

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 18
Number 1 *Parameters* 1988

Article 10

7-4-1988

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FRANCO-GERMAN MILITARY COOPERATION

John L. Clarke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

Clarke, John L.. "NEW DIRECTIONS IN FRANCO-GERMAN MILITARY COOPERATION." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 18, 1 (1988). <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol18/iss1/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

New Directions in Franco-German Military Cooperation

JOHN L. CLARKE

Since the Reykjavik summit of October 1986, and particularly since the prospects for a successful Soviet-American arms agreement on theater nuclear weapons became apparent, the European allies of the United States have directed serious thought to alternative defense structures and to increased cooperation in the policy coordination and military spheres.¹ The specter of a diminished American presence in Europe has prompted a search for ways to bolster the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. This has been particularly true for France and Germany, whose *Erbfeindschaft*, or hereditary animosity toward one another, seems to have dissolved in a flurry of proposals aimed at increasing the collective military capabilities of the two nations. This article explores the military dimensions of increased cooperation between Bonn and Paris, examining the policy implications and prospects for success.

After the plan for a European Defense Community collapsed in 1954 (owing to French opposition to West Germany's membership) and West Germany's entry into NATO the next year, Franco-German military cooperation was very much an open question. With Charles de Gaulle's accession to power in 1958, France's position began to crystallize. For Germany, the French desire for a more influential and independent role seemed possible only at the expense of Germany's position in the alliance.² It was clear to Konrad Adenauer that Germany's security lay with the United States; Germany would not play junior partner to France's world-class power ambitions.³

The opportunity to moderate this division came in January 1963, with the signing of the Elysée Treaty and, with it, the first phase of Franco-German military cooperation.⁴ Unfortunately, this effort was to have little

effect, coming as it did when French participation in the NATO integrated military command was being increasingly called into question by De Gaulle. With the rupture between France and NATO in 1966, Franco-German military cooperation fell into a state of dormancy, if not regression, with efforts largely limited to general staff talks and personnel exchanges.⁵

This state continued until 1982 when, partly as a result of changes in the leadership of both France and Germany, an effort to revitalize the 1963 treaty was made. French President François Mitterand's declared support for the modernization of NATO's theater nuclear weapons, coupled with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to Paris immediately after his election in October 1982, paved the way for increased cooperation. This cooperation took several forms.

The first was an agreement to conduct biannual meetings of foreign and defense ministers. The second was to establish the standing French-German Committee for Security and Defense to oversee cooperative efforts on a routine basis. This committee, in turn, directs the work of three groups: political-strategic, military cooperation, and armaments cooperation. Existing subcommittees are currently devoting their attention to such areas as the Strategic Defense Initiative, France's *Force d'Action Rapide* (hereinafter referred to simply as *Force d'Action*), interoperability, and air defense issues.⁶ Indeed, the establishment of the *Force d'Action* itself can be traced to the 1982 agreements. Another significant result has been the French promise to consult with the Germans, insofar as practical, before France employs its theater (or "prestrategic") nuclear weapons.

Items of particular interest under the rubric of military cooperation include the coordination of exercises, particularly those of French forces in Germany and the possible employment of the *Force d'Action* in support of German units.⁷ Since 1982 the number of bilateral exercises has increased markedly, culminating in the *Moineau Hardi/Kecker Spatz* (Bold Sparrow) exercise of September 1987, the largest joint exercise ever held by the two countries. Personnel exchanges and common training programs have also registered significant increases, particularly at the unit and general staff levels.

The pace during 1987 was particularly intense. On 19 June, Helmut Kohl proposed the formation of a joint Franco-German brigade, which was followed by the announcement by President Mitterand of the formation of a

Major John L. Clarke is currently assigned as a Special Operations officer in Europe and is a recent graduate of the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre in Paris. He holds a B.A. degree from Norwich University, an M.A. from the University of Southern California, and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Salzburg, Austria. A graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College, he has served in command and staff positions in Germany and Korea, as well as on the Joint Staff in Washington. He has published frequently on military affairs.

combined Franco-German Defense Council. The announcement was made during the course of exercise Bold Sparrow. Although a number of proposals of this type have been made before, these two are currently enjoying the patronage of the political leadership of both countries.⁸ However, these initiatives are not without their attendant problems. Let us look at these three particular issues—the creation of a joint brigade, the proposal of a joint defense council, and the combined exercise Bold Sparrow—within the framework of the security concerns of the two countries.⁹

The Franco-German Brigade

German Chancellor Kohl's proposal to create a joint brigade of French and German troops has received a great deal of publicity in the French media, though less in the German press, since its announcement on 19 June 1987. Subsequent ministerial talks have fleshed out a number of the details but also have left a number of issues unresolved.

Kohl's proposal envisioned a brigade composed of equal numbers of German and French troops, with the command initially French and then rotating between the two countries.¹⁰ The brigade would presumably be available for operations agreed to by the two nations through a command relationship yet to be specified. The brigade is to be composed of combat units, as opposed to support units, and thus would be expected to carry out combat missions.

The question of mission is the first of the unresolved issues. The brigade must have a realistic combat mission if it is to avoid becoming simply a parade-ground unit. One suggested mission would be to function as a "Rhine brigade" to assist in the crossing of the Rhine by French forces stationed west of the river in the event that French authorities decide to commit their forces to battle.¹¹ Alternatively, mention has been made of a "fire brigade" mission, in which the forces would be available for employment throughout the Central Region in support of committed forces. The lack of a realistic mission would be certain to cause discontent in defense ministries and general staffs already hard pressed to match resources to missions.

The difficulty in settling on a suitable mission is a function of the different security perspectives and requirements of the two countries. France, independent and with a strong emphasis on nuclear forces, is clearly unwilling to place such a brigade under a NATO integrated military command. Further, any such unit containing French soldiers would have to be supported, from a doctrinal standpoint, by French nuclear forces. Doing so would involve a de facto extension of their nuclear deterrent to cover the West German units assigned to the brigade, as operationally it would be nearly impossible to distinguish among individual units lower than brigade. The French, however, are not as yet willing (and probably are unable) to make a credible extension of their nuclear guarantee.¹² Thus, any mission acceptable

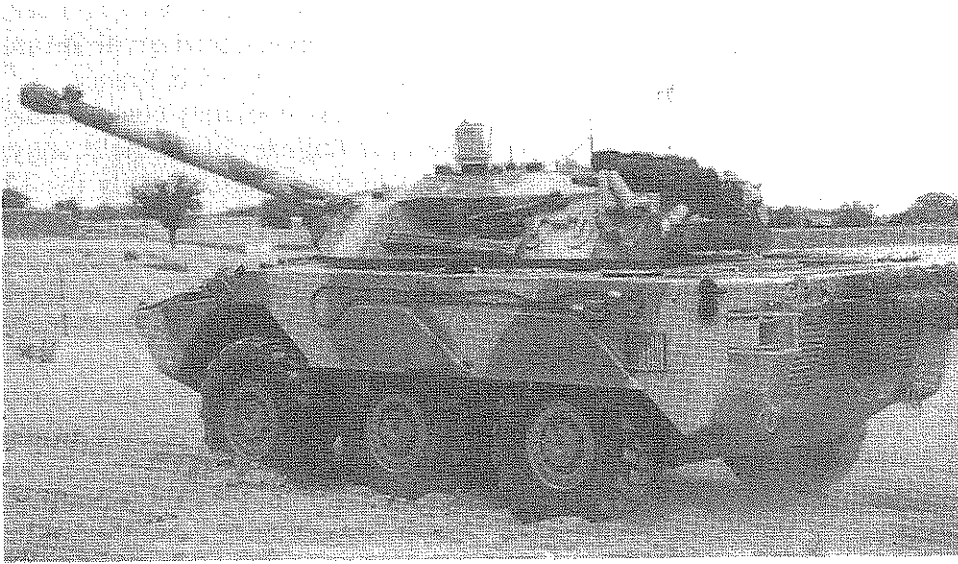
to the French necessarily would be outside the framework of Allied Forces, Central Europe, and tethered reasonably close to French territory to insure nuclear coverage by France's tactical nuclear systems based in France.

West Germany, on the other hand, remains resolutely conventional and integrated into NATO. The 36 active-duty brigades of the field army, organized into 12 divisions, are committed to the SACEUR. Only the 12 home defense brigades of the territorial army, which serves the role of local protection, remain under national command.¹³ Any West German components of the joint brigade would of necessity come from one of these home defense brigades, some of which are manned at only 50-percent active-duty strength. Assignment to the brigade would mandate an upgrading of their status. The West Germans are not likely to be receptive to the prospect of the French providing tactical nuclear fire coverage for the French component of the brigade. Further, the Germans undoubtedly would strongly prefer a mission related to assisting in the reinforcement of the NATO forward defense effort.

The composition of the brigade has been determined, although its size was the subject of some debate. German brigades generally contain some 3500-4000 soldiers, while the French, who do not use the brigade in their combat organization, have some divisions with as few as 6000 men.¹⁴ The French unit to be used as a building block will be the regiment, which, with some 800-1000 men, approximates the size of a German battalion. The brigade will consist of two battalion-sized units from each country. France will supply a light armored battalion equipped with AMX10RC wheeled reconnaissance vehicles and a motorized infantry battalion equipped with wheeled armored personnel carriers. Germany will furnish a motorized infantry battalion and an artillery battalion. Combat support (air defense, engineers) and service support (supply and maintenance units) will be divided between the two countries. The brigade will total some 4000 soldiers.

The lack of commonality in the types of equipment used by the French and the West Germans would render the operations of a brigade composed of armored and mechanized forces most difficult. It was thus proposed that the brigade be composed, initially at least, of parachute or light infantry units, whose lack of heavy equipment would tend to alleviate the worst of the sustainability problems.¹⁵ In the event, the French decided to use light armored and motorized units to avoid the worst aspects of this problem. These units are scheduled to come from the divisions of the *Force d'Action* stationed in France, rather than from the armored divisions assigned to the 2d French Corps in Germany. The German units will come from Home Defense Brigade 55, which is stationed in Böblingen. As Kohl had proposed, the brigade will be under the command of a French general initially, and command will rotate between the two countries.

The support infrastructure of the brigade poses a problem that threatens to retard the project. As noted above, despite a reasonably impressive



The French contribution to the joint brigade includes a light armored battalion equipped with AMX10RC wheeled vehicles (shown above) in lieu of tracked tanks.

record of armaments collaboration in the past (Transall, Alphajet, etc.), German and French army units have little equipment in common.¹⁶ Effective functioning of the brigade would seem to necessitate the adoption of certain common items of equipment, particularly major end items such as vehicles, weapons, and radios. Failure to do so would necessitate the maintenance of parallel logistics infrastructures, seriously degrading the combat effectiveness of the brigade. The brigade's current organization does not deal effectively with this problem.

Operational procedures are another difficult matter: the *Bundeswehr* is a fully integrated force within NATO, is accustomed to operating with NATO standardization agreements, and is proficient in the use of English as the de facto NATO operational language; *L'Armée de Terre*, on the other hand, employs operational concepts that differ in important ways from NATO's and has little operational need for any language other than French.¹⁷ To some extent this problem will be mitigated by using German territorial forces. Although there is substantial exchange training between the two armies at the platoon and company level, employment considerations for brigade-level operations require significant staff coordination in order to develop common operational concepts.¹⁸

The budgetary underwriting of such a brigade represents another potential difficulty. France, already committed to an extensive modernization program of its nuclear forces, may be tempted to resurrect the slogan of 1918: *L'Allemagne paiera!* ("Germany will pay!")¹⁹ Germany is clearly in a better

position to afford the presumed burden at present; however, this may not always be the case. It is, in any event, difficult to estimate how much such a brigade might require in additional outlays, particularly if existing units are used to man it.

Thus the idea of a joint brigade, while innovative and decidedly appealing to both the French and West German publics, remains fraught with a number of problems which threaten to render it stillborn. If it is just a symbol, lacking a meaningful mission, it will not likely receive the support of the two militaries; in order to have operational significance, it must overcome some big obstacles, many of them political.

The Joint Defense Council

At a joint news conference with Chancellor Kohl on 24 September 1987, French President Mitterrand proposed the establishment of a joint Franco-German defense council which would attempt to "coordinate decisions and harmonize analyses in the areas of security, defense, research, armaments and the organization and deployment of joint units."²⁰ He went on to declare that such an organization would be open to other European members as well, such as Italy and Spain.

Although the precise role and functioning of such an organization have yet to be specified, apparently the council would be more than just an amplification of the standing Committee for Security and Defense. Mitterrand stressed that its objective would be to coordinate political and economic policy as well as military policy.²¹ The council is likely to be made up of senior ministers and military officers.²² The idea of charging it with overall defense policy coordination holds out the possibility that it might have powers analogous to the French National Defense Council.²³ If so, it would represent an opportunity for policy coordination at the highest level.

It has been suggested that the council could serve as a link between France and NATO, while providing West Germany with an opportunity to gain information about and perhaps influence French nuclear targeting strategies.²⁴ The primary purpose of the council, however, would probably be to provide France with a way to enhance its leadership role in Europe without rejoining NATO's integrated military structure. German acquiescence in what is essentially a French initiative may be viewed as indicative of the Federal Republic's desire to reengage France in a commitment to forward defense in the Central Region.

A number of problems are associated with giving the council the power it needs to be truly effective. Given the existence of a number of other consultative bodies, such as the Western European Union, whose purpose is to provide a forum for policy coordination on defense issues, it is hard to see how the proposed defense council could play a significant role without

replicating the existing forums. The fact that it is essentially a French initiative renders the idea of such a council worthy of consideration, as France appears to be searching for an appropriate vehicle for its ambition of playing the leading role in European security. In any event, however, the French have made it clear that the council will have no supranational authority, with all questions of cooperation remaining within the competence of national authorities.²⁵

It seems reasonable to assume that domestic politics are likely to be the key factor in determining the success of the council. The current debate in France concerning the employment of tactical nuclear weapons, which has caused a significant gulf between the major parties of the *cohabitation* of government and President, as well as the widening gap between the ruling and opposition parties in Germany concerning security issues, has rendered any effort at serious cooperation hostage to internal political developments.²⁶ It is by no means evident that either side, and the French in particular, is prepared to endow the council with powers that would represent a distinct departure from past practice. Clearly, any policy coordination will likely have to await the consolidation of national positions.

The Combined Maneuver Bold Sparrow

The largest-ever Franco-German combined exercise took place in Bavaria from 17 to 25 September 1987. The primary purpose of the exercise was to determine how effectively units of France's *Force d'Action Rapide* could intervene in support of committed German units. The participants included 55,000 troops of the II German Corps (consisting of the 1st Mountain Division, 4th Armored Infantry Division, 10th Armored Division, and the 56th Home Defense Brigade) and 20,000 French troops of the *Force d'Action* (the 4th Airmobile Division and the 6th Light Armored Division, as well as smaller units from the 9th Marine Infantry Division and the 11th Parachute Division). The maneuver scenario envisioned the *Force d'Action* intervening at the request of German authorities and being placed under the operational control of II Corps in order to help stem an attack by a "red" aggressor and to assist in a subsequent counterattack.

The maneuver was significant for a number of reasons aside from the numbers of troops employed. It marked the first time that large units from the interior of France had participated in maneuvers beyond the Rhine and was also the first time that French units of the *Force d'Action* had been placed under the operational control of a West German commander. Moreover, it was the first large-scale test of the *Force d'Action* itself, which was created in 1983 specifically for the purpose of intervening at long distances in support of allies. For the exercise, some units of the *Force d'Action* had to move more than 1200 kilometers just to reach the exercise area.

While the actual conduct of the exercise posed no insurmountable problems, a number of important questions have arisen as a result of the exercise. The first concerns that of French nuclear strategy. The divisions of the *Force d'Action* participated in the exercise without the nuclear fire support planning that French doctrine dictates for all French units. Indeed, the planning for the employment of French tactical nuclear weapons played no role whatsoever in the exercise. This has caused significant debate about the role of the *Force d'Action* in the national deterrent scheme. It remains unclear how French authorities would actually employ their intervention force—whether it is intended to operate independently, with or without nuclear coverage, or with the 1st French Army, as part of the national nuclear deterrent array.²⁷ In this sense the combined maneuver begged more questions than it answered.

A second problem area involved the organization of the *Force d'Action* itself. The two complete divisions employed in the exercise represented about half of the total strength of the five-division *Force*, but nearly all its helicopters and tanks. While the 4th Division, equipped with over 200 helicopters, seemed to acquit itself well, serious questions were raised regarding the combat effectiveness of the light wheeled tanks of the 6th.²⁸ The transit distances of the 6th Division, with its headquarters at Nîmes in southern France, to a battle area in Germany, raise questions about just how rapid the *Force d'Action* can be in responding to an order to engage in combat in support of the West Germans. During the exercise the *Force* was required to operate far in advance of its support bases; in fact, it operated in advance of *Bundeswehr* units and thus had to rely on German support rather than its own logistics organization. It is most unlikely that the *Force d'Action* would be employed in this fashion in actual combat.

Related to this problem is the question of interoperability. Many of the problems already alluded to in the discussion of the joint brigade surfaced during the exercise: lack of familiarity with operational procedures, language difficulties, and the logistics problems created by the use of non-standardized equipment. Some French officers have estimated that it will take a decade before French and German units are truly interoperable.²⁹ Moreover, it is the French who will undoubtedly have to adapt their procedures to those of NATO, since the Germans can hardly do the reverse.

The last major problem area during the exercise involved the chain of command. The French insisted that the exercise take place without NATO sponsorship; to that end they refused to invite General Galvin, the Supreme Allied Commander, or General Altenburg, chairman of the NATO Military Committee, to visit the exercise. This created a number of problems for the West Germans, as II German Corps is directly subordinated to NATO and required the permission of the SACEUR to participate in the exercise. The French sought to portray the maneuver as a strictly bilateral exercise, thus creating an aura of unreality—it would be highly unlikely for a West German

corps to demand reinforcement outside of NATO channels in combat. With certain exceptions, the French have indicated that they remain largely opposed to maneuvers within the NATO framework, although there is some evidence that this may be changing.³⁰

What Conclusions Can Be Drawn?

Driven by the imperatives of a changing security situation in Europe, Franco-German military cooperation has clearly turned a page and begun the process of living up to the expectations envisioned as long ago as 1963. The initiatives of 1987 form a definite and ambitious start; the obstacles, however, are many.

Of those initiatives, the proposal for a joint defense council holds the most promise of fundamental change and therefore is likely to be the most difficult to achieve. The participants have so far demonstrated little propensity for sacrificing the degree of national sovereignty necessary to provide such a council with the authority necessary to deal with the magnitude of change taking place in Europe. Europeans have little need of another consultative body that can, and thus will, be ignored.

The joint brigade probably is a lasting innovation. The political stakes are quite high, and it is clear that both the German and French publics would like to see this gesture succeed. In order to achieve this, the strategic and operational difficulties described above probably will be set aside in the interests of harmony. The French and Germans realize that the symbolism of the brigade is so significant that its creation has an imperative of its own, and thus they need not await resolution of the outstanding difficulties.

The future is likely to see a substantial increase in the number of combined training exercises, though their scale is likely to remain modest to limit interoperability problems and questions of NATO sponsorship. These exercises are much desired by the respective militaries, particularly the French, as they permit a kind of functional reintegration without the attendant political difficulties.

France and Germany, and all Western Europe, for that matter, must overcome a history that is replete with failure in the field of common military undertakings. NATO is, perhaps, the shining success. But for political reasons NATO is not likely to be the venue for progress on this front. France in particular feels obligated to find another vehicle for its ambitions, but past performance cannot be considered encouraging. The initiatives reviewed above will amount to little if fundamental changes are not made in the strategic and budgetary postures of the participants.

Unless these fundamental changes are made, it will become increasingly difficult to reconcile a France which, despite the creation of the *Force d'Action Rapide*, has become more nuclear than ever and threatens to increase

this dependence with a West Germany in the process of becoming more conventionally oriented.³¹ Given the dual imperatives of a prospective reduction in the American presence in Europe and a markedly improved Soviet conventional posture, the possibility that France and Germany might act in concert is not to be dismissed. They might start with agreement on Adenauer's warning that "*Die Lage war nie so ernst!*"³²

NOTES

1. This is not to imply that significant efforts have not been made in the past, despite their lack of success, such as the European Defense Community and the Multilateral Nuclear Force. Rather, one of the important effects of the INF Treaty has been to spur European efforts to consider alternatives or adjustments to current security arrangements. For a short survey of those alternatives, see David Yost, *Alternative Structures of European Security*, Working Paper No. 81 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1987).

2. French desires to reformulate the alliance seemed to challenge the German notion that NATO's primary purpose was the security of Germany as the linchpin of Europe. For a related discussion, see Nicole Gnesotto, "Der Sicherheitspolitische Dialog 1954 bis 1986," and Lothar Rühl, "Der Aufschwung der Sicherheitspolitischen Zusammenarbeit seit 1982," in *Deutsche-Französische Sicherheitspolitik*, ed. Karl Kaiser and Pierre Lellouche (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1986), pp. 5-26, 27 (published in French under the title *Le Couple Franco-Allemand et la Défense de l'Europe*).

3. Hans-Jürgen Rautenberg, "Das Ende der 'Erbfeindschaft,'" *Der Mittler-Brief* (3d quarter, 1987), p. 3.

4. Gnesotto, pp. 11-12.

5. Rühl, pp. 27-30.

6. For a discussion of the organization of these subcommittees, see Hartman Bühl and Christian Millotat, "Die Intensivierung der Deutsch-Französischen Zusammenarbeit seit 1982," *Der Mittler-Brief* (3d quarter, 1987), p. 4.

7. Bühl and Millotat, p. 4.

8. In 1984, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt made a number of sweeping proposals aimed at increasing European military cooperation. These included a Franco-German army of 30 divisions under French command.

9. Additional initiatives include seminars for general staff officers from both countries and increases in exchange training.

10. French command of the brigade is a German proposal.

11. General E. Copel, "Des unités allemandes en France: Pourquoi Pas?" *Défense Active* (July-August 1987), p. 1. General Copel has also proposed that the French permit *Luftwaffe* units to be stationed in France as a gesture of reciprocity and to ameliorate the problems posed by the lack of airspace in Germany. See also Jacques Richard, "Brigade franco-allemande: un traité d'union sur le Rhin," *Nice-Matin*, 24 July 1987, p. 1.

12. "French, Germans Discuss Army Units," *International Herald Tribune*, 7 July 1987, p. 2.

13. Although the *Territorialheer* is not a NATO-committed force, some of its units carry out NATO missions. For example, some 90,000 soldiers of the *Territorialheer* are committed to assisting in the arrival of US reinforcements under recent Host Nation Support agreements.

14. French organizational structures make comparisons difficult: for example, the 12th and 14th Light Armored Divisions have less than 6000 soldiers each; the 4th Airmobile division some 6500 and the 6th Light Armored Division 7600. By comparison, German *Panzer* divisions range between 17,000 and 21,000; US armored divisions have some 16,000. In US terminology, a brigade is a tactical headquarters to which units are assigned according to mission requirements, while German brigades have a fixed structure, usually totaling some 3500 soldiers. French regiments (800-1000 men) are more strictly analogous to US and German battalions, rather than US regiments, which approximate brigade-sized structures.

15. Kurt Kister, "Die Gemeinsame Verteidigung ist nur eine Fassade," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 June 1987, p. 6.

16. Due primarily to France's position outside the integrated military command, commonality of equipment between French and German units is nearly zero. Even some consumables, such as munitions, differ markedly. For example, while both nations share Milan antitank and Roland anti-aircraft missiles,

artillery and tank munitions are not wholly interchangeable; nor are some small arms ammunition. See David C. Isby and Charles Kamps, Jr., *Armies of NATO's Central Front* (London: Jane's Publishing Company, Ltd., 1985), p. 107; and David Yost, *France and Conventional Defense in Central Europe*, EAI Paper No. 7 (Marina Del Ray, Calif.: European American Institute for Security Research, 1984), p. 40.

17. Twenty years of acting as the conventional component of the *Manoeuvre de dissuasion nationale* has had a profound impact on the French army's view of its operational role. Although organized to facilitate offensive action in support of nuclear strikes (and thus lacking the support infrastructure necessary for an extended defense), French planning exercises nevertheless tend to emphasize defensive and retrograde operations. The French, who hold that military forces must be designed to prevent a war, not fight one that cannot be won, tend to draw a distinction between deterrence and defense. This bifurcation has left some army officers unsure of how to adapt the national strategy to increased cooperation with the Germans, who are wholly committed to defending forward.

18. Exchange training of general staff officers has recently been emphasized by both countries. The Germans would like to quadruple the number of officers attending the French general staff college; there is some doubt that the French would like to (or are able to) reciprocate.

19. The current French *Loi de programmation* for the years 1988-92 emphasizes nuclear forces at the expense of conventional forces; the acquisition of expensive new systems (such as the *Leclerc* main battle tank) will undoubtedly limit the funds available for cooperative ventures such as the joint brigade. The quotation refers to French demands for German reparations at the end of the First World War. See Pierre Lellouche, "Une Brigade sur terrain miné," *Le Point*, 29 June 1987, p. 73.

20. "Paris, Bonn Propose Joint Military Council," *International Herald Tribune*, 26 September 1987, p. 1.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. Giovanni de Briganti, "French Leader: Others May Join Defense Council," *Defense News*, 28 September 1987, pp. 1, 48.

24. *International Herald Tribune*, 26 September 1987, p. 1.

25. On this point there seem to be no problems regarding *cohabitation*; all the parties are in agreement on the question of national sovereignty.

26. In Germany, the Social Democrats have staked out a position far to the left of the mainstream. It includes negotiating an "understanding" on foreign policy with the Communist Party of East Germany, which effectively incorporates the Soviet perspective on security in Europe. The Social Democrats also advocate a new "defensive" defense for Europe, which would rely principally upon lightly armed militias to defend against a "benign" Soviet threat. French military cooperation with any such future SPD government must be considered problematical. See Robert Keatly, "Theory of Defensive Defense Offers Europe Unrealistic Plan of Protection," *The Wall Street Journal*, 6 November 1987, p. 2.

27. The precise role of the *Force d'Action Rapide* remains unclear. It has been referred to as a tool of crisis management rather than as a warfighting instrument. This may account for some of its weaknesses in terms of sustainability and combat power. In essence, there are two such forces, one for central Europe and one for overseas contingencies, though no formal division exists as such. The French apparently intend to remain able to employ the *Force d'Action* in central Europe independently of the First Army, though this creates serious questions of logistics support. The force would be heavily dependent on German logistical support. This, in turn, raises the problem of interoperability.

28. While the 4th Division appears to constitute a potent fighting force, there is some question regarding the combat value of the 6th. Its primary source of striking power resides in the two tank regiments (battalions), each with 36 AMX 10RC wheeled combat vehicles. This vehicle, originally designed as a reconnaissance vehicle, but now pressed into service as a light tank, has performed well in Chad and elsewhere, but there is considerable doubt about its effectiveness against current- and future-generation Soviet tanks. See Pierre Lellouche, "'Moineau Hardi': envol difficile," *Le Point*, 5 October 1987, p. 65.

29. *Ibid.*

30. The mishandling of the invitations created a very embarrassing situation, as the invitations had already been sent and the French demanded that they be recalled. Regarding French participation in NATO exercises, this appears to be on the increase, despite French government denials. See François Puaux, "'Moineau Hardi': un bilan modeste," *Le Figaro*, 8 October 1987, p. 2; Lellouche, "'Moineau Hardi': envol difficile," p. 65; and Simon O'Dwyer-Russell, "French join Nato exercise," *Sunday Telegraph*, 9 August 1987, p. 1.

31. Karl Kaiser and Pierre Lellouche, "Das Deutsche-Französische Duo und die Sicherheit Europas: Gesamtschau und Empfehlungen," *Deutsche-Französische Sicherheitspolitik*, pp. 204-305, and Yost, *Alternative Structures*, p. 41.

32. "The situation was never so serious!"