

Mitterrand shifts course, urges a Third World development effort

by Dana Sloan

In back-to-back trips to Egypt and India during the last week of November, French President François Mitterrand called for the creation of a new world economic order and international monetary system asserting that only economic development is capable of ensuring the true independence of the developing-sector countries.

What transpired during the course of Mitterrand's visits to these two leading nations of the Non-Aligned Movement provided testimony of a shift in course that the French President has undertaken since late summer. After more than a year in office, pressures have converged to the effect of compelling François Mitterrand in a direction that could prove to be crucial for civilization as a whole.

The late Charles de Gaulle once commented that "what I have done will, sooner or later, be a source of new ardor after I have disappeared." De Gaulle's conviction is being born out today, though many a socialist might be loath to admit to any continuity of purpose with the General. Much to the outrage of many of the ideologues in his party, Mitterrand is dropping his profile as the Socialist Party leader who got elected President, and is beginning to act as a President of the Fifth Republic, the institution wielded by de Gaulle as the embodiment of French national and republican interests.

How will the United States respond?

Contrary to what William F. Buckley, the Heritage Foundation and the *New York Times* might want Americans to believe, the turn of events in France is decidedly good news for the United States. Mitterrand's shift provides the Reagan White House with a new chance to forge productive ties and a non-British working partnership with Western Europe. Already in the past month, France has started to become a crucial part of the war on terrorism and organized crime that the White House has committed itself to, and it was France's dramatic shift on terrorism-related issues that first signaled the overall change taking place (see *EIR*, Nov. 30).

The first signs that a shift was taking place in France came this summer. It was at that time that hard intelligence reached the Elysée Palace and the Interior Ministry that François Mitterrand's name figured prominently on an international terrorist hit list held by the controllers of "left" terrorism in the neo-Nazi Malmö International of the Swiss financier François Genoud. When the notorious terrorist figure "Car-

los" surfaced in Europe to personally threaten Mitterrand's life and Interior Minister Gaston Defferre, the French President started to take action.

During the month of August a new anti-terrorism security apparatus was put into place, headed by Joseph Franceschi, who was appointed State Secretary for Public Security. Mitterrand simultaneously brought in Commander Prouteau, head of the elite anti-terrorist strike force known as the GIGN, to be his technical advisor for security affairs; in short, his job is to keep Mitterrand alive. Commander Prouteau has since been sent on international missions, including one to West Germany to help track down members of the Baader-Meinhof gang. During the month of November, the heads of France's equivalent of the CIA and FBI were replaced by officials more capable of carrying out their new assignments.

The American embassy in Paris, operating under orders from anglophile Ambassador Evan Galbraith, (an associate of the U.S. Buckley family), has worked against this development of a cooperative Franco-American anti-terror effort, using the pretext of the presence of four members of the French Communist Party in the government—none of whom have portfolios that could enable them to influence fundamental questions such as defense or foreign policy. Galbraith's embassy staff has been caught in interference in French affairs on two counts: first, by leaking information to the British concerning France's plans to honor military hardware deals it had contracted with Argentina before the Malvinas Islands war; and second, by becoming the mediators for some of the heavy-handed interference recently carried out by Trilateral Commission member and AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland.

Economic policy

In an interview published in the Paris daily *Le Monde* Nov. 26, just before his departure for Cairo and New Delhi, President Mitterrand indicated that reversing the world economic crisis would be the subject at the center of his talks. Commenting on the need to create a new international monetary system, Mitterrand declared that "when I speak of this necessity to my American visitors, they tell me 'it's not our fault, it's the law of the market.' Well, our predecessors, who also adhered to a liberal society, thought it necessary to create the Bretton Woods system. We cannot be without it [a

new system] for long without damaging the cohesion of the Western world. What is also at stake is the development of the world economy, as well as the future of the Third World countries, who have been forced into a tragic indebtedness for lack of international monetary liquidities. This subject will be at the center of my conversation with Mrs. Gandhi in India.”

In the same interview, Mitterrand sought to clarify his views on the Soviet Union, with whom relations have been practically frozen since he took office. Mitterrand, who supports the stationing of Pershing missiles in Western Europe, warned that the Soviet Union has gained the military edge in Europe. “The Soviet Union has a great and legitimate concern for its security,” Mitterrand stated, adding: “So do we.” For this reason, he reiterated, France refuses to allow French nuclear forces to be counted as an integral part of Western forces in the ongoing disarmament negotiations. “No argument will make me change my mind on that question. But I am hostile, on the other hand, to any form of economic blockade against Russia. . . . I will be faithful to the commitments made with our allies on so-called strategic products. But I do not desire that, in some insidious fashion, the sale of butter or chickpeas to Russia comes to be known as strategic.” Later, to emphasize the point made with respect to the Soviet natural-gas pipeline deal, Mitterrand added: “French sovereignty is not for sale.”

The French have also made clear that they consider the nuclear freeze and conventional arms build-up policy being pushed by McGeorge Bundy and Robert McNamara a threat to peace. This return to Gaullist orthodoxy on defense matters is also good news for the White House, and could provide an important flank against the so-called peace movement.

Speaking at the conference of the Western European Union on Dec. 1, Defense Minister Charles Hernu warned that the Soviets want to decouple Western Europe from the United States, and that recent statements made by NATO Commander General Rogers fit precisely into this gameplan. Hernu denounced the McNamara-Bundy grouping which, he noted, “are the very same ones who presided over the impressive rearmament effort of the United States in the 1960s, the very same ones who dumped on Vietnam an amount of explosives bigger than that which was used during the last world conflict,” and who “now explain to us that the European countries will have to do without the American security guarantee.”

Visit to Egypt

That Mitterrand’s turn is not anti-American, but the contrary, was confirmed during his trip to Egypt. There, despite the fact that since this summer, Mitterrand and President Hosni Mubarak have tabled a Franco-Egyptian proposal for the Middle East, the two heads of state affirmed that they would give their backing to President Reagan’s peace plan, in the hope that American power could achieve certain results where others cannot.

Although not the center of Mitterrand’s talks, bilateral economic development issues were prominent. In Egypt, agreements were reached on construction of two nuclear power plants, and several other major infrastructural deals (port and subway projects) that are equally crucial.

Hours before his arrival in New Delhi, and after months of negotiations, France and India signed an agreement on the supply of French enriched uranium for the U.S.-built Tarapur nuclear reactor, a prerequisite for the two leaders’ talks to proceed productively.

Domestically, some dramatic changes could be imminent. Mitterrand abruptly cancelled his regular Thursday morning meetings with the top leadership of the Socialist Party. The institution of these weekly working sessions had brought back into France the vice condemned by de Gaulle as “the regime of the political parties,” the Fourth Republic form of government which made government decisions dependent on the whims of the parties. Mitterrand’s annoyance with his party’s leadership could lead him to make further moves that could shatter the career of at least one member of his cabinet.

Minister of Justice Robert Badinter, who first as defense attorney and now from his government position, has been responsible for the protection of dozens of terrorists, has his head on the chopping block. This fact, and his defense of the publication of a book on suicide methods modeled on the British EXIT group, have prompted increasing calls for his resignation or ouster from the cabinet. Badinter has acted to impede the efforts of his own government to set up adequate measures against the international terrorist networks which have Mitterrand on their list of targets.

Mitterrand in India: ‘New monetary system is essential’

President François Mitterrand of France, currently visiting India for discussions with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, called Saturday Nov. 27 for the “reconstruction” of the international monetary system, and stressed that long-stalled discussions between developed and developing countries on economic cooperation must immediately be revived.

Speaking at a banquet in his honor hosted by Indian President Zail Singh, Mitterrand said that the debt crisis now strangling most developing countries, and the creation of a new international monetary system, must be part of the agenda for revived “North-South” talks. Mitterrand later stated that the bilateral discussions between India and France would

be important to catalyzing resumption of those talks.

The Mitterrand initiative is a public challenge to the International Monetary Fund and its private "sister" organization, the Bank for International Settlements, which are coordinating desperate efforts to shore up the bankrupt international monetary system by de-industrializing the advanced sector countries and imposing genocidal levels of austerity in the developing countries. His decision to state these views in India was particularly significant, since India has assumed the chairmanship of the movement of Non-Aligned Nations under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi. A Non-Aligned heads of state summit is scheduled for New Delhi in March, 1983, at which time the need for a new world monetary system and other aspects of North-South economic relations are expected to be deliberated. The French position breaks the near-unity of the developed countries in resisting improved "North-South" relations.

'Eloquent example'

Throughout Mitterrand's visit, the related themes of high-technology cooperation between France and India, the need for a new monetary system, and the need to revive North-South talks kept emerging. Mitterrand was accompanied by a delegation that included three cabinet ministers, several defense and economic advisers, and other experts, who carried on wide-ranging discussions with their Indian counterparts.

In all of the discussions on bilateral economic cooperation, the French expressed their conviction that there exists a considerable potential for collaboration between the two countries, in particular because India has developed a sophisticated industrial and scientific infrastructure which enables the country to absorb advanced technology in a broad spectrum of industries.

The two countries agreed to establish an institute for advanced research. The French President also proposed to India the conclusion of a long-term agreement for scientific, technological, and industrial collaboration designed to promote technological innovations. Mitterrand said the proposed agreement should provide for the full participation of Indian scientists, so that both countries could share in the benefits of the research. Such collaboration, he said, would be "an eloquent example of North-South cooperation without the stigma of an unequal relationship that is inherent in the present pattern of international developmental assistance."

The nuclear agreement

Perhaps the most important bilateral agreement reached during the Mitterrand visit concerned the supply of French enriched uranium for India's U.S.-built Tarapur nuclear plant. In recent years legislative obstacles in the United States have prevented continued U.S. supply of enriched uranium to India, despite a 1963 agreement to do so. The French became involved last July, when India and the United States agreed to allow France to take over American obligations.

Negotiations on this issue between France and India had been deadlocked for four months due to the French demand that India accept more severe safeguards than those specified in the 1963 agreement with the United States. However, just hours before Mitterrand's arrival in New Delhi, negotiations were completed, reportedly after the intervention by the President, and India's position in the negotiations was accepted.

Overall, the mood in India toward Mitterrand, as reflected in the country's newspapers, was very receptive. Many commentaries emphasized the French willingness to export advanced technologies to India. The Indian attitude was perhaps best reflected in a comment made by President Singh at the banquet honoring Mitterrand. "Contemporary realities," he said, "demand that France pursue an independent foreign policy, and India and other nonaligned countries should work together to build bridges between the East and the West and the North and the South."

The press conference

The French and Indian delegations released few details on the more than five hours of discussions between Mitterrand and Mrs. Gandhi. However, it is known that they exchanged views on the Soviet Union's political situation, the Middle East—particularly French-Egyptian plans to settle the crisis in that region—and American foreign policy. Mrs. Gandhi also briefed the French President on the situation in Asia.

In all of his public appearances, Mitterrand went out of his way to emphasize that France places great importance on the upcoming Non-Aligned meeting and the role it could play in the political drive for a new international economic order.

Speaking at a press conference in New Delhi, Mitterrand was asked by this news service to elaborate on his views of the international monetary crisis. The President responded by saying that a world monetary system had existed until 1971 (when Paul Volcker and George Shultz severed the last links between the dollar and gold), and that system was based on traditional liberal ("free trade") philosophy. At this time, he said, France has particular views on the world monetary issue because of its membership in the European Monetary System, which imposes specific rules on its members. The dollar system, he said, is not bound by one set of rules but by many different rules, and most countries in the world are suffering from monetary instability. A new international monetary system is needed, he said, one that is not based only on the dollar.

The President was also asked about the Middle East, since he had arrived in India after a very important three-day visit to Egypt. He said that France and Egypt, who are closely coordinating their Mid-East policies, do not envision asking India to join with them in a joint policy, and that no three-way agreement exists between India, France and Egypt. However, he said, Indian backing for the French-Egyptian call for joint recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel would be welcomed.