

explained to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting in London that he did not favour an immediate attempt to establish a united states of Europe. Within the foreseeable future it was not practicable: 'It was alien to the British inclination to create grandiose paper constitutions.' (Australian Archives, Canberra, A5954, Box 1970, PMM(48)9, Secret, 19 October 1948.) At this gathering Bevin also tried to complement the Washington discussions with his earlier scheme to involve the Dominions. Following the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, bilateral defence discussions and strategic planning were started between Britain, Australia and New Zealand. (A5799, 48/15, Artlee to J. B. Chifley, Top Secret, 29 December 1948.) Talks with South Africa began in 1949. (R. Owendale, *The English-Speaking Alliance. Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War 1945-51* (1985), pp. 245-72.)

By the end of 1948 the caution of the American delegates negotiating the Atlantic Pact evaporated. In the summer they had been worried about committing Congress, and the likelihood of Truman losing the presidential election. But Truman was returned against all the odds, and opinion in the United States moved strongly in favour of a pact. The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949 by twelve governments. Bevin felt that the pact had 'stredled the world'. (FO 800/483, fol. 75, NA/49/13, Bevin to Franks and Lady Franks, 14 April 1949.)

On 17 December 1947 Bevin had envisaged an association of the Western democratic countries - including the United States, Britain, France, Italy and others - and the Dominions. By the middle of 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty had been signed, and defence discussions initiated with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Bevin saw the Cold War not just in European but in global terms. It was spreading to the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

France and the Origins of the Atlantic Pact

by Bruna Bagnato

Saturday, December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, Charles De Gaulle declared: "Good, this war is over. Certainly there will still be operations, battles and fighting, but the war is over because from now on the outcome is certain. In this industrial war, nothing can withstand the power of American industry ... Now the West will commit a number of political mistakes sufficient to ensure that by the end of this conflict, the conditions will have been created for another one ... with Russia". "How right he was!" was to be the comment, thirty-eight years later, of one of De Gaulle's closest collaborators, General Pierre Billotte, to whom the future President had made this grim prophecy.¹

De Gaulle's eschatological prediction emerged from Billotte's memory in July 1945,² when the military leader had "realized for the first time that it would soon become necessary to reconstitute, under other forms and with other partners and adversaries, the alliance of World War II".³ One simple element was sufficient to explain the birth of this "emergency": the British and American desire to abandon the continent. In Great Britain the success of the Labour Party in the July elections, which had brought Clement Artlee to the head of a government in which Ernest Bevin was Foreign Minister, had been largely due to the fact that public opinion was exhausted by the war, and thus especially sensitive to slogans that touched the chords of emotion with appeals to peace and disengagement. In the United States, public opinion was calling for the return home of the "boys" sent to fight in Europe, where their presence seemed no longer necessary after the end of the hostilities.

If France did not wish to be alone in opposing the hegemonic temptations of the U.S.S.R., she would have to act swiftly before British and American demobilization was completed. It was in fact with extreme rapidity that the

¹ Général P. Billotte, *Le passé au futur*, Paris, Stock 1979, p. 33.

² As Billotte himself relates in *Le Temps des armes*, Paris, Pion 1972.

³ Général P. Billotte, *Le passé au futur*, cit. p. 33.

Commander of the 2nd Army Corps took action, preparing, as soon as August 17, 1945, a note "on the definition of a French military policy which responds to the urgency of the situation", a note discussed by the author with De Gaulle in September. "I confirm to you my general agreement with the military policy you have outlined", the head of the Provisional Government told him. "I appoint you Deputy Chief of Staff of National Defense. In this capacity, you will inform yourself on all matters falling within the competence of the General Staff ... Once having been invested with this responsibility, you will go to meet Marshall and Eisenhower, Alan Brooke and Montgomery and their ministers. You will thus find out whether the Anglo-Americans are willing to engage themselves in peacetime; the Americans, in particular ...".⁴

De Gaulle's resignation, in January 1946, made these projects a dead letter. Billorette was not appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of National Defence. In March 1946 he left instead for the United States, as a member of the French delegation to the United Nations.

At the moment of taking leave of Edmond Michelet, Minister "des Armées", it was agreed that Billorette would initiate negotiations for a possible future alliance between France and the Anglo-American powers only if it should become evident that the United Nations was incapable of promoting a true general disarmament backed up by formulas designed to guarantee collective security. The impossibility for the international organization of assuming the responsibility for guaranteeing world peace became clear to Billorette in the Spring of 1947. For approximately one year the General tried to make or to re-establish contacts "as close as possible with the American personages in all the governing spheres responsible for major decision-making". This allowed the French General to "find out their opinions on the situation".⁵ The result of this delicate investigation was a "note de renseignements" on the risks facing Europe in the event of a conflict, written by Billorette in the months between April 1946 and the end of 1947. The first part of the note, whose considerations were "entirely approved"⁶ by George Marshall, analyzed the probable direction that would be taken by a Soviet offensive, on the basis of information gathered by French counter-espionage combined with analysis of Moscow's traditional strategic concepts as well as the doctrinal positions of Marxism-Leninism and its Stalinist "deviations". Absolute priority would be given, in Moscow's plans, to preparations for a war against Europe. Conversely, no fronts of intervention toward the Indian Ocean or the Pacific were envisaged.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

The second part of the note attempted to "measure the level of danger by which the free world is threatened, according to the vicissitudes of the arms race and the progress in reorganization of its security measures". According to Billorette's calculations, three periods could be distinguished. The first, from early 1948 to the Spring of 1949 — the date set for the constitution of a valid military defence for the Western nations — was characterized by application of the policy of economic reconstruction of Europe launched by the Marshall Plan and by the attempts of the Kremlin to sabotage from without the recovery of the continent. In the event of conflict, the Anglo-American "Combined Chiefs of Staff" would abandon all of Continental Europe, setting up a line of defence that incorporated the Pyrenees and Great Britain. The United States, bound by no alliance, would hesitate to utilize atomic weapons on European territory, opposing no obstacle to the flood of Soviet conventional forces that would inundate Europe.

The second period would start as soon as a valid military force had been established in Western Europe (1949) and would come to an end at the time when the Soviet Union possessed atomic weapons in industrial and operational quantities (approximately 1952). From the politico-economic viewpoint, the Marshall Plan would already have exerted all of its beneficial effects and the American government, after going through the crisis of presidential elections, would have its hands free to promote a policy of consolidation of its military system. A balance between Europe-U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. would be achieved in conventional forces, while the further development of the atom bomb by the U.S.A. would lead the White House to utilize it to block any attempt at Soviet expansion.

The third period — 1952-1955 — would see the start of negotiations between Americans and Soviets for the utilization and strategic neutralization of the atom bomb, in a situation of substantial equilibrium as regards conventional weapons.

From the description of the three periods hypothesized, it was clear that the most favourable stage for Soviet action was the first, which would terminate only when the Western nations had managed to prepare the means for valid defence and to consolidate their political and economic recovery. The U.S.S.R. could not have this period elapse in vain, with the prospect of no longer finding circumstances equally favourable for the total submission of Europe. Unless, of course, Moscow might be hoping to propose to Washington a division of the world in order to have enough time to prepare the final destruction of the American capitalist system.⁷

Billorette waited for the situation in France to become "normalized", with the exclusion of the Communists from the Ramadier government, before

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

presenting to the new Premier, Robert Schuman, at the end of 1947, a personal and secret note on the means to be employed for guaranteeing the security of France. In the document Billotte insisted on the risks of war and on the shifting sands on which attempts were now being made to lay the bases for the security of the nation. Such security no longer resulted from a system of international guarantees, but rested on the shaky, decaying foundations of a balance of foreign powers that diplomacy was attempting to maintain and consolidate without much success. The only exit from this political stalemate would be the adoption of a common global strategy for the United States and its European allies which would ensure France protection of its main territory and unity of the *Union Française*. And the only way to persuade the Americans to put their trust in the Europeans was to construct a union of the Old Continent which Washington would feel compelled to support. This manoeuvre would have allowed France to enter the exclusive Anglo-American club, engaging herself without risk in the strategic game of London and Washington; to guarantee the security of her territory and the unity of her empire; and to assume a top-ranking role in the eventuality of conflict. If war had not then broken out, the French government would be able to implement a policy of national independence within the European union.

The note was accompanied by two memoranda. The first of these was entirely technical in nature. After demonstrating the impossibility of neutrality, in consideration of the prevailing political, legal, economic and military conditions, the document stressed the urgency of a definitive decision in favour of the Anglo-American camp, the only valid option for a France that wished to safeguard her independence and her security.

The second memorandum was a sort of working outline for the dialogue with the Anglo-Americans. In it Billotte analyzed the strategic options available in the event of conflict with the Soviet Union, pointing out the risks and the advantages of the two main hypotheses: the abandonment of Europe, with refusal to fight the initial battle along the Elbe line, evacuation of Western Europe and falling back on the Great Britain-Pyrenees-North Africa line; or, on the contrary, maintaining the "Elbe position". The first hypothesis presented "dramatic problems". Europe's resources would fall into the hands of the Soviets, who would have free access to the Mediterranean and to the Atlantic and would occupy the Scandinavian peninsula. The peoples of Europe would feel themselves sacrificial victims, probably becoming sensitive to the appeals of Moscow.

The "Elbe position" instead presented more advantages than problems, as it was geographically more feasible. In this case too, however, a certain margin of time would be needed before the European defence system could withstand any offensive from the U.S.S.R.⁸

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 41-45.

Schuman, to whom the project was submitted, fully approved it in principle. The French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault also expressed agreement with Billotte's worries during a "discreet" visit made by him to the General in October 1947 at his private residence near New York, where Bidault had gone to attend a session of the United Nations.

Urged on by Billotte, at the end of 1947, Bidault had a meeting with Marshall, during which the head of French diplomacy suggested to the American Secretary of State that the United States should contribute to the defence of Europe. Marshall was "favourably surprised" by the French initiative, expressing his agreement to starting "très secrètes" talks between the British, French and Americans and designating General Marthew Ridgway as American delegate. Only three personages from each country were to be informed of the project: Artle, Bevin and General Morgan for Great Britain; Schuman, Bidault and Billotte for France; Truman, Marshall and General Ridgway for the United States.⁹

The problem of European defence had been raised by Bidault and by Bevin during the London Conference of November 1947. In a meeting with his British colleague the head of the Quai d'Orsay had, even before the end of the conference, expressed French concern for the worrying development of events in Europe and for the growing tension between the Americans and the Soviets.¹⁰ The United States was now aiming toward reconstituting a government for Western Germany which would definitively confirm the rupture of the accord established in wartime. The Soviet reaction would not be long in coming. Bidault predicted an offensive in Czechoslovakia, from where an attack on Austria would be launched, and a less direct offensive, through the Communist "fifth columns", in Italy and France. Faced with this hypothesis, France could not allow herself to be left alone to resist the destabilizing manoeuvres of the Kremlin. The Foreign Minister believed that the only possible response would be the creation of a military security corps which would include France, Belgium, the United States and Great Britain.¹¹ The

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 58-59. Cf. P. Melandri, *France and the Atlantic Alliance 1950-1953: Between Great Power Policy and European Integration*, in O. Riske (ed.), *Western Security: The Formative Years. European and Atlantic Defence 1947-1953*, Oslo, Norwegian University Press 1985, pp. 266-282. p. 267.

¹⁰ On the Bidault-Bevin meeting, cf. A. Varsoni, *Il Patto di Bruxelles (1948): tra integrazione europea e alleanza atlantica*, Rome, Bonacci 1988, pp. 37 ff.

¹¹ V. Auñol, *Journal du Septennat*, I, 1947, Paris, Colin, 1970, p. 695. Cf. also P. Melandri - M. Vaisse, *De la prise de conscience de l'impuissance à la quête de l'influence*, in R. Girault - R. Frank (eds.), *La puissance française en question 1945-1949*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne 1988.

More generally, on problems of defence, cf. P. Guillen, "La France et la question de la défense de l'Europe occidentale du pacte de Bruxelles (mars 1948) au Plan Pleven (octobre 1950)", in *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, II, (1986/2) pp. 305-327.

French appeal to Western solidarity was heard by Bevin who, in a meeting with Marshall on the afternoon of December 17th, informed the American Secretary of State of British apprehensions and those – even greater – of the French. However, he did not wish to precipitate a decision by the United States which, while showing sympathy for the fears of its European allies, deemed it impossible to assume immediately a precise, binding commitment, postponing a clearer stance to a time when the Europeans would advance more concrete, definite proposals.

Marshall's caution did not prevent implementation of the project for holding talks between the major states. On December 29, 1947, Billotte sent the American Secretary of State, through Ridgway, a note verbale¹² confirming that he had been charged by the French government with contracting topranking American authorities to study the conditions in which the bases could be laid for a secret military agreement between the two governments, designed to assure the security of the two nations and of the Atlantic world through a common strategy. This was a strategy, wrote Billotte in the aide-mémoire devoted to the conversation with Marshall and brought to the attention of Bidault, that should involve the Western part of Europe, compatible with French opinion on the basis of which, in case of Soviet aggression, the fighting would take place as far to the East as possible. From the political point of view, Billotte concluded, this would lead to greater cohesion and solidarity between the governments of the West.¹³ In the personal letter for Bidault that accompanied the aide-mémoire, the General stressed the intimate link between the reconstruction of Western Europe and its security, while pointing out that it was impossible for the Americans to associate themselves with a programme designed to ensure the defence of the Old Continent before the governments of Western Europe had made public their own intentions in this regard.

While awaiting an explicit affirmation of self-help from the British and French governments, Billotte, Ridgway and Morgan met in a stronghold in the vicinity of New York to establish the principles for a common policy of security and a direct global strategy, on a footing of equality, between the United States, France and Great Britain. The postulate at the basis of the discussion was that of the eventuality of Russian aggression, in order to

¹² Général P. Billotte, *Le passé au futur*, cit., p. 59.

¹³ Archives Nationales (hereinafter referred to as A. N.), Papiers Georges Bidault, vol. 25, Général P. Billotte, General Staff Committee of the United Nations, French Military Delegation, Jan. 9, 1948.

The Author wishes to thank Madame S. Bidault for having allowed her to consult the papers of her husband, and expresses profound gratitude to Madame Bonazzi, Director of the Contemporary Section of the Archives Nationales, for her courteous and invaluable collaboration.

confront which, according to Ridgway, the contribution of the German divisions would be needed.

"Nothing proves that the political leaders were informed of the projects of the Chiefs of Staff", G. Elgey has however pointed out. "In any case, even if they had been informed, it is not certain that they would have taken them seriously. Among the duties of the Chiefs of Staff was that of formulating the most widely varying hypotheses. Thus it would be rash at best to conclude that in 1948 the American, British and French governments had decided to rearm Germany".¹⁴

It was however evident that in France fear of the Soviet Union was now prevailing over fear of the rebirth of Germany.¹⁵ To the American Ambassador to Paris, Jefferson Caffery, Bidault had already explained in early March that what he really wanted was "a concrete military alliance against a Soviet attack with definite promises in relation to definite events that would take place under certain circumstances. He wanted an explicit mention of Germany only for reasons of internal policy".¹⁶

This need for concreteness was the constant and most conspicuous element of the French approach to the subject of security; an element which is present from the very beginning of contacts with the American Administration to establish a common formula of guarantee.

On March 4, 1948, Bidault wrote Marshall a personal letter in which he expressed French concern for the situation in Europe and advanced precise proposals for a Franco-Anglo-American alliance. The French Foreign Minister recalled the progressive stages of the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe (the creation of the Cominform in September; the hanging of the leader of the agrarian party in Bulgaria during the same month; the suppression of the peasants' parties in Rumania in October; the dissolution of the opposition parties in Hungary in November; the Prague coup d'état in February). Bidault wrote: "The French government is resolved to do everything in its power to consolidate the last barrier preserving the free territories on the European continent and the intransigent will to resist. It will exert every effort, in accord with Great Britain, to organize the common defence in conjunction with all the European democratic powers". But, he continued, "The hour is too dire, the danger is too urgent, Soviet power is too mighty for France, just recovering from the wounds of war, to assume alone, even with the support of the allies which it is trying to organize, the role of defender of the Western territories".

¹⁴ G. Elgey, *Histoire de la IV^e République. I. La République des illusions 1945-1951*, Paris, Fayard 1965, p. 381.

¹⁵ Cf. J. Frémaux – A. Marrel, *French Defence Policy 1947-1949*, in O. Riste (ed.), cit., pp. 92-103, in particular the paragraph entitled "German or Soviet Threat?", pp. 96-97.

¹⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter to be referred to as FRUS), 1948, vol. III, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1974, p. 35.

It was due to this awareness of "impotence" that Bidault turned now to Marshall and, through Marshall, to the President of the United States, "implore them to consider the gravity and perhaps the imminence of the danger". "The United States", continued the leader of the Quai d'Orsay, "shows an admirably generous concern for putting its immense resources at the service of the reconstruction of devastated peoples", but it was now necessary "to consolidate on the political terrain and as rapidly as possible on the military terrain, collaboration between the old and the new worlds, so firmly united in their attachment to the only civilization of any worth ... It is my duty to state that my nation and the other European countries which are resolved to resist will not have the means of resistance proportional to the force of the assault except in the measure to which agreements with the American government will allow them to acquire what they are lacking in strength". For this reason, he concluded, "I propose that the French, British and American governments inaugurate the political consultations called for by the gravity of the present situation and that in particular they examine without delay the technical questions posed by the problem of common defence against a danger that may be immediate".¹⁷

On the next day, March 5th, Marshall discussed with President Truman the message sent by Bidault. In a memorandum of the 12th addressed to the White House, the Secretary of State concluded that it was "necessary, to strengthen the morale of the free nations of Europe, France and Italy in particular" to provide the governments in Paris and Rome with "at least an indication of our willingness to consult on the means to be used to block the further extension of Communist dictatorship in Europe". The discussions taking place in Brussels would indicate "how far the governments of France, Britain and the three Benelux nations were willing to go in committing themselves to common defence and would furnish a starting point for consultations between them and the United States".¹⁸

The Soviet threat, which Bidault had described as imminent in the letter dated March 4th in relation to developments in Czechoslovakia, seemed truly urgent in the light of Soviet requests to the government in Oslo for the conclusion of a pact that would establish, in conjunction with the pact with Finland, the political hegemony of Moscow in the Scandinavian region. An alarming aide-mémoire sent by the British Embassy to the State Department stressed British concern over the evolution of the situation in Northern Europe where the Soviet "offensive" in Czechoslovakia, Finland and now Norway called for an urgent response. "There was no time to lose" in reacting to the

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strategy of Moscow. Bevin suggested that a mutual assistance pact should be concluded, in which all the nations directly threatened by the "Russian march to the Atlantic" would participate.¹⁹

The Soviet threat to Norway acted as catalyst in the process of formation of an American political will. Marshall replied immediately to the aide-mémoire of March 11th, declaring that the United States was "ready to proceed immediately with mutual discussion on the establishment of an Atlantic system of security", and proposing that the British delegation should come to Washington the following week.²⁰

The invitation was addressed to Great Britain and Canada. France and the Benelux nations were not informed of the talks held in Washington starting on March 22nd to avoid the risk of "news leakage before a final agreement".²¹

This exclusion of the French representatives from the innermost circles of security tells much about the scarce trust placed by Washington in the French services, where Soviet infiltration was feared, and about the confirmation of a "special relationship" between the Anglo-Saxon nations.

While Marshall, urged on by the danger of the situation in Norway, proposed to the British that contacts should begin immediately, with Bidault he responded on a general level. To the desperate appeal of March 4th, the American Secretary of State replied on the 12th, stating that the United States "agreed with the French as to the gravity of developments in Europe and the urgency of determining the best measures for preventing the expansion of the area of Communist dictatorship in Europe", but an essential prerequisite for American involvement in the defence of the Continent was the conclusion of the five-nation agreement that was about to be signed at Brussels.²²

This was an accord that Bidault had since February considered destined to be "high-sounding" but inoperative without the concrete engagement of the U.S.A.²³

On the signing of the Brussels Pact, on March 17th, Bidault and Bevin sent Marshall a joint message stating that they had appreciated his "encouraging message" of March 12th and declaring themselves ready to discuss with the American representatives what further progress "might be desirable".²⁴

¹⁹ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 47.

²⁰ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 48.

²¹ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 97.

²² FRUS, 1948, III, p. 50.

²³ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 29.

²⁴ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 55; A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, Dossier 1. Bidault relates in his memoirs:

"It was about the beginning of 1948 ... when I wrote twice to General Marshall to inform him that danger could strike from one moment to another over all of Western Europe, that the Russian advance troops were within 200 kilometres of the Rhine and that, consequently, safeguarding the West demanded the presence of American forces and the formal alliance of

¹⁷ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 25, dossier 1, letter by G. Bidault to G. Marshall, Paris, March 4, 1948.

¹⁸ FRUS, 1948, III, p. 49.

Bidault and Bevin had also been particularly attentive to Truman's speech to Congress on March 17th, in which the President had affirmed that Soviet determination should be met by equal American determination to help the free European nations to protect themselves.²⁵ The French Ambassador to Washington, Henri Bonnet, confirmed from his privileged observation post the change of direction in American policy from acquiescence to determination. In a series of urgent and confidential telegrams sent to the Quai d'Orsay, the diplomat analyzed the development of American positions, noting the American desire to establish a methodological symmetry between the programme of economic aid, already launched in the Marshall Plan, and the project for military support. As regards the problems of security too, the United States wanted the Europeans to take the initiative. Truman and Marshall, reported Bonnet, were clear on this point. The speech to the Congress had not been merely an isolated manifestation of the concern with which the American Administration followed the development of European issues. Truman, on the occasion of the Irish holiday of Saint Patrick's Day, had given a speech in which he affirmed American responsibility for protection of the free world and the need to unite America's strength to that of people striving to defend themselves. Marshall had spoken to the Senate's Armed Forces Committee on reestablishing the draft and on the institution of compulsory military training. At a luncheon held by a journalists' association, Marshall had stressed the threat that the Soviet Union was holding over a Europe still in the stage of reconstruction and thus incapable, alone, of holding out against a possible offensive. The American position was thus, concluded the Ambassador, free from ambiguity.²⁶

This change in the American attitude produced contrasting reactions at the Quai d'Orsay. Bidault had taken the trouble to write personally to Marshall, inviting the United States to assess the risks for the integrity and independence of Europe and to abandon restraint and passivity. But now this abrupt change of tactics in the State Department, which was launching an anti-Communist crusade, seemed to expose the still defenseless nations of Western Europe to possible reactions from Moscow.

the United States to re-establish, in the face of this urgent danger, the precarious security of our peoples ... General Marshall answered me essentially that, to allow the government of the United States to influence its own public opinion, it would be necessary for Europe itself to exert efforts to achieve unity and organize its own defence". G. Bidault, *Une résistance à l'autre*, La presse du Sticle, Paris 1965, p. 160.

²⁵ Cf. H. Truman, *The Memoirs of Harry Truman, vol. II, Years of Trial and Hope 1946 - 1953*, Hodder and Stoughton, New York, 1956, pp. 255 ff.

²⁶ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 1 confidential-urgent telegram ns. 1194 - 2000, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, March 17, 1948.

On March 18th the Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry Jean Chauvel wrote a personal letter to Bonnet pointing out these perils.²⁷ The starting point for Chauvel's reflections was the effect of the Prague coup d'état on relations between the Americans and the Soviets. Both Caffery (to Bidault) and the American Ambassador to London, Douglas, (to Bevin), had proposed to the French and British governments that the three ambassadors should be recalled from the Czechoslovakian capital "for consultation". In full agreement with the Foreign Office, the Quai d'Orsay had replied that it was not at all favourable to breaking off diplomatic relations with Prague, considering that, "as it is a question of confronting Russia, the time for spectacular manifestations is past, while the moment for effective defense measures has arrived". Since then, continued Chauvel, the anti-Communist tone of the American officials had become, if possible, even more vehement. Truman himself, in the Saint Patrick's Day speech in New York, had launched into a diatribe against Moscow.

"We are currently in a highly dangerous period, which began with Truman's speech of March 1947, and from which we will only emerge on the day when our military preparation and the organization of Western Europe's security hinging on the United States will be sufficient to make Moscow reflect", wrote Chauvel. "Up to that moment we must choose between two different problems: to do nothing so as not to provoke a reaction from Moscow, or to do something, accepting the risk that the Kremlin will take its own protective measures". At the point matters now had reached, the choice had already been made. It was obvious that France had committed herself to a project of accord with the United States. But, continued the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, "I believe it would be tempting fate if, at the very moment in which we are trying to make up for a real delay, one or the other of us starts to amuse himself by waving the red flag in front of the bull".

Chauvel had no doubt that the reason why the Americans were raising up the Soviet spectre had to do with questions of internal policy, "exciting other bulls". But the American Administration would have to be made aware of the fact that its incendiary statements could have dramatic consequences, that there was a bond of cause-and-effect between Truman's speech of March 1947 and the communization of Eastern Europe and that the nations not yet absorbed in the Soviet orbit - among them France - were concerned with avoiding imprudent language while endeavouring to work effectively, with as little noise as possible, to organize their own security.

²⁷ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (hereinafter to be referred to as AMAE), série Papiers d'Agents, Papiers H. Bonnet, vol. 1, letter by J. Chauvel to H. Bonnet, Paris, March 18, 1948.

What the Europeans expected from the United States was not speeches that were violent, dangerous and devoid of positive effects, but rather concrete, binding commitments. "What interests us today", continued Chauvel, "is that real bonds are established and effective work is initiated to allow us not only to reconstruct our economies, but also to rebuild the military strength that permits us to locate the frontier of the Western world along the Rhine or better still along the Elbe".

In conclusion, purely verbal harshness had to be avoided²⁸ due to the effects that such "perfectly useless manifestations" could have on the Soviet government which, unlike the American one, was much more strongly attached to concreteness.

The Quai d'Orsay and the Hôtel Matignon were also, like the Kremlin, "concrete" and Chauvel's letter was, in this sense, an act of accusation against American policy which, with light-hearted unconcern for the dangers threatening Europe in the event of Soviet reaction to the declarations issuing from Washington, had declared ideological war without assuming any commitment with regard to a possible clash. The letter sent by Marshall to Bidault on March 25th in reply to the joint Bevin-Bidault démarche of March 18th was a kind of answer to such accusations. The American Secretary of State wrote to the Foreign Minister that the French would soon realize that the Americans "were no longer in the period of oratory demonstrations; these were accompanied by decisions, military decisions in particular, that should be taken seriously".²⁹

In Washington, the three-way talks on security among the Americans, Canadians and British were continuing. These initial contacts, of an explorative nature, went on until April 1st, when a final draft was compiled, which gave effect to Truman's declaration of March 17.³⁰

The Quai d'Orsay, while unaware of this initiative, was pleased by the signals of interest coming from the American capital where, reported Bonnet, the government was attentively studying the Brussels Treaty to decide on the role the U.S. would play in an extension of security measures. The French Ambassador pointed out the traditional American preference for "unwritten"

²⁸ Chauvel was referring to the case of Finland. The American Ambassador to the Helsinki government had been charged with making a démarche with the Finnish government on the occasion of the ultimatum given it by Stalin. "Pourquoi faire, Grands Dieux!" exclaimed Chauvel. "The Finnish government is aware that nobody can do anything for it. Fortunately, it is aware of this, since if it mistook the expressions of sympathy and encouragement it has been given for truth, it could be tempted to take refuge, like Schuschnigg and Benes in 1938, behind a false sense of security".

²⁹ AMAE, *Série Papiers d'Agents, Papiers H. Bonnet*, vol. 1, letter by G. Marshall to G. Bidault, Washington, March 25, 1948.

³⁰ FRUS, 1948, III, pp. 59-72, "Final Draft", *ibid.*, pp. 72-75.

formulas of alliance, but reported that the United States had acknowledged and proclaimed the role and the responsibility that would be incumbent on it in the event of international crisis, ensuring support for the nations of the Brussels Pact — albeit in general terms — and trusting in the success of the plan for economic reconstruction as a requisite for allowing the European nations to "regain the strength to resist the Soviet Union".³¹

Support for Europe was however still too vague and undefined to appear satisfying in French eyes. The French were annoyed by the Americans' failure to comprehend the imminence of the danger, and followed with close attention the technical solutions that the State Department was devising to free itself from the fetters of the prohibition against concluding alliances in times of peace.

"Due to constitutional aspects and the current state of the American forces as well as the inevitable repercussions, any commitment to the Brussels Pact nations would represent a particularly arduous task" — wrote the French chargé d'affaires in Washington, Armand Bérard, in a personal letter to Chauvel at the end of March. "The formulas which seem to find the greatest favour should affirm the determination of the American government to oppose all the brutal actions tending to prevent implementation of the Marshall Plan". However, this posed delicate problems, since such a guarantee would have been extended to all the beneficiaries of ERP aid, among whom were states neutral by law, such as Switzerland, and de facto, such as Sweden and Ireland.

In Washington, the advisability of extending the Brussels Pact to the Scandinavian nations was debated, but it was feared that if this were done, a Soviet reaction would be swift to follow. The State Department, Bérard continued, thus seemed oriented toward providing a limited guarantee to the five Brussels Pact nations, to which it was hoped there would soon be added Italy and the countries which had formed groups similar to that of Brussels in Northern Europe. The Americans however, commented the French diplomat, were too superficial to understand that it was impossible for the European democracies to associate themselves with nations like Greece and Spain.

As for the form which the guarantee was to take, the United States seemed to opt for a "special relationship" rather than for "full-fledged participation".³² The news from Washington, while reassuring insofar as it indicated that the Americans were seriously studying the possibility of an accord capable of guaranteeing European security, was not entirely reassuring since it did not

³¹ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 1, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, telegram ns. 1303-1304, urgent confidential, Washington, March 25, 1948; *ibid.*, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, telegram n. 1335, Washington, March 25, 1948.

³² A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 25, dossier 1, personal letter from A. Bérard to J. Chauvel, Washington, March 26, 1948.

specify how much time would elapse before the United States could assume a binding commitment in this sense. "I know, from the indications that the State Department has given to the French Embassy, the diligence with which the administrations involved are studying in Washington the possibilities of formulating a political guarantee" – wrote Bidault to Marshall on April 13th – but "I insist on the need to study the possibilities of concrete, rapid military assistance",³³ concluded the head of the Quai d'Orsay, fully aware that it was impossible for France to confront alone a Soviet aggression that would overwhelm the nation, according to military predictions, within ten days.³⁴

Bonnet, at the Washington Embassy, dedicated all of his energy to following the intricate debate on the two fundamental aspects of the American guarantee: its formula and its extent. The Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak had told him that he believed the American government was seeking a formula from which a guarantee of Art. 51 of the United Nations Charter could be derived. Spaak believed that one factor influencing the Americans' hesitant decision-making was the fear that providing a guarantee only to the Brussels Pact nations would be interpreted by Moscow as a signal that the way was open to launch offensives against the other European nations.³⁵ The same problem had also been discussed by Bonnet with the State Department Adviser Charles Bohlen who, while first stating that his government would have to take into account the obligations deriving from the UNO Charter, favoured a guarantee to the 16 beneficiary nations of the ERP, a solution that would have allowed the United States "not to bind itself to a specific group of countries and simultaneously to strengthen its own security".³⁶

The manoeuvres for squaring the circle as regards the political formula through which the American guarantee was to be expressed were followed with amazement and disappointment in Paris, especially in view of the indefinite extension of the period of uncertainty for the Europeans resulting from this long-drawn-out work. "The policy of a guarantee comparable to the

³³ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 25, dossier 1, telegram by G. Bidault to G. Marshall, Paris, April 13, 1948.

³⁴ Thus the President of the Republic V. Auriol tells of the debate in the Council of Ministers on April 14th: "If we are alone, the battle will last ten days. We must have the support of the United States. The essential thing is military preparation. At this point, Bidault shows me a personal telegram which he has just sent to Marshall signalling the danger and expressing his anxiety about this danger. He requests of him that firm solidarity be shown and that concern be dedicated to military defence". V. Auriol, *Journal du Septennat*, II, 1948, Paris, Colin 1974, p. 177.

³⁵ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 2, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, telegram no. 1559 – 1569, confidential-very urgent, Washington, April 11, 1948. Cf. also P. H. Spaak, *Combats inachevés. I. De l'indépendance à l'Alliance*, Paris, Fayard 1969, pp. 258 ff.

³⁶ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 2, telegram n. 1673, private-confidential, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, April 15, 1948.

Marshall Plan", wrote Chauvel to Bonnet on April 15th, "is a long-term policy, and conflict may erupt in Berlin any day. What interests us, therefore, is much less the political and legal definition of a guarantee than precise indications as to what concerted military action could be taken and what means the allies could rely on in relation to such action". The attention devoted by the American Administration to studies for establishing solidarity with the Europeans "could have a very strong moral effect" as a "deterrent" for any Soviet initiatives. But Washington was still nebulous and vague on too many points. Not only had a formula not yet been found but also – and more important – the State Department still had not decided which European strategy to pursue. There existed, in fact, for the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, "two possible policies" and alternatives: either a policy of concessions to allow the economic, political and military reconstruction of Europe in a climate of détente; or "a consistent policy ... of reacting immediately against all those Soviet initiatives that go beyond a limit to be set".³⁷ Between a policy of appeasement and one of firmness the Americans had not yet finally decided.

"The two policies ... are not contradictory for Washington", stated Bonnet. The United States "is pursuing the economic, political, and eventually military reconstruction of Europe and is at the same time resolved to react immediately against any Soviet initiatives". "Respect for logic", noted the Ambassador sarcastically, "is not always, as you know, a determining element in Anglo-American policy".

However, precisely due to the poor American "capabilities" for protecting the boundaries of the European nations, the Chiefs of Staff "fervently" supported the hypothesis of rearmament for the Western nations. Washington's decision to re-equip its armed forces to create a "solid instrument for the regime of armed peace" would not, in fact, be completely effective for another two years.

As regards the rashness with which the White House had inaugurated its policy of intransigence toward the Soviet Union, Bonnet considered the American policy of "no more concessions" and "non-provocation" to be a difficult one since "the boundary between firmness and provocation was a fragile one, especially with regard to a government as mistrustful as the Russian one". The only cautious step was, in this sense, the continuous and precise clarification that any guarantees of assistance to the European nations were aimed at keeping the peace.³⁸

³⁷ AMAE, série *Papiers d'Agents*, *Papiers Bonnet*, vol. 1, letter by J. Chauvel to H. Bonnet, Paris, April 15, 1948.

³⁸ AMAE, série *Papiers d'Agents*, *Papiers Bonnet*, vol. 1, letter by H. Bonnet to J. Chauvel, Washington, April 17, 1948; also in A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 2.

While this animated correspondence between Chauvel and Bonnet continued, particularly interesting insofar as the Ambassador and the Secretary of the Foreign Ministry confronted problems in a direct style devoid of circumlocutions,³⁹ appeals from the Europeans for a final decision by Washington continued to be heard. On April 17th, Bevin and Bidault again wrote to Marshall, stating that the communication issued at the end of the meeting of the five Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Brussels Pact nations sanctioned their agreement to the organization of an Advisory Council and the opening of military talks. While aware of the fact that "it was necessary to take all measures for preparing our defence", Bevin and Bidault stressed the "need for assistance from the United States effective for the organization of the defence of Western Europe", which, they explained, was in its current condition, incapable of defending itself alone. "It seems imperative that the United States take some initiative or at least inaugurate talks" since, in spite of the difficulties of the American Administration, "if it was wished to lose no further opportunities, thus giving new impetus to international Communism", it was "essential" to proceed with negotiations.⁴⁰

Bonnet and the British Ambassador Inverchapel sent the message not to Marshall, who was in Bogorà, but to the interim Secretary of State, Robert Lovett. The American reply was "disappointing":⁴¹ the State Department asked the five Brussels Pact nations to "aller plus avant"⁴² with the organization of their relations and the coordination of their efforts, reminding them that the American administration, under the terms of the letter of March 17th, was committed to start talks only after a "definition of their intentions in a more complete and detailed form, especially regarding military problems" had been formulated. Lovett did not fail to repeat that the United States intended to proceed on defence problems in the same manner as it had done for economic issues. The only positive note in this "cold shower" was Lovett's statement that, during this stage of waiting for the Europeans to solve their problems, the United States would not abandon its policy of firmness toward the U.S.S.R. and, in case of immediate threat, would be "automatically" involved since any

³⁹ On the eve of his resignation as Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, Chauvel wrote to Bonnet that he had "particularly appreciated our collaboration across the seas. I doubt that it will continue much longer, but I will remember it with great pleasure".

AMAE, série Papiers d'Agents, Papiers Bonnet, vol. 1, J. Chauvel to H. Bonnet, Paris, January 5, 1949.

⁴⁰ AMAE, Série Papiers d'Agents, Papiers R. Massigli, vol. 79, G. Bidault to H. Bonnet, telegram n. 2072, Paris, April 17, 1948; also in A. N., Papiers Bidault, vol. 24, dossier 2.

⁴¹ V. Aurioi, *op. cit.*, II, p. 192.

⁴² *ibid.*

offensive by the Kremlin would inevitably strike at the American troops stationed in Germany.⁴³

This was a real "slap in the face" to French concerns; a slap that was not erased by Marshall's letter of April 22nd, in which he wrote to Bidault that he agreed with the need to establish co-ordinated plans for defence, hoping no doubt existed as to the intentions and the determination of the American government with regard to all that concerned the free nations of Europe.⁴⁴

The United States, commented Bonnet, was convinced that a conflict could have been avoided by letting the Soviet know, simply but clearly, that, if the independence of any of the nations of Western Europe should be threatened, Washington would immediately support that nation.⁴⁵

But this assurance was not enough to relieve the anxiety of the French, who had long been imploring "something concrete". It was Chauvel who explained "what the French were expecting from the Americans", in a long and bitter letter to Bonnet⁴⁶ which started with the following words: "I believe that the American government, regardless of its good intentions and its fast-paced rearming, will be unable for some time to help us hold any line of defence in Europe. For my part, I have had no doubt that this was the position. But they must give us a confirmation, an official one if possible".

Chauvel then went on to other observations, distinguishing between the concept of guarantee and that of assistance, and between the different types of guarantee.

The guarantee should cover the territories of the 16 beneficiary nations of the Marshall Plan, to which were to be added the occupied zones of Germany. Thus it should not be limited to the five Brussels Pact nations. "I wonder whether the fact of having accepted the plan of assistance should be considered as an element that already establishes a certain solidarity between debtors and creditors, solidarity that could manifest itself on the occasion of any obstacle opposed to the functioning of the Plan by a power foreign to the group. I will have a study carried out on this".

This formula seemed preferable both because it implied a common acknowledgement by the parties involved of their solidarity with the United States — and was therefore not a unilateral declaration by Washington —

⁴³ A. N., Papiers Bidault, vol. 24, dossier 2, confidential telegram ns. 1713 — 1725, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, April 19, 1948.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, telegram ns. 1784 — 1785, secret, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, April 22, 1948.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, telegram ns. 1781 — 1783, confidential, top secret, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, April 22, 1948.

⁴⁶ AMAE, Série Papiers d'Agents, Papiers Bonnet, vol. 1, letter by J. Chauvel to H. Bonnet, Paris, April 22, 1948.

and because the Marshall Plan was an economic instrument potentially utilisable by all; consequently, an acknowledgement of solidarity would have positive effects without arousing aggressive images. Certainly, it had to be taken into account that some reluctance among the Swiss or the Scandinavians might be encountered but, noted Chauvel, "we can try".

There existed another form of guarantee that had been relegated to second place due to tension with the U.S.S.R.: the guarantee against Germany. It was important that "the concern for a guarantee against the Russians" did not eclipse the need for a guarantee against Germany.

As regards assistance, on the other hand, the United States wanted the five Brussels Pact nations to make precise proposals before initiating talks with Washington. "It is a choice of method" observed Chauvel; "the important thing is to be agreed upon the method to follow". However, Washington was perhaps unaware of the fact that the conclusions of the signers of the Brussels Pact would be exclusively theoretical without American assistance. Such assistance would have to cover "this narrow peninsula of which France represents the outermost point" and would involve the security of the United States from at least three points of view: the availability of a starting point for reconquering the Continent; keeping the Ruhr basin in Western hands (if the Ruhr had fallen into Soviet hands, it would have turned the balance of power heavily in favour of the Kremlin); and keeping control of the oil deposits of the Arab world.

On the basis of these three elements, it was necessary to hypothesize two fronts: the first was designed to cover the Ruhr – and the Brussels Pact represented its basis; the second would instead follow the Northern frontiers of Turkey and Iran. As regards the constitution of this second front, "nothing had been done". In spite of American intervention in Greece, in the Palestine affair, in Turkey, in Iran, and in spite of the British bases in Kenya and Cyrenaica, the French did not consider that a concerted Anglo-American strategy for defence in that sector had been established. The defence of the Middle East presupposed the "maitrise" of the Mediterranean coastline and especially of North Africa, in which the United States was greatly interested. The system to be established would therefore cover all of the Mediterranean and, "if things are done well", France would be an essential element in the scheme. It was thus evident that the United States-Great Britain-France triad urgently needed to establish a concerted strategy for planning and implementing the defence of the Eastern "cul de sac", a task delegated to them "given the assembly of *avengles, bornes et de paralytiques*" inhabiting those areas.

It was within this system that Italy should be integrated, both because of her geographical situation, projecting into the Mediterranean theatre and not

into that of Central Europe, and because of the resistance of Benelux to any plans for extending the Brussels Pact to the peninsula.

"I believe", continued Chauvel, "and the Minister agrees with me, that in this field France should take an initiative" and that "she should act in this direction without waiting too long, since events are swift and ideas circulate rapidly", with the resulting risk that the project might slip out of the hands of French diplomacy. The prospects for success seemed encouraging. Quaroni had reported to Chauvel that several Americans passing through Rome had proposed the idea of two pacts, one for the Northern front and one for the Mediterranean front, suggesting that France act as "hinge" between the two systems: "Precisely what I have in mind", concluded Chauvel.⁴⁷

The Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry expressed his thought to the Ambassador to London René Massigli, informing him of his proposal for a Mediterranean system that would include Italy, forming a front "from Iran to Gibraltar" which, in case of conflict, would support the Northern front formed by the Brussels Pact nations and possibly the Scandinavian states.⁴⁸

From Washington, however, Bonnet warned that the State Department, "in its current state of mind", would be unable to propose a hypothesis for a Mediterranean Pact "with any chance of being listened to". Not because the American General Staff was not "fervently" interested in the fate of the Middle East – especially in the light of the strategic value of the sector – but because a guarantee to the Mediterranean would make it impossible for the United States to deny any accusation of "encirclement" made by Moscow. For this reason the hypothesis did not arouse great enthusiasm among the Americans, who were, moreover, exasperatingly slow, in French eyes, with regard to the idea of Euro-American talks.

⁴⁷ On the same day H. Bonnet wrote a personal letter to V. Auriol. The Ambassador insisted that "the opinion in American governing circles was that war was not going to break out ... they believed that the strength of America and her industrial might constituted a serious guarantee of peace. At the same time, while strictly applying a policy of 'firmness', they were making sure that it was free from provocation. In any case, the Americans accepted the risks inherent to that attitude, in spite of what could have been, at the current stage, the consequences for their allies". The Europeans thus had to take their "precautions". "First of all, the pacts concluded or to be concluded would have preventative value only under two conditions: that they were translated into a real strengthening of the parties involved and that their purpose, that of keeping the peace, was understood by all, even by those who could have ignored it." Europe's interest, concluded the Ambassador, lay in contributing to facilitate détente so that the work of economic reconstruction could be successfully completed.

AMAE, *serie Papiers d'Agents*, Papiers Bonnet, vol. 1, personal letter by H. Bonnet to V. Auriol, Washington, April 22, 1948.

⁴⁸ AMAE, *serie Papiers d'Agents*, Papiers Massigli, vol. 95, note by J. Chauvel to R. Massigli, Paris, April 29, 1948.

⁴⁹ A. N., *Séne Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 2, confidential telegram n. 1870, H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, April 3, 1948.

"The problem was always the same: when would the Americans decide?" wrote Massigli in early May.⁵⁰ The Ambassador was by no means reassured. The United States was engaged in Europe "in an imprudent policy that could provoke brutal reactions one day or the other" while the Administration was still groping through a political-legal labyrinth from which no exit had yet been found. This was an irresponsible policy implemented by Washington, based on the "trust that the Americans have in their star and in their political genius". But this faith, observed Massigli, had not been sufficient in the past to keep them from making mistakes. "And now we will be the ones to pay for the mistakes". Making the picture even gloomier was the realization of the scant trust placed by the United States in its French partner, especially "on the level of discretion". The Americans still feared "the presence of the friends of Moscow in our services" and were inclined "by preference" towards an accord with Great Britain, in a further confirmation of that Anglo-American "club" to which France had long been applying for admission.

It was not merely the difficulty in finding a formula acceptable to the Congress that kept Washington from taking a stance. To the hesitations of the American government, Bonnet reported, were added the objections of the military leaders. In a conversation with the French Ambassador, the Chief of Staff of the Army, Bradley, had stated that there were three great problems: the reconstruction of Europe; co-operation between the United States and the Western Union and an American guarantee to the signers of the Brussels Pact; and the supplying of arms to the Allies. Bradley, after laying stress on the "personal and friendly" nature of the conversation, had said that if there were no difficulties concerning the first aspect — since the European states would be able to rebuild their military power only when economic prosperity and industrial strength increased — the other two instead posed delicate problems. American adherence to the Brussels Pact would be considered an aggressive move by Moscow, to which the Kremlin would feel compelled to respond. Similarly, any true European rearmament financed by America would provoke a Soviet reaction. At any rate, it would be impossible, since American industry was not ready to fulfill the needs of the European nations. Bradley also stated that the American army was prepared to furnish aid to the allies but that its support would "lack effectiveness" in the aircraft field.

What conclusion could be drawn from these indications? Bonnet believed that the military leaders were in agreement with the governmental policy of firmness and "non-provocation", but he stressed the difficulty of the task facing the American Administration, for which the concession of a guarantee to Europe represented the "bouleversement" of long-standing political tradi-

⁵⁰ AMAE, Papiers d'Agents, Papiers Massigli, letter by R. Massigli to J. Chauvel, London, May 3, 1948.

tion. "It was not yet possible to see exactly what would be the nature of the solution proposed", concluded the Ambassador. It was however essential that it strengthen European security without heightening tension with the U.S.S.R., thus inaugurating a period of détente that would allow the normal economic recovery of Europe.⁵¹

A turnaround in American policy was to take place shortly thereafter with the presentation of the Vandenberg Resolution to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate on May 19th. Five days before, on the 14th, the interim Secretary of State Lovett had authorized Ambassador Jefferson Caffery to "emphasize to Bidault that we are not thinking and have never thought in terms of 'guarantees' but in terms of practical concrete measures to consolidate the security of Western Europe".⁵² On the next day Caffery showed the document relevant to the Vandenberg motion to Chauvel. The Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, to whom the American diplomat had delivered Lovett's message, stated that the signals coming from Washington were encouraging but that the French continued to be alarmed. From the latest information of the Washington Embassy, it appeared that a close correlation could be seen between the assistance of the United States and the rhythm of its rearming. It could be predicted, therefore, that only in the long term would military supplies from overseas arrive in Europe. Consequently, Europe was in the short term unprotected against possible Russian reactions, especially in relation to developments in the German issue.⁵³

A new element of tension was now beginning to disturb relations between the United States and France. Conversations between the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and the American Ambassador to Moscow Walter Bedell Smith seemed to announce, in the Soviet version, a new policy from Washington, tending to seek for direct accord with the Kremlin, i. e., abandonment by the State Department of its "European policy". But the United States managed to soothe the anxiety of the Europeans, who had been unpleasantly "surprised" by this sudden initiative of American diplomacy.⁵⁴

It was in a climate of mutual incomprehension that, in July, the French and Americans began to discuss, along with their partners the British, the Canadians and the three Benelux nations, a pact designed to guarantee the security of the West. In the meetings held in Washington the difference of opinion between the Quai d'Orsay and the State Department became very

⁵¹ A. N., Papiers Bidault, vol. 24, dossier 3, secret telegram from H. Bonnet to G. Bidault, Washington, May 3, 1948.

⁵² FRUS, 1948, III, p. 151.

⁵³ A. N., Papiers Bidault, vol. 24, dossier 3, note by the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry on the Caffery-Chauvel conversation, Paris, May 15, 1948.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, vol. 25, dossier 1, G. Bidault to O. Harvey, Paris, May 20, 1948.

clear, especially as regards the formula and time schedule for preparing European defence and for extending the area covered by the security system.

The State Department focused on drawing up a long-term treaty of alliance, within which the question of rearming the European nations would be confronted and resolved. The French repeated that the Soviet threat was too menacing and too imminent to allow further delay in the American decision to supply military aid to her European allies. The French government was interested primarily in obtaining supplies as soon as possible, while it was much more luke-warm over the question of political involvement, which would find application only in the mid- and long-term. The State Department Adviser Charles Bohlen stated, to the French chargé d'affaires Armand Bérard, who was stressing the discrepancy between Washington and Paris on this aspect, that it would be difficult to persuade Congress to authorize sending supplies to the Brussels Pact nations, a measure that would respond only in part to the problems of European security; and moreover, the United States did not possess any surplus material to be put immediately at the disposal of the Europeans.⁵⁵

On July 17th a note from the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay drew up a first balance sheet of the Washington talks, stressing that "from the French point of view the concrete support of North America was more important than the aspect of an American guarantee, in spite of the psychological value of the latter". It was then pointed out that Canada and the United States envisaged a regional pact of Atlantic solidarity which would include the Scandinavian nations, Iceland and Greenland rather than Italy and Portugal. This would have implied a shifting westwards and northwards of the centre of gravity of mutual assistance.⁵⁶

At the meeting held on July 20th, Bonnet insistently returned to the question of the difficult position of France, which "had to solve immediate problems in regard to which a long-term pact would be ineffective. France wanted military supplies immediately and needed some form of insurance for that very day". France, explained Bonnet, was the nation which was the prime candidate for being the first Western victim in case of Soviet aggression. The French people did not feel that the American troops stationed in Europe represented a sufficient guarantee for their safety; the French wanted tanks and military supplies.

To Lovett it was obvious that, for the French, the rearmament of their nation held top priority over all other issues under discussion. In addition,

Bonnet did not believe in the argument opposed by the Americans to his request, namely, that there existed no American surplus to be sent to France.⁵⁷

The state of extreme tension in Franco-American relations fully emerged in the statements made by Bidault at the Hague conference on the 19th and 20th of July. "Up to now", Bidault stated, "the Washington talks have been nebulous, as are the designs of the American Administration at times. The impression gained by the French government is the following: the United States intends to apply the Vandenberg Resolution; it is favourable to military assistance under the form of lend-lease; in a pre-electoral period, the USA does not want to take on commitments that could prejudice the decisions of Congress, insisting on the commitments already assumed by the Marshall Plan and by American rearmament and on the difficulty of assuming any others ... The current attitude of the American Administration is, to a certain degree, in contradiction with the positions previously held by accredited representatives of the United States ... Let us not forget that we have been encouraged to stipulate the Brussels Pact, that they have asked us for a demonstration that Western Europe is willing to defend itself alone, that we have kept General Marshall informed by telegraph as to the stipulation of a pact with which we assume certain risks in virtue, it could almost be said, of certain American promises." Today, instead, "the U.S.A. seems much more interested in its own defence and it is not our place to encourage this trend by giving it the means to placate the American conscience at a bargain price. The French government assigns only relative importance to the formal aspect of the planned guarantees. It is instead extremely interested in the concrete means of defence that will be put at our disposal, because the risks we are running are primarily military risks".

Bidault then called for "prudence"; prudence in evaluating the seriousness of American foreign policy, dangerously fickle and inconstant; prudence, as a consequence, in evaluating the reliability of the Atlantic Pact as well. "I fear that such a proposal" continued the head of the Quai d'Orsay, "as substitute for more concrete support, will have the result, if we accept it too easily, of reassuring and satisfying the American conscience". "This Atlantic Pact of which we are speaking" he continued "is a mythological animal, a unicorn; no text has been submitted to us. Before assuming solemn commitments we have to know exactly what they have in mind". It was therefore necessary to "take great care not to discourage the United States and not to give it the impression that we have taken its suggestions in bad part, which could offend its feelings ... The French Ambassador to Washington sends us information in which the French spirit of logic and systematic thought is able to impose a

⁵⁵ *FRUS*, 1948, III, p. 208.

⁵⁶ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 24, dossier 3, Note by the Secretary General, top secret, Paris, July 17, 1948.

⁵⁷ *FRUS*, 1948, III, p. 218.

certain order; but reading the complete compte-rendus leaves an impression of confusion and even of rambling vacuity. It would be an excellent thing if we could see more clearly".⁵⁸

The need to do something concrete – the foremost element in the French approach to the problems of security – was now added, in the negotiations stage, to the call for clarity in the formulas. The formula proposed by the Americans, for defence organized along the lines of the 1947 Rio Treaty, would probably not arouse objections in the Senate, stated Hickerson. But Bérard, the French delegate to the Working Group, replied that a pact that did not provide immediate assistance would have no chance at all of being ratified by France.⁵⁹

Between the European preference for a simple, binding formula such as that of Art. 4 of the Brussels Treaty and the United States' desire to use the Rio Pact as a model for its involvement in the defence of Europe, a compromise was finally found, expressed in the Washington Paper of September 10th. By that date, the delicate issue of immediate French rearmament had been resolved. The insistence of the French government on this matter had risked exasperating the Americans, but had finally been successful. Faced with the blackmail of a threat to abandon the negotiations, the United States yielded, agreeing to equip three French divisions on German territory.⁶⁰

But both the Washington Paper of September 10th and the Draft Treaty of December left unresolved the problem of Italy's adherence to the Pact, a problem of exceptional importance for French diplomacy.

On December 29th the governments involved were presented with the preliminary text of the treaty. At the Council of Ministers of January 12th, the Foreign Minister Schuman, who had succeeded Bidault the previous July, illustrated the content of the pact, emphasizing that, although the text might be acceptable, there still remained two problems to be solved: the admission of Italy and the coverage of North Africa. These were two questions of capital importance for Paris. Ramadier insisted to Schuman that maximum firmness should be shown over the protection of French North Africa. The Minister of Defence declared that he "could not conceive how it was possible to assume a commitment to Alaska and not see the interest of the pact concerning the North African territories".⁶¹ To this paradox, the French diplomats were to

⁵⁸ AMAE, Série Papiers d'Agents Papiers Massigli, vol. 79.

⁵⁹ FRUS, 1948, III, pp. 207–218.

⁶⁰ Cf. L. S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO. The Formative Years*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 1984, p. 81.

⁶¹ V. Aurioi, *op. cit.*, III, 1949, p. 9.

As early as 1947, however, Bonnet had been warning that the Arctic region was considered by the United States to be the country's "new frontier". AMAE, série Y Internationale 1944–1949, vol. 11, telegram n. 1228, Washington, June 9, 1947.

return frequently. The Embassy Adviser at Washington, Armand Bérard, who represented France on the permanent committee of experts studying the Atlantic Pact project, tells in his memoirs how he received instructions to have the entire African Maghreb included in the protected area but, in the face of the resistance encountered, France was obliged to limit its demands to Algeria alone. Bérard warned however that the compliance shown by his government in regard to Tunisia and Morocco would not be repeated for Algeria: "This was a minimum and ... on this point, France would not yield". "The departments of Algeria were constitutionally a part of France. How could the latter accept entering a pact in which they were amputated? Parliament would not ratify it". And again: "How could Algeria be excluded when Alaska was included within the sphere of application of the treaty?"⁶²

The problem of including the three Algerian departments in the area protected by the security system was closely correlated to the question of Italy's adherence to the pact. At the end of December 1948 a confidential, top secret telegram sent by the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay to the Ambassadors in Washington and in Rome stated that France would have to "formally recommend Italy's participation", "the more so since it seemed that if Italy were not included in the treaty, the Anglo-American powers would hesitate to include French North Africa among the territories guaranteed against all aggression".⁶³ The Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Chauvel affirmed without hesitation, in his memoirs, the "instrumental" character of France's support of Italy: the adherence of the latter to the pact would make the French request on Algeria consistent and logical, and would also have shifted the barycenter of the alliance toward the Mediterranean, allowing France to "place herself at the centre of the system and not, as originally foreseen, on the outskirts".⁶⁴

The debate over Italian participation and over the inclusion of Algeria absorbed the energies of French diplomatic and political circles. Early in the year, a note from the Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay addressed to the Minister stressed how, with agreement already reached, the two problems risked becoming the proverbial banana skins for the final stage of negotiations.⁶⁵ France vigorously defended the immediate inclusion of Italy for reasons of a political and strategic nature (strengthening the Rome government;

⁶² A. Bérard, *Un ambassadeur se souvient*. Vol. II, *Washington et Bonn 1945–1955*, Paris, Plon 1978, pp. 181–182.

⁶³ AMAE, Série Z Europe, sous-série Généralités 1944–1949, vol. 25, telegram n. 5668–5670 (Embassy in Washington); ns. 1564–1566 (Embassy in Rome), Paris, December 23, 1948.

⁶⁴ J. Chauvel, *Commentaire*, vol. II, *D'Alger à Berne (1944–1952)*, Paris, Fayard 1972, p. 208.

⁶⁵ A. N., Papiers Bidault, vol. 26, dossier 1, note by J. Chauvel to the Minister, Paris, January 7, 1949.

covering the French South-eastern border), but this hypothesis met with only lukewarm agreement from Washington and Ottawa, and decided opposition from London. The Americans themselves, who at the time of Marras' visit⁶⁶ to Washington had seemed willing to support the possible candidature of Italy, had become uncertain and hesitant. Faced with these difficulties, it was stated in the note, Paris could accept, as subordinate to the hypothesis of Italy's immediate adherence, the maintaining of contacts with the Rome government.

Such elasticity was not conceivable for Algeria. "It would be absolutely impossible for any French government to assume a commitment in the Arctic without covering, at the same time, the whole of our metropolitan territory, in Africa as in Europe". The instructions sent to Bonnet ordered the Ambassador to "make the United States understand that, if not Tunisia and Morocco, at least Algeria should be covered by the security system". If the partners opposed objections, it would be preferable to omit from the treaty any specific geographic limitations, merely establishing commitments of a general nature. The reasons of policy, both internal and international, and of strategy involved in the Algerian issue were too important — concluded the note — to allow France to be flexible on this point.

The question of Italy, however, was soon to change aspect. On January 12th the government in Rome made an official request to participate in the pact and the United States, with Hickerson as its spokesman, expressed their support for this request on January 18th.

For the Quai d'Orsay, there existed four formulas for extending the pact to Italy. Briefly summarized, these can be stated as follows: Italy, Greece and Turkey could be the subject of a declaration published at the moment in which the Atlantic Pact was signed (British hypothesis); Italy would be admitted as an original member (French, and partially American, hypothesis, but Washington requested the simultaneous adherence of Italy to the Brussels Treaty or to the Council of Europe); Italy would accede simultaneously to the Brussels

⁶⁶ On Marras' trip to Washington, cf. L. Nuri, "La missione Marras, 2-22 dicembre 1948", *Storie delle relazioni internazionali*, II (1987/2), pp. 343-368.

On December 17 and 21, Marras met with P. Billotte, who then reported to the Quai d'Orsay that he had found the Italian General "very likeable" and grateful to France for the support given Rome by the government in Paris in regard to the colonial issue. AMAE, *Serie Papiers d'Agents Papiers Bonnet*, letter by P. Billotte to H. Bonnet, New York, Dec. 23, 1948. The Foreign Minister Schuman held Billotte's opinions in great esteem. On December 25th he wrote a personal letter to Bonnet stating that "the presence of General Billotte, who is in permanent contact with the American General Staff as regards technical and strategic problems, should be profited by during the negotiations. I therefore believe, 'he wrote', that I must advise you to convoke Billotte and consult him on all military aspects of the pact. He will certainly be highly useful to you". AMAE, *Serie Papiers d'Agents Papiers Bonnet*, vol. 1, letter by R. Schuman to H. Bonnet, Paris, Dec. 25, 1948.

Treaty and to the Atlantic Pact (a solution that was objectionable to the Benelux nations and to Great Britain, which did not desire Italian participation on the permanent military committee — France would approve this solution); Italy could enter the Council of Europe immediately and the Atlantic Pact subsequently (the French objection was relevant only to the uncertainty of the "date of birth" of the European organization).⁶⁷

At the beginning of February the problem became more complicated. With the progress in Atlantic negotiations, Stalin had asked Norway, on January 29th, for information on her position after the failure of the plan for a Scandinavian Pact to unite Norway to Denmark and Sweden, a plan swiftly shipwrecked on the shoals of the Stockholm government's neutralist policy. Norway, after this failure, stated her intention of adhering to the Atlantic Pact. When on February 5th Moscow proposed to her a pact of non-aggression, it was already too late. On the next day, February 6th, talks between Acheson and the Norwegian Foreign Minister Harald Lange were to begin.

This extension of coverage to the Scandinavian region was viewed with a certain alarm by Paris. "The Americans, in my opinion, are making a mistake", wrote Auriol in his diary; "their desire to set up a barrier against Russia is really going too far, and this takes the form of an encirclement that risks being highly dangerous in its political consequences".⁶⁸ Schuman instead interpreted the problem on the basis of much more "French" co-ordinates. The Foreign Minister informed his colleagues, during the Council of Ministers held on March 2nd, of America's decision to admit Norway to discussion of the Atlantic Pact and of the "suggestions" that had been given him not to oppose this. But, declared the head of the Quai d'Orsay, "there is Italy and she has a promise. Now the United States say that this is not the right moment and that they will talk about it after the signing. This puts Italy in a delicate situation, impairs her prestige but above all, for military reasons, harms French interests". If Norway were admitted to the Pact and Italy excluded, there would be a shift in the balance of forces; thus it was "the French interest that was at stake".⁶⁹

Moreover, a completely satisfying reply from the Americans was still lacking on the Algerian issue. The situation was resolved expressly due to the intransigence of Paris. Bonnet declared that France would oppose the inclusion of Norway unless Italy's candidature were accepted. The official version from the French government explained that Paris was not opposed as a general principle to including the Nordic nations, although it considered this to be

⁶⁷ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 26, dossier 1, note from the Secretary General to the Minister, top secret, Paris, Jan. 19, 1949.

⁶⁸ V. Auriol, *op. cit.*, III, p. 113.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, March 2, 1949.

much less important than the adherence of Italy. The problem, already broached several times, had never before been stated in such final terms. Bonnet's daring remarks provoked a strong reaction from Washington; it was precisely the threats to Norway that put an end to American hesitation. The United States could not allow the loss of significance from a pact which, precisely because it was Atlantic, should naturally include the Scandinavian nations.⁷⁰ On the other hand, explained a note from the French Foreign Minister, "it would be difficult for France to understand that Italy should not participate in the Atlantic Pact while Norway, for example, became a member."⁷¹

Intransigence was a successful tactic. On March 2, 1948, Dean Acheson, who had replaced Marshall as Secretary of State in February, explained to Truman that the French had threatened to withdraw from the alliance if their requests on Algeria and Italy were not accepted. Truman capitulated, thus awarding Paris a great diplomatic victory.⁷²

The atmosphere in Franco-American relations seemed to have become more serene, but the recent storm had left a trail of tension in its wake. The French were beginning to assess more carefully the commitments that adherence to the Atlantic Pact entailed for their nation, and debate was opened on some points that seemed particularly intricate. On March 3rd the "Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale" made public the final document on the study that had been carried out as a thorough investigation of the Atlantic Pact. In this document, it was stressed that the defensive pact of alliance should contain clauses of a strictly military nature; it should not be "an exclusively political instrument, but be 'armed and armour-plated'". It should be able to guarantee "a) the effective defence of Europe through methods appropriate to all circumstances; b) material and financial aid allowing programmes for national rearmament to be carried out; c) unification of armaments and the working out of a common strategy". "Our policy", it was emphasized, "should be aimed at keeping 'our soil inviolate', because, if France should be subjected to a new invasion and a new foreign occupation, the Americans, after such a cataclysm, would find only a cadaver to liberate". American caution, which had been expressed in the rejection of any automatic commitment, was the subject of deep reflection. Two possibilities were seen: "Either the United States is willing to participate immediately in fighting on

⁷⁰ Cf. I. M. Wall, *L'influence américaine sur la politique française, 1945-1954*, Paris, Balland 1989, p. 212.

⁷¹ AMAE, Série Z Europe 1944-1949, sous-série Généralités, vol. 25, circular n. 69 of the Service d'Information et de Presse, March 3, 1949.

⁷² Cf. D. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, Hamish Hamilton, London 1969, p. 278; I. M. Wall, *cit.*, p. 213.

the European Continent, sending ground and airborne means; and then it would be possible for France to accept total solidarity; or the Americans cannot intervene immediately, and then Soviet troops would flood over the country up to the Pyrenees and perhaps as far as Gibraltar within a brief span of time". Since the government in Washington had refused to guarantee, on paper, that its intervention would be automatic, France should be allowed the right to express her co-operation, in case of aggression not involving her directly, in non-military forms. The hypothesis that seemed most acceptable was that of French non-belligerence since, it was explained, "an ally without means is more dangerous than a non-belligerent; history supplies numerous examples".

As regards the area covered by the security system, it was important "to strengthen Continental influence" to allow France and the Benelux nations to be able, in case of aggression, to rely on "substantial arrières". These "arrières" consisted of the Iberian peninsula and Italy. It was therefore necessary "given the gravity of the situation" for Paris to normalize its relations with Madrid as soon as possible, passing over the reserve of the Franco regime, since "strategy rules policy". Stress was also placed on the strategic importance of North Africa and the error of extending the protected area to "outlying states" such as Scandinavia and the Middle East.⁷³

If these were the conclusions of the military, they did not differ greatly from those of political circles, which in discussing the "non-automatic" nature of American intervention, painted frightening scenarios for the nation in the event of Soviet attack. "What will happen within the first eight days of a war? What will the armies of the Atlantic Pact do in the first few days?"⁷⁴ the Minister of Defence Ramadier asked Schuman, whose back was against the ropes due to the objections raised during the Council of Ministers on March 7th. To these questions Schuman could only reply evasively, stressing "the moral certainty" of American intervention, which was instead subject to the real uncertainties of the Senate's vote.

The President of the Republic Auriol, already annoyed at not being informed of the negotiations, was open to the confidences of the anxious officials of the Quai d'Orsay. A. Parodi, who on February 2nd had replaced Chauvel as Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, expressed his concern at the traditional "inconstancy" of the Americans (recalling the Mexican War of 1846-1848 and 1916 and the Cuban War of 1898) and at the anti-Communist obsession that had spread like wildfire through Washington. "What worries me most" said Parodi, "is their encirclement of Russia. We must take a firm

⁷³ AMAE, série Z Europe 1944-1949, sous-série Généralités, vol. 25, March 3, 1949, top secret.

⁷⁴ V. Auriol, *op. cit.*, III, p. 146.

stand stating that we consider this pact to be a defensive pact within the sphere of the UNO".⁷⁵

The fear of evoking Soviet reactions; the fear of not having obtained sufficient guarantees for the security of the nation; the persistence of a certain "méfiance" toward the American ally, too Manichean in its interpretation of international events and too childish in its reactions — these were the elements for reflection which engaged the politicians and attracted the attention of public opinion. While, by this time, at the Hôtel Matignon, the Elysée and the Quai d'Orsay, the advantages of neutralism were no longer proclaimed, there were still those who, considering the uncertainty of American intervention, pointed to the need for further study of this hypothesis. Professor Etienne Gilson, of the Académie Française, became the spokesman for this proposal. On March 2nd, in an article published in *Le Monde*, Gilson emphasized that the American refusal to fight in Europe — "a perfectly understandable decision" — should be matched by "our right to refuse to sacrifice ourselves for the United States". Neutrality for Europe was not inconceivable, continued Gilson, "as long as it was armed neutrality". In case of invasion, the nation would not defend itself any worse, isolated and without a treaty, than it would isolated and with a treaty of assistance which failed to provide assistance. The chances that the nation will be invaded will not be greater, but less". Therefore, he concluded, "Let us confess that this is one more reason not to reject (neutrality) without having examined it".⁷⁶

Gilson's article aroused sharp controversy. But to the statement made by M. Ferro, who pointed out that, for the United States, the Atlantic Pact was an instrument for preventing another invasion of France,⁷⁷ Gilson replied unperturbed that "the problem was not the good faith of the President, but the opinion of the Senate".⁷⁸

To the objections of cultural circles were added the cautious, prudent, if not actually negative, evaluations of the pact made by the military. On March 23rd Billotte was still writing that he was "troubled and concerned" about the Atlantic Pact, and suggested that "before the initialling and the signing of the treaty" the French should obtain from the Americans the drawing up of a common strategy that would assign absolute priority to European defence. If the Americans should not agree to this point, the French position would have to be "reconsidered".⁷⁹ The French Minister of Defence was no less

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁷⁶ E. Gilson, "L'alternative", *Le Monde*, March 2, 1949.

⁷⁷ M. Ferro, "On précise à Washington la portée et les conséquences du Pacte Atlantique", *Le Monde*, March 4, 1949.

⁷⁸ E. Gilson, "L'équivoque", *Le Monde*, March 6-7, 1949.

⁷⁹ A. N., *Papiers Bidault*, vol. 26, dossier 1, letter by P. Billotte, New York, March 23, 1949.

critical, as within the same period he wrote to General Revers that American military assistance would not safeguard France from possible occupation.⁸⁰ To this discontent in political and military circles there was added, obviously, ferocious criticism from the Communist Party.⁸¹

To the outside world however, the French government showed itself firmly consistent in defending the Atlantic choice. The "Service d'information et de presse" of the Quai d'Orsay prepared a document specifying the ways in which it was possible to rebut, point by point, the arguments in opposition to the Atlantic Pact.⁸² Aurioi defended the validity of the formula in a speech delivered on March 10th at a dinner given in his honour by the regional newspapers' syndicate.⁸³ Schuman ended his speech broadcast over the radio on March 18, 1949⁸⁴ by stating that "it was with a clear conscience that the French government would sign and propose to Parliament for ratification this instrument of peace and security", and the treaty was analyzed article by article at the press conference held on March 23rd.⁸⁵ On the eve of his departure for the United States, the Foreign Minister spoke of the pact as "a guarantee of peace and security". "The historical event that will take place on April 4th", he continued, "will express the will of the free peoples to preserve their common civilization and to work to build a more fraternal world. Our peaceable force must banish fear and the risks that fear has aroused".⁸⁶

At his return from the United States the tone was, if possible, even more enthusiastic: "The Atlantic Pact represents for France a historic act of incalculable significance, much more important than the Briand-Kellogg Pact,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Ministry of National Defence to General Revers, March 21, 1949, nr. 91 DN//SR, secret, confidential.

⁸¹ Especially in relation to the "peace offer" of Stalin who on January 30th had stated that he was ready for a declaration by the Soviet Union and the United States rejecting war which would be a prelude to final disarmament. Cf. *L'Humanité*, January 31, 1949 ("Importantes déclarations de Staline sur les relations entre l'Union Soviétique et les Etats Unis" and P. Courrade, "Pièces en mains"), February 21, 1949 ("Ceux qui préparent la guerre" and A. Garrel, "Le choix de M. Bidault"), February 23, 1949 ("Une déclaration capitale de Maurice Thorez").

Again on the Soviet peace offensive cf. "L'offre du Kremlin", *Le Monde*, February 1, 1949, "Les violentes accusations de l'Urss contre la France et l'Angleterre sont dénuées de fondement", *L'auube*, January 31, 1949. Bidault replied to the criticism of *L'Humanité* of February 21 from the pages of *L'auube* ("Le 'collabo' de Staline", February 22, 1949).

⁸² AMAE, Série Z Europe, 1944-1949, sous-série Généralités, vol. 26, Service d'Information et de Presse, March 19, 1949.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Service d'Information et de Presse, Circular no. 81, March 11, 1949.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Service d'Information et de Presse, circular no. 95, March 24, 1949.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, circular no. 101, March 30, 1949.

because it adapts itself to the facts, leaving to each member nation its own sovereignty and independence".⁸⁷

It was with a speech reflecting these thoughts that Schuman persuaded the National Assembly on July 25th to grant its authorization for ratification of the pact. After a hardfought debate, the final result was an overwhelming majority of favourable votes (395). The 189 opposing votes were cast by the Communists (168), the Progressives (8); the members of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (6); to which were added 4 representatives from the MTLD, 2 from the MRP and one from the UDI.⁸⁸

Although these numbers speak clearly, they do not tell all. They fail to reveal either the survival of strong neutralist tendencies in internal public opinion, or the scarce trust placed by a vast number of French citizens in their overseas partner. For example, interesting data emerge from the results of public opinion polls carried out between 1952 and 1957. In 1952, 45% of those interviewed replied to the question "In case of war between the Soviet Union and the United States, whose side should France take?" by stating their preference for neutrality (in answer to the same question, formulated in 1957, the percentage was to rise to 62%). "In case of war, would France be able to rely on the United States?" was another question in the survey; and 37% of those interviewed replied "up to a certain point".⁸⁹

The French partner was an insecure and anxious one; often loth to accept American "patronage", to admit subalternation to Washington, and marked by outbursts of dignity and grandeur whose effects were almost always disastrous.

And the history of relations between France and the United States in the Fifties tells of minor and major crises, of the vigour with which Paris defended the margins of autonomy not engulfed by the Atlantic framework.

⁸⁷ AMAE, Série B Amérique 1944-1952, sous-série Eats-Unis, vol. 120, April 19, 1949.

⁸⁸ "Année Politique", 1949, pp. 390-7. Cf also mrs. 1090 and 1142 of *Documentation Française*, of March 10 and June 2, 1949 respectively.

⁸⁹ Cited in J. B. Duroselle, *La France et les Eats-Unis des origines à nos jours*, Paris, Seuil 1976, pp. 195-6.

The Other "German Question". The Foundation of the Atlantic Pact and the Problem of Security against Germany

by Norbert Wiggerhaus

I.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the "German Question", the question of the chances of reunification of the two German states, is still a subject of great political debate, with bilateral, domestic and foreign policy implications. In this debate, a factor frequently underestimated is the fact that this complex subject has been closely intertwined, although in different forms, with the international order, and it has often been overlooked in recent times, how strongly the question of an emerging German nation-state affected in many ways foreign interests and the European balance of power since it first appeared at the beginning of the 19th century.¹

The "German Question" as a problem for the other powers took shape together with the awakening national movements in the resistance against Napoleon's "Grand Empire".² Although the revolutionary attempt to create a

¹ A wide range of recent scientific literature seeks to broaden narrow perspectives. See, i. a., Josef Becker, Andreas Hillgruber (ed.): *Die Deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Referate und Diskussionsbeiträge eines Augsburgs Symposiums* 23. bis 25. September 1981, München 1983; Josef Foschepoth (ed.): *Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage. Deutschland im Widerstreit der Mächte 1945-1952*, Göttingen 1985; Axel Frohn: *Neutralisierung als Alternative zur Westintegration. Die Deutschlandpolitik der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika 1945-1949*, Frankfurt 1985; Michael Stürmer, *Dissonanzen des Fortschritts. Essays über Geschichte und Politik in Deutschland, München 1986*; *Die Deutschlandfrage und die Anfänge des Ost-West-Konflikts 1945-1949*, Berlin 1986; Hans-Georg Ehrhart: *Die „deutsche Frage“ aus französischer Sicht (1981-1987)*, München 1988.

² On this and the subsequent discussion: A. Hillgruber: *Die Deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert - zur Einführung in die nationale und internationale Problemata*, in: Becker/Hillgruber, *Die Deutsche Frage*, pp. 3-15. Abridged version of the paper entitled "Ewiges Dilemma: Die Deutsche Frage. Vom unvollendeten und unvollendbaren deutschen National-