

Zero options for Europe?

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It was difficult enough to handle first Reagan and star wars, and then Gorbachev and glasnost; but if they join forces, how much room is left for Europe? All those who worry at the same time about European autonomy and Western cohesion, cannot but face the above questions. Europe has come out of the Euromissiles affair victorious — though at the price of serious disagreements — and has not yet had the time to catch her breath. From SDI to Irangate, from Chernobyl to *glasnost*, or from the Reykjavik Summit to the Washington one, she has undergone a series of shocks due to the initiatives of the two superpowers.

How many shocks can Europe survive?

Reagan's and Gorbachev's dynamics have been succeeding each other, relaying and combining. On the contrary, Europeans have reacted with much less initiative and dynamics, and more with a mixture of hope and worry, confusion, partial disorientation and satisfaction. In a word, the behaviour of the Europeans has been much less one of action than one of questions. Why have West European defence experts, particularly in the German Federal Republic, but in other Western countries as well (including France and the USA), been so confused since Reykjavik and the battle over Gorbachev's proposals?

There is no lack of those ready to mock this confusion. For many Americans close to the Reagan administration, the Europeans do not know what they really want. Whether the Americans and the Soviets agree or disagree, they show a permanent tendency to worry. In the case of the zero option, they criticize both the deployment and the removal of the Euromissiles. For a number of old hands in the Alliance, this crisis has always existed, and has never endangered its basic state of health — or at least its chances of

survival. For the greater part of Western opinion, the hopes for detente and disarmament which are above all linked to the person of Gorbachev are such that Europe is, on the other hand, said to be at a historic turning point. Yet more attention is being paid to potential openings than to the dangers inherent to the new situation. This situation is seen as bringing both security and autonomy to Europe; in the short term, it is supposed it will allow the Alliance to transcend the opposition between the American hawks and the European doves, whilst in the long term, it is assumed it will herald in its own replacement in the form of a system which will do away with both nuclear arms and Europe's division into two blocks. Finally, everybody — including most of the Cassandras — considers that if Europeans are not satisfied with defence and detente being based on the balance or co-operation of the two superpowers, then it is their own responsibility to take those initiatives best for their interests.

There is some truth in all of these points of view; none, however, definitely dispels the doubt that this new detente can risk dragging Europe, in the name of disarmament and elimination of ideologies, to a position where it might happily slide into Finlandization. Still a word is needed about the notion that the Europeans do not know what they want, and that they criticize the Americans whatever the latter do. It is perfectly true that they fear both collusion and collision between the giants, and that they reproach the USA with both pulling them into useless and dangerous conflicts, and with negotiating their future with the Soviet Union without consulting them.



Reversal of alliances

Yet beyond these excessive reactions, which see a new Yalta behind all dialogue with the East, and a third world war as the result of any attempt at resistance, surely this double worry is justified by the structure of the present context, as also by the inconsistency of the USA. An Indian proverb says that

when two elephants fight, it is the grass which is destroyed. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, has pointed out that "The same thing happens when two elephants make love". The interests of America's allies on the eastern shore of the Atlantic require neither too radical hostility nor too much intimacy between the superpowers. Europeans fear being the victim of one or the other, and hope that a certain, correct distance between the superpowers will give them a greater margin of action, or the role of intermediary.

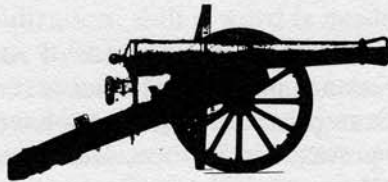
Above all, however, it is history and geography which prohibit the fluctuations that characterize American attitudes. No European head of state can afford, as Carter did, to begin by stigmatizing fear of communism, and end up by declaring that the invasion of Afghanistan had opened his eyes to Soviet behaviour; or, as Reagan did, first to denounce the "Evil Empire" and the illusion that arms could be negotiated, and end up by being attracted to Reykjavik by Gorbachev, and by supporting a revolutionary concept of international security whose implementations would require more confidence and reciprocal co-operation with the USSR than the most optimistic hopes for the supporters of detente in the nineteen seventies.

On the subject of "zero-options"¹ and the presence of American nuclear arms in Europe, European ambivalence is real. But what is really striking is the abrupt change in the American position: Americans have abandoned the supporters of their nuclear presence in Europe, and aligned themselves with those who want both, the GIs and nuclear weapons, out of the Old Continent. Certain Europeans, such as François Mitterrand, and even Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, have applauded the deployment of American Euromissiles (which were a reply to the Soviet SS20s) only to encourage their removal (again, in reply to the removal of the SS20s). Although rather static and mechanical, this was in line with a logical conception of balance at all levels. Others, such as Raymond Barre, have less logically discovered the importance of Euromissiles only once they were doomed, first criticizing Mitterrand for his engagement in their deployment, and finally for not having fought sufficiently against their removal.

But besides these individual exceptions, there are two clearly distinct camps at the level of political force and government: on the one hand, those who fought for the deployment of Euromissiles and are critical of the double zero-option (the Atlantic "establishment", the European conservatives — Kohl, Thatcher, the Centrists and Gaullists in France) and on the other, those who opposed deployment, and have rejoiced over their removal (the SPD, the British Labour

Party, and the pacifist movements, as well as the Soviet Union, of course). What is new is that the United States, after battling for deployment and denouncing its adversaries, have joined ranks with the latter in the hope for nuclear disarmament. Washington's traditional allies have thus felt betrayed, and consequently need some kind of change or complement in the field of American protection.

Combined with its deft diplomatic exploitation by Gorbachev, this reversal of alliances explains why the Atlantic crisis should today be paid more attention than in the past. Already in 1981, in a similar assessment of Atlantic relations, we were wondering whether to apply the formula used by Adenauer before the Bundestag: "The situation has never been so serious", or the motto of the City of Paris "Fluctuat nec mergitur" (It floats and does not sink). We concluded by proposing a reversal of the classic formula: "The more things change, the more they stay the same", into its opposite: "The more things stay the same, the more they change"².



Looking in the same direction

Recent evolution seemed to us more fundamental than on the occasion of previous crises, since it affected relations between the two essential pillars of the Alliance: the USA and Germany. If it is a fact that European security depends above all on the presence of the two superpowers, and their nuclear weapons, on German territory, then neither the USA nor West Germany can afford to remain isolated without affecting the whole system, something which is less true for Greece or even France. Now 1981 saw a certain divergency between the USA and West Germany: the former was looking increasingly to Asia and Central America, and developing a muscular policy regarding the USSR, whereas the latter was looking increasingly to Central Europe and was evolving a more conciliatory attitude in East-West relations. And this evolution seemed to us to correspond to diverging moral and social

tendencies — the dominant American one being that of the “moral majority”, and the dominant German one being strongly influenced by the “Green” party and pacifists.

This analysis, inspired in particular by the election of Reagan and the pacifist demonstrations and by the direction in which the SPD in Germany was drifting, has become somewhat obsolete over these five or six years, mainly due to the evolution of the Reagan administration. There is still some friction between the USA and West Germany, but in 1987, as at the beginning of the sixties, it has been the USA which has tried to convince a wavering German government to take a favourable stand over the question of an East-West agreement. But whilst Adenauer then had the support and favour of De Gaulle in his firm stand over Berlin, in the double zero-option affair his successors have given the impression of having been abandoned both by the European allies — including the French — and by the Americans.

Furthermore, a large majority of Germans are in favour of denuclearization, and almost unconditionally trust Gorbachev. This all leading to a situation similar to that at the beginning of the nineteen seventies — the period of detente — when the USA under Nixon and West Germany under Brandt, much to the disapproval of sections of the American and German Right (more important then than today), entered into parallel dialogue with Moscow. As is well known, this dialogue eventually led to the SALT agreements and the treaties of West Germany with its Eastern neighbours. On that occasion there was already reason to wonder whether this parallel dialogue is, or is not, a convergence factor amongst members of the West; whether Saint-Exupery's formula should be applied: “Mutual love is not looking at each other, but looking in the same direction together”, or whether that ascribed to Charles the Fifth was not more suitable “I completely agree with François of France. we see things in exactly the same way: we both want Venice”.

The question of whether a new defence system is needed and feasible is thus all the more acute today as the modifications taking place in all the essential variables of the European equation are leading to the possibility of global change.

Breaches in the system

Since the Second World War, the European system of security has been basically founded on four interdependent elements: the Soviet menace

(materialized by its military presence in Eastern Europe); American protection (materialized by its military presence in Western Europe); the division of Europe and of Germany in particular (produced by this double presence); and finally nuclear arms, on which the stability of the military balance has been based.

Certainly, some structural asymmetry has always existed between the two alliances: one is an empire dominated directly and exclusively by a continental power, whilst the other is an alliance under one hegemony, but with various differentiating geographical, political and military factors. The precise object of the Atlantic Alliance is to overcome, or at least compensate for, these discontinuities between America and Europe, as well as between nuclear and non-nuclear States, in an attempt to counterbalance the natural and ever-recurring tendency to decouple the security of the former from that of the latter. This clearly explains the importance given to the possibility of striking Soviet territory (in answer to an attack from the Soviet) and thus eliminating the essential difference between the vulnerability of the two superpowers and that of the two Europes.

At the present moment, all the elements in this system have, to differing degrees, been put into question. Since the beginning of the nineteen eighties, the success of Western anti-nuclear movements, particularly in Germany, and of Eastern anti-totalitarian movements, particularly in Poland, have demonstrated that the presence of nuclear arms and the division of the Continent are resented more and more by the Europeans concerned (with the partial exception of France). Certainly Western pacifists and the members of *Solidarity* have been defeated, they profoundly influenced their societies, and their respective ruling powers have had to a large extent to take up the language used by these movements in order to maintain some degree of popular legitimacy.

In West Germany, those who wish to leave NATO are a small minority, and no one even dreams of sacrificing this liberty in favour of reunification³. Yet two views are prevalent; that the presence of nuclear arms is more a danger than a protection, and that dialogue with the East is essential to keep the human and cultural identity of the nation, and to augment the permeability of accepted frontiers. Both converge in favour of a consensus on detente, arms control and trust in Gorbachev.

Because of this, inter-German and inter-European dialogue becomes a part of

the dialogue between the two superpowers. The initiative in this field belongs at present to the latter. By denying the dogma of nuclear deterrence in his March 1983 "Star Wars" speech⁴, Reagan was the first to open a breach in European security. He continued to widen it even further by his cavalier disregard of European interests in Reykjavik, and by the brutality of the pressure he has brought to bear on the double zero-option affair. Gorbachev has simply caught the ball on the bounce and taking Reagan on his word, he has revived the old "Ban the Bomb" slogan from the time of the "Stockholm Appeal"⁵. After decades of adaptation the idea of mutual deterrence, he has been able to find a way of revenging the deployment of Euromissiles, a deployment his predecessors were unable to avoid.

More generally, the novelty of his approach (apart from his daring and agility of his reactions) is to be found in a combination of two factors. First, he is skilled in grasping Western currents of opinion and adopting its language. Soviet diplomacy started by using the language of American arms control supporters at the end of the nineteen seventies. Since then it has adopted the American Liberal idiom in vogue during the Carter administration (on interdependence, globalization and management of common planetary interests) as also the idiom of the German "alternative" movement's opinion and the left wing of the SPD (on non-offensive defence, and structural incapacity to attack). And for good measure, he has added a dash of Central European nostalgia and taken a leaf from De Gaulle's book with a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" formula. Secondly, Gorbachev has widely exhibited to the whole world the real changes inside the Soviet Union resulting from *glasnost*. He has been a master at turning even events such as the Chernobyl explosion, or embarrassing affairs such as Rust's landing in Red Square to his advantage, by using them to end all mistrust of Soviet power and politics.

A two-tier deterrence

This combination of Western vocabulary and domestic cultural revolution may well announce a change in priorities which cannot but help the process of peace. But the important fact is that, in the medium term, it is simply helping the Soviets in their traditional European policy. Proclaimed since the nineteen fifties, and reactivated and strengthened today, these aims remain a transformation of the European security system through denuclearizing first Central Europe and then the whole continent, accentuating the particular status of Berlin and Germany, reducing American presence, and preventing its

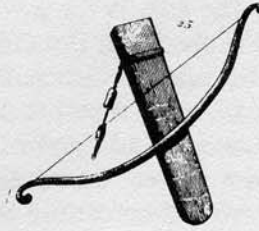
replacement with a European defence. It is this Soviet plan, then, which is creating the involuntary coherence between the parallel enterprises of the Reagan administration and the European governments, the latter drawn (in particular by German public opinion) towards regional disarmament. And in both cases, the aim is to replace security essentially based on the nuclear balance by security dominated by conventional or space weapons; and on top of that, the aim is to give priority to negotiation and co-operation over deterrence.

A two-tier system would thus replace a single system of balance between the two alliances and of strategic continuity within the Atlantic one. The second system would be one in which the two superpowers would manage together the protection of their respective territories by strategic negotiations, and possibly by a partial anti-missile defence system. The first would be managed by the two Germanies, or the two Europes with ground-based nuclear arms banned from the non-nuclear states — maybe all over the continent — (according to the desires of Egon Bahr)⁶, with security assured by co-operation between East and West Europeans, under the control of the two superpowers.

This double system would present numerous advantages. It would reduce the number and cost of armaments, and also the risk of nuclear accidents, and above all, it would favour liberty in East-West communications (although not liberty in Eastern Europe, since Soviet domination in the East is not caused by American nuclear presence in the West). On the other hand, it would make the link between the regional defence of Western Europe and strategic deterrence obsolete. Similarly, it would create difficulties for NATO's flexible response, deterrence by threat of escalation, and the French and British nuclear forces, threatened so to speak, from above (by SDI and reduction of strategic arms), and from below (by the trend towards the disappearance of tactical or pre-strategic nuclear weapons). For continental Europe as a whole this new more regional system would certainly reduce American domination, and perhaps also nuclear danger, but it would increase the risk of Soviet domination and conventional conflict. Unless a new, independent West European defence supplies a counterbalance to the USSR, and reduces the risks of Balkanization and European impotence.

Risk-free predictions

But these are just extrapolations of present day tendencies, and it is time to inquire to what extent, and under what conditions Europe can affect them since it would be equally mistaken to believe that either the present system is



dead, and destined to be soon replaced, or that the absence of credible alternatives will keep it alive in the foreseeable future without any greater rejection crises. As usual, the truth is more complex and more ambiguous. Up to now, Europe's present contemporary system has offered a security unprecedented in history, and unrivaled in any other region of the world, but it has frustrated the East European peoples' aspirations to freedom and the aspirations of Germany to assert its identity and autonomy. The problem is thus to modify the status quo in its most unsatisfactory aspects (European division, the casts of armament and uncontrollable nuclear risks) without losing its positive aspects (nuclear deterrence and alliance with the US).

It is evident, however, that this can only be a delicate and contradictory process. Two predictions can be stated without too much risk: the world will not be denuclearized, and America will keep its interest in Europe not becoming communist. In Europe, itself, the presence of American troops and of their nuclear arms is destined to undergo an important process of limitation, but not radical elimination. As far as the division of Europe and Germany is concerned, although its economic, cultural and even to a certain extent, its ideological character will be attenuated, it will survive as long as the Soviet Union is governed by the Communist Party. Under these conditions, Europe in the coming years will continue to live within the framework determined by the two phenomena underlying East-West relations: totalitarianism and the atom. This despite the fact that the specific nature of totalitarianism and the nuclear phenomenon is less clear cut; the debate going on today concerning defence and disarmament has the advantage of outlining possible models which are still utopian, but which one day may replace the current system.

It is as if the hopes and nightmares of different political forces and nations clash in a symbolic or fantastic world, and this is why the debates over the double zero-option or European co-operation on defence are much more important than their apparent or immediate consequences. Two concurring

projects would seem to emerge. The first is for a "common European house" (Gorbachev), a "denuclearized Europe from Poland to Portugal" (a slogan from the British Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament), or a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals", in other words, a Europe of detente and reconciliation, of nuclear disarmament and "non-offensive" conventional defence. The other project is for a nuclear-based defence for Europe (in the sense of Western Europe) which would constitute the future second pillar of NATO, a reformed Atlantic alliance, in the case of qualitative change in the relations between Europe and the two superpowers.

The most important question for Europe is whether these two projects are two alternatives, or whether they can, and should, be combined; and if so, in what order and according to which priorities. It is clear today that these priorities differ from one nation and from one political force to the other. For the European Left, and in the majority of the Central and North European countries, the former prevails. For example, when the SPD speaks of the "Europeanization" of Europe, or the "self-affirmation" of Europe, it is referring to the CSCE countries rather than to the twelve countries of the EEC — to the Europe of detente rather than to the Europe of defence — even though some military co-operation in Western Europe is not always excluded in these circles. But the basic idea is that of European reconciliation, first in the shadow of the entente between the two superpowers, then in the dissolution of the blocs (and not in the emergence of Western Europe as a new bloc or third superpower).

Conversely, in France and in the European Right and Centre, the idea of a "European" Europe as an alternative to Atlanticism is above all that of a Western Europe able to defend itself, in particular by substituting its own deterrence for an American protection which is either insufficient or politically unacceptable. Since debate was sparked off in Reykjavik, France has been the only country where "European defence" has taken the lead over the new detente, although some rather isolated voices, from Helmut Schmidt to Alfred Dregger in West Germany, or from David Owen to Geoffrey Howe in the United Kingdom, have been raised along the same lines in other West European countries.

The memory of Munich

As far as heads of government are concerned, such as Helmut Kohl or Margaret Thatcher, they have been attempting to maintain a delicate balance between the two tendencies, their main concern seems to be to avoid any

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initiative capable of weakening the Atlantic alliance even further. And even in France nuances of opinion on the double zero-option and on the Washington Summit seem to have arisen between the Right and the Left, that is, between the Government and the President of the Republic. This may be explained by differences in seeing the situation, as also by the evolution of European (especially German) attitudes.

In choosing to support Genscher (a partisan responding positively to Gorbachev's overtures) rather than Wörner or Dregger, François Mitterrand has shown that he is not willing to be isolated from a vogue which is probably destined to be on the rise, especially in Germany. Perhaps he thinks this is the only way of maintaining French influence on European developments. It was indeed paradoxical for the most ardent of French partisans of Europe, to equate the first zero-option (accepted by all Europeans) with Munich. On the other hand, the idea of upholding a common European position hostile to the second zero-option was mistaken only if it relied on the illusion that Kohl would have been able to oppose the combined pressures of the two superpowers, of public opinion, and of his government partners led by Genscher. But it was defensible if its longer term aim was to proclaim Europe's right to nuclear defence, and the primacy of arms balance over negotiations. The idea could have been not to associate France with what some Germans see as another global betrayal leading to a new "stab in the back" legend, and to a fanciful and useless search for purely national solutions⁷. Just like its partners, France has to find the right mixture of national, European and Atlantic interests, and of short term, medium term and long term perspectives.

A European defence based on hostility towards the new detente and arms limitations and indifference to the pan-European dimension, would have very

few chances of success in France (where Gorbachev's peace offensives are beginning to be appreciated)⁸ and no chance at all elsewhere. But a pan-European reconciliation, not based on the relations between societies, but on disarmament, and its implications (for the West viz. the dismantling of American nuclear presence on the territory of its European allies, while for the East, a gamble on Gorbachev's intentions, on his hold on power and on the future evolution of the USSR) can only lead to compromising the security and independence of Europe. Faced with this double impossibility, then, if the division of Europe can and should be overcome, without affecting its security, its military dimension (up to now the most stable aspect of the European system) must undergo structural change at the end of the process and not at the beginning.

Another order, another equilibrium

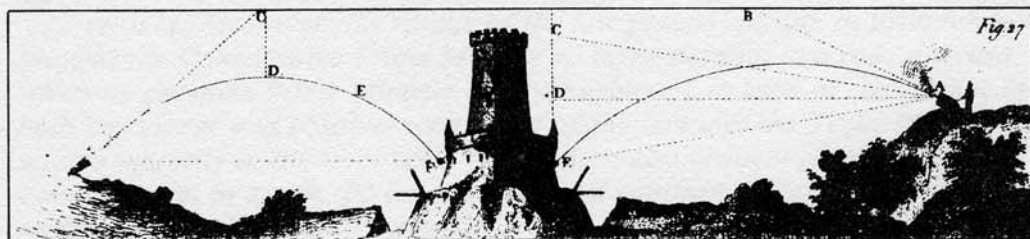
In the domain of security, the order of priorities should be: first to repair (at least in part) the damage inflicted on Euro-American relations since Reykjavik, thus helping to re-establish what can be re-established of American engagement in Europe, as well as the balance between the two alliances; second, in the shadow of this balance, to increase as much as possible the autonomy and cohesion of Western Europe in terms of defence and deterrence; third, to pursue negotiations with the Eastern bloc countries, in order to reduce the costs and risks inherent in the present situation notably with conventional arms in particular. Parallel to this, in the economic, social, cultural political field the dialogue and co-operation with the East should give more and more meaning to a European identity which will not only exceed national frontiers but also military alliances and ideological systems.

If the above evolution takes place, and if the Soviet empire changes in nature (something which cannot be effected by the West) then perhaps convergence of the two will lead to what De Gaulle called: "another order, another equilibrium"⁹. In the meantime, France must avoid falling into two opposing traps. One would mean getting carried away by the anti-nuclear vogue and supporting Gorbachev, which would mean losing the benefits of thirty years of efforts and ten years of consensus. The other would involve a territorial and conceptual return to the old-style Gaullism, with its deterrence based on the idea of a "national sanctuary", a sea-based deterrent and an "all or nothing" doctrine. France could soon be turned into what has been called a "nuclear Albania", perhaps impermeable to outer influences (though for less time and to a lesser extent than is often believed) but unable to bear weight in the evolution of Europe.

Must we conclude that the middle-of-the-road policy followed at present is the only possible one? Certainly not, and François Heisbourg, who under the pseudonym of André Adrets has been the best defender of optimism and of short steps, has just brilliantly illustrated this, recognizing the limits of pragmatism and irrefutably demonstrating the impossibility of the status quo¹⁰. France has no other solution than a more active and positive European policy, whatever the material limits and political incomprehension it must face. We will have to listen to our partners, and adapt our military policies to the growing importance of conventional defence, whether in terms of armament or disarmament. Furthermore, we will have to reply positively to the hopes expressed by the peoples from one end of Europe to the other, in the name of dialogue and co-operation between East and West.

Within this movement and dialogue, we must insist firmly and irrevocably on the two ideas which the French seem to see more clearly than the other Western Europeans: that there is no solid military stability without the atom, and that real East-West detente can make no progress without human rights.

It is not a question of preaching in the desert, or using these two ideas to avoid any evolution: on the contrary, it is necessary to establish these as the starting point for a Europeanization of defence and deterrence policies, as well as of policies towards the East. Only at this price will the lost battle over the zero-options not take the meaning of zero-options for Europe.



References

1. The first zero option aimed at eliminating the intermediate and long distance missiles: SS20, Pershing 2 and Cruise. The second option concerned the elimination of shorter range missiles (500-1000 km): SRINFs: SS22, SS23 (Russian); Pershing 1A (German/American).
2. "Plus c'est la même chose, plus ça change. Reflexions sur les nouvelles dimensions de la crise atlantique", *Etudes internationales*, September 1982.

3. Ironically Michel Jobert chose the moment to congratulate himself for having foreseen German neutrality and preference for reunification, just when the most determined advocates of detente, and the GFR's role as a bridge between East and West, were renouncing this position and had begun to work towards other aims (namely the freedom and political construction of Europe). See M. Jobert, "Now Comes A German Swing to the East", *International Herald Tribune*, 8 July 1987; T. Sommer "Die Einheit gegen Freiheit tauschen", *Die Zeit*, 26 June 1987; "Die SPD bejaht die Teilung", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, leader July 1, 1982. On the present form of the German ambiguities see D. Schroeder, "Nachdenken über deutsche Sonderwege", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 24-4 May 1987; A. M. Le Gloannec : "L'Allemagne, une utopie", in "Allemagne — deux Etats, une Nation?" *Revue Française de Science Politique*, special no. June 1987; and D.Vernet "Paradoxes franco-allemands", *Le Monde*, 25 June 1987.
4. In his March 1983 speech Reagan defined nuclear weapons as "immoral and obsolete".
5. The Stockholm Appeal was launched early in 1950 by the World Conference of Peace Partisans against the American decision to construct the H-bomb. It collected 273,000,000 signatures with 115 from USSR.
6. See E. Bahr, "Que peuvent faire les Etats non-nucleaires?", *Nouvelle Revue Internationale*, Prague, March 1987.
7. See Elisabeth Pond: "Sind wir verraten und verkauft?", *Die Zeit*, June 26, 1987.
8. See the Sofres poll, 9 July 1987 on "Les Français, le Desarmement et l'image de l'Union Sovietique", comment by Duhamel on Europe 1.
9. For a systematic development of these ideas see our article: "L'Europe entre les Etats-Unis et l'Union Sovietique", *Commentaire*, Spring 1986.
10. See A. Adrets: "France-RFA: le nucléaire dans une Europe divisée", *Politique Etrangère*, 3, 1984. P. Hassner: "Les limites du pragmatisme", *Politique Etrangère*, 4, 1984. F. Heisbourg: "Defense française: l'impossible status quo", *Politique Internationale*, no. 36, Summer 1987.