

Political Storm Breaks Out In France

Aug. 13 (NSIPS) — Despite the vacation-induced relative lethargy of the French population, an unprecedented rebellion against the policies of Wall Street and its French valet, President Giscard d'Estaing, is presently under way among Paris political circles, most notably within the Atlanticist camp itself.

There are three major causes for these developments — the frightening spring and early summer drought which destroyed up to 50 per cent of French potato, corn, and other crops, the continued attacks against the French franc, and the recent attempt by Secretary of State Kissinger to blackmail Pakistan into not purchasing a French nuclear plant.

These events, combined with the remarkable demonstration of anti-Atlanticist statesmanship currently given by the minority Prime Minister of Italy, Giulio Andreotti, have had the cumulative impact of forcing a de facto alignment of substantial Atlanticist forces behind the long-standing programmatic proposals of Gaullist pro-development spokesmen such as former Premier Michel Debré — return to a gold-based monetary system, debt moratorium for Third World nations and the drought-stricken French peasants, total independence in the formulation of foreign and defense policies.

The straw that broke the proverbial camel's back was Kissinger's ill-timed blackmail effort this week to prevent Pakistan from buying a nuclear reactor from the French, in the name of the so-called "non-proliferation treaty." Following a

general press uproar about Kissinger's "hypocritical" policy of "commercial protectionism," and the French government's inaction, Prime Minister Chirac was forced to denounce Kissinger's "inadmissible interference" in French affairs. Kissinger himself, who is vacationing in France, had to issue an appeasing statement, promising to organize tri-partite negotiations between Pakistan, France, and the State Department.

No sooner had this storm subsided than Giscard, in the course of a state visit to Gabon, announced that his government would let international currency speculators determine "an objective valuation for the franc." The immediate reaction of large numbers of French capitalist politicians, including most notably members of Giscard's own Independent Republican party, was to call for a return to the gold standard, long advocated by the Gaullists as the only solution to the present ongoing crisis.

Finally, Giscard's refusal to take emergency measures of financial aid to the drought-stricken French peasantry is about to cause the political defection of many peasant-based members of the "presidential majority." Some of Giscard's own previous followers are presently calling for an emergency parliamentary session to deal with the agricultural crisis, in contradiction with the government's stated policy.

In light of this rebellion and the gradual convergence between Gaullists and "soft" Atlanticist layers, a government crisis in the fall becomes inevitable.

On the Agenda:

Moratorium On Peasant Debt

Aug. 13 — In two instances this week alone, members of the presidential Independent Republican party issued calls for declaration of immediate debt moratorium on peasant debt and threatened to split from that party unless immediate emergency measures are taken. RI deputy D'Harcourt from the Calvades region called for the convening of an emergency session of French parliament to discuss the agricultural situation and issued a proposal for a moratorium on peasant debt and tax payments until January 1, 1977, leaving open the possibility for further extension of this measure. In a statement to NSIPS reporters, D'Harcourt expressed his interest in the European Labor Party's Emergency Agricultural program because "I am obviously in something of an anxiety state about the agricultural situation since I'm a rural deputy."

In similar circumstances, an Independent Republican deputy from the Cote D'Or region told NSIPS reporters "I am a deputy from a rural area and a notary and believe me I know what you mean about agriculture. I am going to resign from the Independent Republicans if something is not done about agriculture in France — and when I say quickly, I don't mean the end of September (date of scheduled governmental session for agriculture — ed.). . . . We must return to the gold standard immediately. Otherwise we are going to have the same hell on our hands as they have in Italy. We must get this done now."

The French Communist Party (PCF) this week moved one step closer to adoption of a call for full debt moratorium in France with the announcement of new measures to deal with the agricultural disaster in that country. In addition to earlier measures calling for postponement of all major taxes, interest payments and social charges, as well as a one-year extension on all loans to individual peasants and farmers, the PCF has introduced a call for a "financial moratorium" for the capitalist agro-food industry.

French Peasants Loose Attacks On Giscard

Aug. 13 — Under increasing fire in France for sitting idly by while the franc comes under a massive wave of speculation, French President Giscard d'Estaing made the following comment from Libreville in Gabon according to the Aug. 10 Le Monde:

"France's public finance situation is the best in Europe in 1976 . . . It is after an objective monetary appreciation that the just value of our currency and those of the countries which are linked to it will be established."

But even French Atlanticists do not agree. Le Quotidien de Paris, an Atlanticist Social Democratic daily, carried two articles on Aug. 9 attacking French President Giscard for his responsibility in bringing about the current speculative attacks against the franc and for not having the courage to stand up to pressure from Secretary of State Kissinger who is trying to prevent Pakistan from going ahead with an agreement to purchase a uranium enrichment plant from France.

The following is excerpted from an Aug. 9 Le Quotidien de Paris article entitled "The Franc Targeted":

"Built on sand, the mechanisms which today serve as a monetary system and which France has definitively rallied (to), amplify rather than slow speculative movements. . . . Calling into question international monetary disorder to explain, at least in part, the fall of the franc does not exonerate the French government. First, because only a country whose economy is vulnerable can constitute a target for speculation. Second, because France (notably in Rambouillet) aligned on the U.S. monetary positions, which are in favor of the float. The franc today suffers the consequences."

The following is an excerpt from a front-page editorial in Le Quotidien Aug. 9, entitled, "Kissinger Forbids France's Nuclear Trade":

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"Mr. Kissinger, who often claims to be the descendant of Metternich and Talleyrand, seldom has their finesse: the brutal pressure which he has just applied on his temporary host, Mr. Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, shows that he goes to negotiations as others go to combat. To forbid Pakistan to buy a nuclear plant from France is tantamount to preventing France from selling. Here is an ideal opportunity for our government to reaffirm its independence. . . . The Americans say that we do not demand sufficient guarantees to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms. This is a complicated way of defending (their) commercial positions. . . . Will Mr. Giscard d'Estaing know how to oppose such a diktat?"

The following is an excerpt from an article in the financial daily Les Echos Aug. 9, entitled, "A Decisive Week for the Franc":

"The root of the problem (is) a vague and whimsical economic policy" carried out by the government. "What is in question within the Hexagone (i.e., within France — ed.) as well as without, is France's capacity to fight inflationary pressures. . . . Fundamentally, within and without, it is confidence which is lacking. The economic and social projects of the government appear imprecise and not up to the level of (present) circumstances. . . . Our real problem, that on which the firming up of the franc depends, is not to artificially manipulate our currency but to clean up our production costs and prices."

Atlanticists in the French Socialist Party attacked Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's interference in Franco-Pakistani accords for the construction of a nuclear plant:

Gilles Martinet of the Socialist Party labelled the Kissinger intervention "intolerable" and further indication of the Secretary of State's recourse to "a policy of diktat."

Similarly, Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand issued a call for a "European collective security pact" following two days of discussions with Finnish Social Democratic leaders.

Charles Saint Pret, spokesman for the traditionally fiercely nationalist right wing in France and a collaborator with independent Gaullist Gen. Gallois in the review La Pensee Nationale, issued the following denunciation of Wall Street's plan for a "unified Europe" in the Aug. 12 issue of the nominally Social Democratic daily, Le Quotidien de Paris:

(Unified) Europe will only reinforce the economic and plutocratic Europe which is one of the bastions of American hegemony and will increasingly permit Washington to dominate the Western part of old Europe. (West) Germany serves this policy marvelously: an industrial colossus, this country is (Washington's) best ally, and above all economic partner, but also a diplomatic and military ally, which is justified by its common borders with the East.

But France does not have any contentions with Russia. The quarrel between the Germano-Americans on the one hand and the Russians on the other, does not concern her and she must deal only with her own affairs. Economic Europe is above all a military and political construction; it is Yalta's consecration of the East bloc and the Germano-American bloc which is organized against the east and which makes use of this pretext to reinforce its domination over Mediterranean nations. Thus, we are thrown thirty years in reverse.

Giscard:

"Après Moi, Le Déluge!"

The following are excerpts from an article in Le Point, Aug. 9:

**Giscard d'Estaing:
The New Louis XV?**

Two arm-chairs for the Giscard d'Estaings. Two chairs for the Chiracs: in Brégançon, where Giscard had invited Mr. and Mrs. Chirac to spend the first June weekend "with the family," there was no joking with etiquette. . . . At the table, Giscard and his wife were first served. And at coffee time, on the terrace, the most comfortable seats were reserved for them. . . .

"He takes himself for the King of France," say the Saint-Simons of the Elysée Palace, whereas disconsolate souls are sad to see Giscard devote part of his time to a meticulous modification of the Elysée etiquette rather than to state affairs. . . .

Following the wishes of Giscard, who selects the menus by himself, the superintendent responsible for the service wears tails and striped trousers. Curious conversations are sometimes heard: such and such a politician, still under the effect of his amazement, says that during the luncheon of parliamentary leaders, last May 13, the President talked to him, not of politics, but of the way to seat the husbands of women-ministers at the table. . . .

"Louis XV had also taken in hand the changes of etiquette and ceremonies at Court," recalls one of Giscard's closest collaborators, as if to stress that for two years comparisons between the private department of Giscard and the Beloved King have been increasingly in order. Surprising attraction. In 1974, Giscard, a good specialist of the French XVIII Century, had himself inaugurated a Louis XV exhibit organized in Paris; then he had a portrait of this king (by the Van Leo atelier) hung on the ground floor of the Elysée; like Louis XV, he often goes to Marly, inquires about everything in his "Maison," including the slightest details, and is irritated by his inability to escape his palace as often as he wishes.

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