

THE POSITION OF FRANCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

4 March 1963

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION--Vice Admiral Rufus E. Rose, USN, Commandant, Industrial College of the Armed Forces	1
SPEAKER--His Excellency Herve Alphan, Ambassador of France to the United States	1

NOTICE

This is a transcript of material presented to the resident students at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. As such it represents the views of the author and not necessarily those of the Industrial College or the Department of Defense. Members of the College may quote it only in student reports or publications for use within the College. Other persons may not quote or extract for publication, reproduce, or otherwise copy this material without specific permission from the author and from the Commandant, ICAF, in each case.

Publication No. L63-136

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

His Excellency Herve Alphand, Ambassador of France to the United States, was born on 31 May 1907 in Paris, France. He was educated at Lycee Janson de Sailly and Ecole des Sciences Politiques. In 1930, the Ambassador started that which was to be a long and continuous career in the service of his country when he became an official with the French Treasury. Subsequently he became Financial Agent to the Turkish Government, 1934; Inspector of Finance and Director, Trade Agreements Division, Ministry of Commerce, 1937-1938; Financial Counsellor to the Embassy, Washington, D. C., 1940-1941; Director of Economic Affairs for French National Committee in London, 1941-1944; and Director-General, Economic Financial and Technical Affairs, French Foreign Office, 1945. He was appointed to the rank of ambassador and as such served as the President of the French Delegation to OEEC, Washington, D. C., in 1949. Following this he served as French Deputy to the Atlantic Council, 1950; Ambassador and French delegate, NATO Permanent Council, 1952-1954; Ambassador to Japan, 1954; and Ambassador and French delegate to the United Nations, 1955-1956. He has been Ambassador of the French Republic to the United States since September 1956. This is Ambassador Alphan's first lecture at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

THE POSITION OF FRANCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

4 March 1963

ADMIRAL ROSE: Gentlemen: Before I say anything else, I would like to welcome the large number of visitors we have today. I am sure it is not necessary, but I want to remind them of one of the customs of the College: What is said in these four walls does not leave these four walls.

In continuing our study of the international scene and the relationship of various countries to the Communist-free world blocs, we shall hear today about a longtime friend and ally of the United States, the Republic of France.

When considering a speaker for the scope of today's subject, "The Position of France in World Affairs," I can think of only one man who would be in a better position to address us than our guest. With all due respect, sir, that man would be your President.

Ambassador Alphand has served his country for more than 32 years in the fields of finance, economics, and political science. Many of these years were in the Foreign Service, the last 15 of which were served at the ambassadorial level. He has had direct association with the OEEC, the NATO Permanent Council, and the United Nations. In short, gentlemen, there are few men in this world with better qualifications to discuss the objectives of France and relate these to the international scene.

It is an honor and privilege for me to present to the students and faculty of the Industrial College His Excellency, Herve Alphand, the Ambassador of the French Republic to the United States.

AMBASSADOR ALPHAND: Gentlemen: I am very honored indeed to have this opportunity to talk to you today, you of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the great group of guests.

I think it is timely to speak about our problems. It is timely because apparently some differences appear between us--not between

you and me but between our two Governments. I can assure you from the beginning that they are not profound differences. After all, as Thomas Jefferson used to say, "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle," I think there are differences of opinion. I don't think there are differences of principle between France and the United States.

Differences between allies are always less important, of course, than differences and tension between enemies. Anyway, I must confess to you that I am accustomed to these crises. I arrived here six and a half years ago in the middle of the crisis that was called the Suez crisis. It was in September 1956, and, when I arrived at the Washington airfield at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, somebody told me, "You have to be in the Secretary of State's office at 3:15." So, without presenting my credentials, I came to see Mr. Foster Dulles, whom I knew for a long time. He said to me, "Herve, we are in the middle of a crisis." And I said to him, "Foster, yes, we are in the middle of a crisis for 1500 years, and you for only 200 years."

But some say that these crises are, in a way, provoked by diplomats because it is healthy for them, it is good for their balance. I can assure you that I don't provoke the crises that come automatically to me. But it is true to say that it is in life better to be worried than to be bored. And with all these crises I can tell you that we have had some worries in Washington, but I have never been bored for the last six and a half years.

I think my subject today would be mainly concentrated on the Western defense and the views of France about these vast problems of the defense of the West.

We live in a time and in a world where the conditions of defense have been entirely transformed by one fact, a new fact, threatening at every moment the life of every nation. This fact, of course, is the atomic fact. Until the end of the 19th century, wars were murderous but they spared the civilian population and were generally settled by the loss of a province. During the last two world wars, of course, entire countries were flung into the conflict and suffered millions of casualties, huge destructions of capital, and losses which profoundly changed the world's balance.

However, today the problem appears in a basically and totally different perspective: a generalized thermonuclear war could annihilate everything in a few minutes. Truly, the future of our planet and of the human race would be at stake. It is therefore easy to see

why this new factor completely upsets old political, strategic, and even moral concepts. We must face, with a good deal of imagination, and with a complete new approach, the difficulties of a situation which never has existed before; this explains the surprising turn that our relations with our opponents has taken and also sometimes the various roads followed by the allies when they try to solve problems that have never arisen before.

As far as France is concerned, she approaches these extremely complex questions with realism and also with modesty inspired by the fact that in our modern world her power is relatively limited when compared with the gigantic power of the United States and of the U. S. S. R. She is inspired by two principles in her search for possible solutions. On one hand--this is the first principle--she feels that a country of her size must maintain its own national defense, that the task of protecting its population against any threat must remain above all the government's responsibility in case of danger, and that it is the only way for her to mobilize and use with the utmost efficiency all the nation's resources. On the other hand, and this is the second principle, she knows very well that one nation, and especially ours, could not, under present circumstances, fight alone a big war and that, to recall General de Gaulle's expression, "having Allies is natural in the historic period in which we live."

Alliance and independence--such are the two key words of France's defense policy today--these are the words to remember when answering many slanted or erroneous interpretations of our intentions.

An independent national defense requires in the first place certain indispensable political and economic conditions. I think that these conditions are realized today through a democratic process. France, in the course of the last five years, has accomplished a profound transformation of her institutions so as to assure stability for her government, a separation of powers, leaving to Parliament the task of voting laws but without the right to interfere with executive responsibility, and a protection of the fundamental liberties of man.

This political stability has made possible an unequaled economic expansion. Today our gross national product increases by 6 percent each year and reaches one of the highest levels in the Western World. Everywhere new industries are springing up, everywhere old plants are being modernized, thanks to the combined action of free competition and a planning system which is not authoritarian.

The present rise of prices that we see today and the social tensions that it brings along are but the result of a very harsh winter and of a situation of overemployment which contribute to the increase of wages. Our balance of payments is positive, so that since 1958 our gold and currency reserves have increased by some \$3 billion and have not reached \$3.85 billion. Not only have we ceased to appeal to the generous aid of our friends--and especially of the United States of America--but we are capable of paying back in advance our external debts. In this way, a true French renaissance has been made possible in all fields, whether scientific, social, or technical. This renaissance constitutes the necessary support for the creation of a modern national defense.

At this point I would like to give you some figures to show that--contrary to certain comments--France in this field is neither negligent nor lazy. Our military budget represents 7 percent of our gross national product, as against 10.4 percent in the United States, 7.2 percent in England, 3.9 percent in Italy, and 3.4 percent in Belgium. It is normal that the French ratio should be slightly inferior to that of the United States because our per capita income reaches only 40 percent of America's, and in all times the proportion of military expenditures has been relatively higher in richer countries. I will add that, though France is now freed of the enormous burden of her 19th century colonial obligations and the war of Algeria, she still brings a greater contribution than any other country in the world to the common task of helping underdeveloped countries. Our contribution in this field reaches 3.41 percent of our national product, as against 0.97 percent for Germany. The end of the war in Algeria, where 440,000 officers and men were still stationed a year ago, is allowing us to bring back a great part of these forces to Europe, to reduce military service to 18 months, and to add to our labor force a great many workers which were badly needed.

At the same time, we are reorganizing our military forces which will be divided into three groups. The first will be devoted to what we call the defense of the national territory; the second will be what we call a force of intervention; and the third will include our strategic nuclear forces. Let me expand my remarks on the two last groups.

What we call the intervention forces are those which must be ready to act at any time in the air, on land, or on the seas, and fight in France or outside of France. In particular they include the French forces now in Germany and also a division specialized for overseas operations in order to fulfill our obligations toward the African

countries to which we are bound by defense agreements. All those divisions, even if they are not all placed under the NATO command, will fight against the common enemy, should Europe be attacked.

To give you an idea of our effort in this field, I will say that our active forces represent now some 2 percent of our population, as compared to 1.5 percent in the United States, and 1 percent in England.

The last element of our national defense is our atomic force, which is now building. So much has been written in the world press on this question that I feel that I owe you some explanation.

France intends to constitute, little by little, her own atomic force, and it will start becoming operational in a few months. As General de Gaulle said, this force "will have the somber and terrible capacity to destroy in a few instants millions and millions of men." At first, it will consist of supersonic bombers, later of rockets and of submarines capable of shooting nuclear and thermonuclear bombs.

The French decision to acquire this arm does not imply at all a lack of confidence in the commitments undertaken by our allies and especially by the United States. We acknowledge on one hand that American nuclear power is gigantic and that ours will be very modest in comparison and, on the other hand, that these American arms still remain today the essential guarantee of world peace.

Therefore, why should we ask to have our own atomic force? In fact, we do not know what the international conditions will be 5, 10, or 15 years from now, and whether there will not be some cases then when France's interests will be threatened while those of her allies may not be involved in the same degree. It therefore seems normal to us for our own protection to have at our disposal a force which, though limited, would make an eventual adversary think twice before trying to blackmail us.

Our position on this, I must say, is not very different from the position of Great Britain, as was explained recently by the Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan. The difference is that we are building this force without the help of anyone. No aid has been offered to us and we do not ask for any. In the majority of cases, we believe that this force will constitute a not insignificant addition to the forces of the Allies and to the Western deterrent.

I do not think that anyone should reproach France for wanting to acquire a modern defense. France's rights in this matter are not limited by international commitments, as Germany's are. Up to the time when aggression and occupation stopped us in our track, we were holding a leading rank in the atomic scientific field. The development of a nuclear force greatly contributes to opening to our technicians, engineers, and industrialists new fields directly connected to the exploration of the atom.

I will add that the creation of such a force does not appear to be beyond our financial or technical capacities, because our particular objectives to deter are not as vast as yours. We do not pretend to realize a global missile and, even without the help of secret information, we still benefit from experiments made by others before us on the road on which we are now engaged.

And this explains, gentlemen, and justifies, in my view, our position regarding this vital problem.

Now we come to the second aspect of our defense policy. The second aspect, as I told you, is the Alliance. I want to stress before you that, so long as the threat directed against the Western World lasts, the Atlantic Alliance is in our view indispensable to our common survival. The most recent events and Soviet statements unfortunately force us to believe that the danger is still present.

This means that all the rumors spread about either the French intention to destroy the Alliance or our desire to constitute a third force in Europe to play the role of an arbiter between East and West are absurd and quite groundless. I must add that no French official voice has formulated the wish, as it has been advanced, for the American divisions' departure from Europe. It simply seems wise to us to foresee that in a probably distant future they might partly or entirely be withdrawn. This possible move would have to be done without harming the security of the West or the existence of the Alliance.

If we desire to build a strong France and a strong Europe, it is to strengthen the Western World--it is not to create a neutral power. It is to allow it to better resist all that might imperil its independence, its principles, and a civilization we share in common.

But it is true to say that, on the other hand, the form of this necessary alliance, the form it acquired when NATO was created

13 years ago, does not appear to us entirely adapted to present circumstances. We are not the only ones to think so. You, too, are trying to better adapt the organization of our alliance to the present needs.

What essential change has occurred since the creation of NATO? In 1950, the United States alone possessed a nuclear arsenal. It could use it without fear of retaliation for the defense of its European allies. In 1963, the U. S. S. R. has also constructed a weapon of massive destruction. She claims to be able to use it on the very soil of the United States. Therefore, willingly or not, we must admit that a profound transformation has occurred in the technical and strategic conditions that we must necessarily take into account. This is the present objective of the studies and extremely complex negotiations started by the Western camp and which bear chiefly on the respective role of conventional and atomic armaments, on the means to prevent dissemination of nuclear weapons, on the methods to make Europe more responsible for its defense, et cetera.

One aspect of this change in the situation has been the agreement concluded between the United States and Great Britain at Nassau concerning the formation of an atomic force, called multinational and multilateral, composed of means brought by the United States, Great Britain, and perhaps some other countries, and in particular of submarines or surface ships carrying Polaris missiles. By this agreement Great Britain could build her own atomic warheads and submarines and buy from America the Polaris missiles. In case her supreme national interest should be at stake, England could then withdraw her own atomic means from the multinational force.

Your government has asked us if we were willing to enter into a similar agreement. As you know, in his press conference on 14 January, General de Gaulle answered that we could not, and explained why.

First, as I recalled at the beginning of this lecture, and for perfectly natural reasons, France wants to have her own independent nuclear force. Therefore the idea of participating in an integrated force is contrary to her policy. This is the political reason that led to our refusal.

But there are also technical reasons that prevented us from accepting a similar offer to that which Great Britain might find satisfactory for herself. How do we know if we can build thermonuclear warheads and submarines adaptable to the Polaris missile? In this

field, we are far less advanced than our British friends and years may pass before we can catch up with them. Would it be, therefore, reasonable for us to make the great financial and technical effort in which we are engaged to build a French atomic force and, at the same time, the supplementary effort that would be necessary for us to participate in the Atlantic multinational force? As the President of the French Republic has said, "To us, in a technical sense, this matter cannot be considered at the present time."

Does that mean that in this case we are adopting an entirely negative attitude which could be embarrassing for our allies? I do not think so. I believe that there has been a tendency to somehow dramatize this situation and to ignore the constructive elements to be found in the presentation of our views. If we wish, under certain circumstances, to be able to use alone our own atomic deterrent force, we do not exclude at all--and this, I believe, would happen in a great majority of predictable cases--the combination of the action of our small atomic force with the enormous force of the United States and that of Great Britain. We do not refuse either cooperation in technical and strategic fields; but here again this cooperation has also to be desired by our allies. It is in such a direction, I believe, that could be usefully sought the possibilities of modifying or of completing the organization of the Atlantic Alliance.

Defense, with its new aspects, poses hard problems to each of us and perhaps is the cause of some misunderstandings and even of some quarrels among friends. Let us always try to see what unites us rather than what has a tendency to separate us.

France and the United States are in complete agreement as to the necessity of a common action to protect the Western World from the imperialism coming from the East. We both think that the relations between us must be those that exist between free peoples, and that if the destiny of Europe does not lie in becoming an intermediary neutral force it cannot be either the satellite of another power. It was your President who spoke about an association of equal partners. One must admit that in the atomic era it is difficult to find formulae to conciliate those two notions of alliance and independence about which I previously spoke. We do not, however, despair of finding them.

Moreover, all we accomplish together in such a direction has a higher and more distant objective than the maintenance of a balance of terror in the world as is now practiced. Together with you we believe that the day will come when the countries of the East will

understand that it is useless to threaten us and risk a global cataclysm. Both of us aspire to the "detente" which will make it possible to approach the real problems of mankind. I mean disarmament-- not just putting a stop to nuclear tests, as that does not constitute real disarmament, but the progressive destruction of atomic arms and of their vehicles under international control. I mean also the common effort to be made by all the industrial countries of the world to bring aid to those 2 billion human beings who still live like their ancestors in the greatest physical and moral misery and who need us in order to progress.

It is to those tasks, gentlemen, that we must devote ourselves, because finally they are the only ones that count. I am sure that France and the United States, following their secular tradition and ignoring the temporary difficulties met on the way, will continue to walk side by side in order to secure greater happiness for the whole world in freedom and in peace.

COLONEL SMILEY: Ambassador Alphand, we of the Industrial College are indeed indebted to you sir, for spending your time with us today and sharing with us your vast knowledge, understanding, and experience, not only in the problems of France but with the rest of the free world as well.

Thank you very much.

(6 June 1963--7, 600)O/ekh:en