates that from past performance and hints from European leaders you get this picture of de Gaulle's ideas:

The presence of the U.S. in Europe would be subordinated to French control or eliminated altogether.

Germany would be kept divided and weak, deprived of nuclear weapons.

Britain would be pressured to sever her close ties with the U.S. and recognize French dominance.

Powers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO--would be whittled away until it was no longer an effective military deterrent to Communist aggression.

The European Common Market would be greatly weakened by downgrading its political powers, or wrecked completely.

France would continue to build up its nuclear strength in an effort to become a nuclear power on equal terms with Britain.¹²

To determine, with any degree of accuracy, what de Gaulle thinks is something even his own ministers cannot do. But, those views expressed by Newsweek appear to be a good consensus of European thinking.

¹²"If De Gaulle Could Have His Way in Europe," US News and World Report, 13 Dec. 1965, p. 55.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The stated purpose of this paper has been to show by means of a case study of de Gaulle--his effect on France, Europe and the national strategy of the United States--that leadership, in certain instances, should be considered as one of the elements of national power. Certainly, in the case of General de Gaulle, he has had an overwhelming influence on all the elements which comprise the national power of France. No other man at the time could have led the people of France from the brink of civil war, from the political chaos which had existed since the end of World War II, from the economic doldrums and monetary insecurity to a position of a world power in her own right. A power which other nations would have to contend with on a worldwide basis. Certainly, de Gaulle has not attained universal popularity. Even in France, as evidenced by the elections of December 1965, there is strong opposition to his domestic and foreign policies and to the single-handed manner in which his decisions on these matters are forthcoming. De Gaulle has never been influenced in his actions by either popularity or public opinion and none can deny that the driving force behind this man has been his desire to raise the prestige of France throughout the world and to return France to its historical position of a world power.

It is not intended that leadership should always be included as an element or a factor of national power, however, it is an element to be considered in assessing any national power.

What then does the present and future appear to indicate for de Gaulle's policies?

THE UNITED STATES

In the military, political and economic fields de Gaulle's constant criticism of American hegemony is the basis for his private foreign policy. When threats of war exist, such as in Berlin or Cuba, he remains the ally of his allies because he realizes he needs the United States nuclear protection. But when there is no danger of a global war he takes an aloof position to Washington as in the case of Vietnam, Laos, the Congo and Santo Domingo.

With the threat of any Russian attack of Europe diminished he wants American influence in Europe removed. He has publicly threatened to quit the Atlantic Alliance by 1969 and desires to replace NATO by bilateral defense agreements with the United States. We can expect de Gaulle to present his plans for the reorganization of NATO in the coming year. Whatever this might be it will, undoubtedly, not be compatible with the ideas of the United States or the other alliance members. Meanwhile, de Gaulle's diplomatic action in the underdeveloped nations takes on a more and more independent course from that of the United States.

WESTERN EUROPE

De Gaulle attempted to strengthen his hand in Europe by the treaty of friendship he signed with Chancellor Adenauer, thereby trying to bind Germany to France. But in doing so he offered Bonn the impossible choice between Washington and Paris and he soon found that the successor to Adenauer would not loosen Germany's ties with the United States. He had, inadvertently, not only raised West Germany's bargaining power in the alliance but he had also promoted indirectly a growing special relationship between Germany and the United States. At present the French-Germany friendship treaty is dead.

The relatively small economic and military power of France standing alone, and de Gaulle's determination to keep his hands free even in Europe, shatter all thoughts of a United Europe. It is this self-created situation which French public opinion has finally grasped and is much worried about. De Gaulle has been lately promoting a new Great Design in the form of a European Europe which includes Eastern Europe and, of course, all under French guidance.

THE SOVIET BLOCK

In 1966 de Gaulle may well go on a long-expected visit to the Soviet Union. This would be a follow-up to the significant increase in the number of ministerial visits, diplomatic contacts, trade and cultural agreements between Paris, Moscow and other

Eastern European capitals during the past two years. Both de Gaulle and the Soviet leaders want to intimidate Bonn and have a common objective, to block a German share in nuclear armaments and strategy. This fear is shared by most Frenchmen and by almost all European countries--West and East. Even de Gaulle's idea of trying to solve the German problem with the cooperation of all European countries, both from the Western Alliance and from the Soviet bloc, could be sound. Rumors of a French-Soviet treaty of friendship should be considered remote. They merely serve the purpose of bringing pressure on West Germany and letting the United States know that Paris could go that far. The Russians undoubtedly use this as a division weapon against the Western Alliance and as a blackmailing instrument against West Germany. De Gaulle's policy of friendship with the East probably gave him thousands of Communist votes in the 1965 election.

CHINA

When de Gaulle recognized the Peking government he raised the hopes that France could contribute to solving some problems in Asia, such as the Vietnam conflict. Nothing of the kind has happened and Paris has been unable to play any peace role in either Southeast Asia or on the Indian subcontinent. There is a common policy between Paris and Peking in their opposition to the nuclear test ban treaty and to non-proliferation of atomic weapons, however, this existed prior to de Gaulle's recognition of Communist China.

NUCLEAR POLICY

De Gaulle's steady buildup of the independent French nuclear force is a main cause of the worsening relations with Washington. It is to be expected that under his continuing rule the testing of French nuclear weapons in the Pacific and the building of supersonic planes for delivery will go on. However, French public opinion is more and more hesitant about the huge amount of money that is being spent in this field.

THE WORLD

De Gaulle's handling of the Algerian problem and the French African colonies has brought him growing admiration in the under-developed countries. He makes a great point of visiting some of the countries and receiving their leaders in Paris. With the limited economic and financial potential available to him, de Gaulle cannot back up his policies with great resources except in former French Africa. If he wanted to cooperate in a joint program with other Western countries he would probably achieve great personal success. But, his philosophy of exclusive national French interests preclude it.

There is no significant indication that de Gaulle, at seventy-five and only recently reelected for another seven years, will not go on in the same direction and with the same methods as before.


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