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Enlightening the Debate on Good Governance

France and the Definition of the European Interest

JACQUES CHIRAC



European Essay No.17

A Definition of Federalism

Federalism is defined as 'a system of government in which central and regional authorities are linked in an interdependent political relationship, in which powers and functions are distributed to achieve a substantial degree of autonomy and integrity in the regional units. In theory, a federal system seeks to maintain a balance such that neither level of government becomes sufficiently dominant to dictate the decision of the other, unlike in a unitary system, in which the central authorities hold primacy to the extent even of redesigning or abolishing regional and local units of government at will.'

(New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought)

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Introduction

Each year the President of France addresses all his country's ambassadors at a special meeting in Paris to assess French diplomacy, its aims and intentions, its successes and failures over the preceding twelve months. It is an opportunity for the President to survey international affairs and to highlight future developments where he expects France's ambassadors to secure advantages for France's national interests.

This year the meeting was called at the end of August and President Chirac's speech received media attention, even in Britain. This was chiefly because of the views he expressed on Europe, calling in particular for a Constitution. Much of what he said built on his earlier important speech to the Bundestag (reproduced by the Federal Trust as *European Essay* No. 9), but in this speech he goes further, stressing the scope for a vanguard group of member states specifically in a Common Foreign and Security Policy, and underlining the nature of European interests over and above those of the nation states.

The passage on Europe and the CFSP is particularly interesting since it raises by implication a host of issues that will be fiercely debated in the run-up to the 2004 ICC, and possibly thereafter. His call for a European

Constitution is central to the post-Nice agenda. It is aimed at enhancing a common European identity, enabling Europe to speak more clearly in international affairs because it has better defined the values for which it stands internally as well. President Chirac calls also for the definition of a 'European interest' that is 'much more than a compromise between the interests of its member States.' Here he seems to posit an ambition for European foreign policy which goes beyond what has been achieved so far, introducing a dynamic element which could encourage member States to change their usually well entrenched positions in the interests of an innovatory joint position. Taken in conjunction with President Chirac's stress on the disparity between Europe's economic strength and its relative weakness politically on the international scene, this could herald a major development of the Union's diplomatic presence in the rest of the world.

But the speech merits reflection not only for these specific points already mentioned. It is instructive in its own right as an insight at the highest level into French policy relating to Europe and to the wider world. And it is instructive as a comparative instrument, for how much of this could have been said by Prime Ministers Blair, Schröder, Berlusconi and Aznar? By substituting Britain, Germany, Italy or Spain for France in the numerous occasions when it occurs in this speech, could these words have been addressed to those states' ambassadors as well? If on reading this speech you feel they could, you will appreciate how far the member States have progressed already along the road of a Common Foreign and Security Policy. If not, you will realise how far we still have to go.

Martyn Bond
Director of The Federal Trust
September 2001

Paris, 9th French Ambassadors' conference / 27. 08. 2001

France and the Definition of the European Interest

Jacques Chirac

President of the Republic

Here we are again at the opening of another Ambassadors' conference, convened by the Foreign Minister. It gives me the opportunity, before you return to your posts, to set out my thoughts on world developments and the ongoing efforts to defend France's interests and promote our values.

I shall talk to you today about Europe, the new strategic situation, our endeavours to promote peace and, finally, the organization of international society.

Europe

From the outset, France has provided Europe with the inspiration it needs. The past few years have seen new challenges taken up: the euro, which in a few months will become the currency of 300 million

Europeans; Defence Europe, relaunched in Saint-Malo, which is making the EU a genuine player in the international arena; and, finally, the enlargement, made possible thanks to the Treaty of Nice which is going to set the seal on the continent's reunification and entrench peace and democracy within it.

Those milestones passed, new prospects have been outlined. Under French presidency we decided to launch a great debate on Europe's future, which will be completed by an intergovernmental conference in 2004.

Essentially, the matters for debate are those I had identified in my speech to the Bundestag: delimitation of powers between the EU and its individual member States in order to clarify who does what in Europe; simplification of the treaties to make them clearer and better understood; preparation of the institutional changes needed to make our decision-making system more efficient; provision of a greater role for national Parliaments so that the EU operates more democratically; and, finally, definition of the legal status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights so as to provide a firmer basis for our common values.

We shall have to move towards getting Europe to do more within the framework, advocated by France, of a Federation of Nation-States.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

When it comes to Europe's external action, let us not underestimate the progress achieved over the past few years. Europe's voice, through the High Representative, today Mr Solana, is now heard in the Balkans as it is in Sharm el Sheikh. He is recognized as a leading interlocutor in the international arena. The Political and Security Committee, created

by the Nice Treaty, has started working and every day is increasingly becoming the mainspring of the CFSP. It is constantly involved in crisis management.

Over the next few months, the European defence capabilities already decided on will be established and, if necessary, updated. The arrangements negotiated with NATO are satisfactory. They guarantee that Defence Europe will be built in harmony with the Alliance. Without unnecessary duplication, they ensure the decision-making autonomy of the EU which must be able, where appropriate, to operate using its assets alone. So at the end of the year, the machinery conceived in Saint-Malo will be operational. We have come a long way in the past three years!

This new capacity for action will, of course, be used in priority to deal with crises directly affecting the EU's security. Should we go beyond that? Personally, I am in favour of doing so since I consider that it is Europe's natural role and in its interest to make a significant contribution to implementing UN peacekeeping operations.

For years, the United Nations Secretary-General has been trying to find solutions to the problem of rapidly and efficiently deploying peacekeeping operations decided on by the Security Council. Everyone knows that the first few months of an operation are obviously the hardest - those when it is being set up. It's here that Europe could make a useful, or even decisive contribution. In fact, thanks to its new projection capabilities, the EU could, on the basis of course of an agreement concluded with the United Nations, be asked to launch certain operations before others take over.

But, despite this progress, people still picture the European Union as an economic giant whose political weight is not commensurate with

its position in the world. Its member States still too frequently disagree both on fundamentals and methods. On the foreign policy front, the EU's ambitions are uneven. Declarations issued under the Common Foreign and Security Policy too often reflect the lowest common denominator. How can we make Europe carry greater weight on the international stage? How can we give it the thrust and magnetism it lacks in this sphere? For the next few years, I suggest several avenues which, if taken together, could provide an answer.

- First we need to strengthen the feeling of European identity. If they are to express strong positions to the outside world, EU member countries must assert more clearly their common benchmarks, the values, principles to which they are committed. Here the adoption of a Constitution would help. Such a text would bring the Europeans together, allowing them through an act of solemn approval to identify with a project. I note with interest that this idea, which I have had occasion to put forward, is gaining ground. Let's see to it that this happens in 2004.

- We then need to go on extending the field of the EU's external action. Of course, we shall have to be discriminating, but some issues with a strong international dimension call for greater integration. This is the case of policies on immigration, refugees, the fight against organized crime, drugs and prostitution. On all these issues which affect our fellow citizens' daily lives and on which they are asking for Europe to do more, we need to go further. Let's keep in mind the strength and efficacy the common trading policy has brought Europe and our country.

- But the institutions must also be adapted. In the international sphere, I think there must be three objectives. First of all, on the main international issues, we must encourage the quest for common analyses

and, above all, the definition of the European interest which is much more than a compromise between the interests of its member States. Secondly, we need to ensure that Europe's voice is heard strongly, consistently and over the long term. Finally, we must secure complementarity and coherence between the EU's different organs and instruments.

Long-term action, coherence, the ability to define what is in Europe's interest and carry it out are indispensable. Yet today the achievement of these three prerequisites is not fully within the remit of those in charge of handling the EU's external policy, i.e. the Presidency, High Representative and Commission. Remedying this will be one of France's priorities in the institutional reform being set in train.

- Finally, I think that to move forward after the enlargement, Europe will need a vanguard, a pioneer group, as I outlined in my speech to the Bundestag. The foreign and security policy naturally lends itself to more substantial cooperation within a group of States, open to all those who want to go further and do so more quickly. By adopting convergent positions on essential foreign policy issues and jointly carrying out defence projects, some countries, as experience has proved, can be a driving force benefiting all those who want to join in the effort.

International Security / Missile Defence

At a time when Europeans are thinking more deeply about Europe's future, another essential debate is getting under way. It concerns the conditions of collective security and is beginning to take shape in the wake of President Bush's decisions signalling the United States' intention to develop a missile defence system.

I have expressed France's concern about this programme whose details, particularly the envisaged systems and timetable, aren't yet known. These concerns remain. At this stage, we are keen to pursue the ongoing bilateral dialogue with our American allies and in NATO. When the time comes, after consulting all the players concerned and in the first place our European partners, we shall make our position known.

As I stressed in my speech to the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies on 8 June, the proliferation-related risks, albeit not new in any way, take on another dimension when they combine the devastating nature of the weapons of mass destruction with the means of propelling them over great distances thanks to ballistic technologies. There's no single response to this new threat. Political means must not be neglected. Deterrence guarantees the protection of our vital interests. And the missile defence capabilities, at the heart of the debate, whose efficacy and consequences must be assessed, are far from constituting a new panacea. I think that their development should in any event take account of two imperatives:

- first of all, these missile defence capabilities must on no account weaken the international prevention policy. Admittedly, the nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation efforts, patiently developed over decades, have not been flawless. But they have made it possible to prevent or curb some harmful projects which otherwise would certainly have been pursued. These efforts must not get bogged down. Relaunching them has become essential.

Of all the States, the European Union member countries are very probably the best placed to draw attention to what is at stake and restore impetus to this prevention policy. It is with this in mind that the Fifteen decided in Göteborg, at France's initiative, to adopt a common position in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles - a position based on the universalization of the International Code of Conduct proposed by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

member States. I note with interest that this initiative has been well received. I hope that it leads as soon as possible to the convening of an international conference.

- the second imperative concerns the strategic balance. It is in the general interest to maintain it at the lowest possible level by avoiding a new arms race.

This is the whole crux of the discussion which has to develop, not just between Americans and Russians, but also with the other nuclear powers. Here, going beyond the efforts to prevent proliferation and maintain the role of deterrence I have already talked about, several aspects have to be taken into consideration. I am thinking particularly of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, the need for a greater effort on the nuclear disarmament front on the part of the United States and Russia, and preventing the militarization of space.

Differing in nature, some of these issues primarily concern the United States and Russia, while others are broader. In this debate from which a new strategic framework for stability will emerge, France will continue to make her voice heard. She considers that the idea of launching consultations on these issues between the five nuclear powers is worth considering.

Balkans

More Europe, more security, but also more peace in the world.

Of all the crisis situations, the one we are primarily focusing our attention on today is that in the Balkans. Our country, together with its EU partners, the United States and Russia, is engaged there, very

probably for some time. Milosevic is in prison. He is going to answer for his crimes in an international court. His policy has been defeated, but the recurrent events in Macedonia and Kosovo remind us that this doesn't mean that the germs of destabilization have been eradicated. The advocates of violence must know that collectively we are utterly determined to thwart the realization of their projects.

At the same time, the diplomatic efforts and action on the ground must both be pursued - action in Macedonia where, spurred on by M. François Léotard, the European Union representative, the dialogue has led to a political agreement laying down the principles for a peaceful coexistence between the different Macedonian communities within a united and democratic State. This political agreement has paved the way for NATO's weapons collection operation. This is a necessary prerequisite for restoring calm.

This situation remains fragile, and extremist factions are still threatening the desire for peace of the vast majority. But a process has been created. The European Union has been instrumental in enabling the dialogue to take precedence over confrontation and a political solution to prevail over a military option leading nowhere. In over ten years of Balkan crises, this is the first time a genuine preventive diplomatic action has been conducted. The European Union is at the heart of it and I am delighted.

Action too in Kosovo, so that the forthcoming elections may take place under conditions guaranteeing the stability and substantial autonomy provided for by United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244. Finally, action to encourage ethical developments and democracy both in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and throughout the region.

It is indeed through dialogue and reforms that this region's difficult

problems have to be resolved. If they follow this course, the Western Balkan countries will one day be able to join the European Union. Already, it is stretching out its hand to them, offering them stability and association agreements. Any other path would be a dead-end. This is the message sent out by last autumn's Zagreb summit, convened - as you will remember - at France's initiative, a message which was widely welcomed. From now on, it is on this solid and clear foundation that European policy in the region is based.

This is the purport of my forthcoming visit to Belgrade. I shall go to pay tribute to the courageous efforts of those who, for almost a year, have been struggling to impose democracy.

Middle East

In the Middle East, alas, the sound of weapons has replaced the hope which sprang up a year ago in Camp David. As happens whenever we move nearer to peace, the forces hostile to it lash out. Rarely has the situation been so serious, reaching the point of threatening the very stability of the whole region.

What should be done? The United Nations has very clearly set out the principles on which the peace must be based: UNSCRs 242 and 338. These are still wholly valid. The Madrid Conference nearly ten years ago reaffirmed the direction to be taken: exchange of land for peace. Diverting from it would mean turning away from a fair and lasting settlement. The recommendations of the Mitchell Commission, in whose work the European Union played an active part, have established a framework and mapped out a clear and fair path. But, first and foremost, the achievement of the peace depends on the political will of those confronting each other.

Israel will not achieve the long-term security to which her people so legitimately aspire without full recognition of a dignified, viable Palestinian State and a peace agreement with all the Arab countries. Similarly, the Palestinians will not obtain full recognition of their legitimate rights and their State without forging strong political, social and economic ties with Israel.

In these times when violence is prevailing, the international community is remaining very mobilized to prevent a widespread conflagration and bring the protagonists back to the negotiating table. France and Europe, working actively alongside the United States, are intent on helping Israel and the Palestinian Authority find the path to a settlement, and then assisting in its implementation through guarantees, support for the construction of infrastructures and mobilization of all the international community's capabilities.

But to be lasting, the peace must be comprehensive. There is the same determination, the same commitment in the quest for peace on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks.

It is against this background that France welcomed President Bashar al-Assad on a State visit last June. Our objective is to work to restore dialogue and get the parties to resume the negotiations embarked on eight years ago now between President Hafez al-Assad and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Here too, it's a matter of political will.

Finally Lebanon, where I shall soon be attending the Francophone summit, also needs this just, lasting and comprehensive peace so that she can develop totally independently, doing so harmoniously with her neighbours.

France is keen to see the Lebanese State's authority exercised

throughout its territory.

Africa

In Central Africa, hope of at last seeing the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement has risen over the past few months. President Joseph Kabila has demonstrated a willingness to move. The United Nations Security Council has become more involved; the foreign troops have begun pulling out of the territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo and it has become possible to envisage the disarming of the various armed groups.

Experience reminds us, however, that the road to peace in this part of the world, confronted by internal and external conflicts, is full of pitfalls. This is why it is more necessary than ever before to show determination and constancy if we are to convince all the parties to honour their commitments in full.

As the Foreign Minister reaffirmed again very recently, France fully supports the guidelines adopted by the Belgian presidency: the whole of Europe must mobilize to give this region the support it needs to get back on its feet. And when the time comes, when sufficient progress has been achieved, we shall have to revive the idea of a Great Lakes Conference with several objectives: to find lasting solutions to the security questions, firmly establish human rights and, finally, relaunch on solid foundations, with the aid of the international community, the development of a region whose future to a large extent dictates that of the continent.

French Diplomacy/Globalization/UN Security Council/

International Regulation

With the strength born of the talents of her people, dynamic, competitive, open to Europe and the world, France is fully benefiting from globalization.

However, our country is continuing to argue, and will go on arguing for a multipolar world, since every society needs balance and rules in order to encourage everyone's development.

This is France's objective. We want it to be that of the whole of Europe, a Europe which has to become one of the major key players ensuring the balance of tomorrow's world and offering it its own vision. The Europe which is asserting its desire to promote the universal values of humanism: respect for human rights, cultural diversity, spirit of solidarity, ethics in the sciences and ethical policies and action. The Europe which, by defending the Kyoto Protocol, is expressing its aspiration to see shared sovereignty exercised over the planet and its resources. The Europe which is keen to see international life organized through genuine dialogue.

- Because she is arguing for more balance, France is committed to strengthening her and Europe's ties with the principal new powers emerging at the beginning of this twenty-first century. It is with this ambition that over the past few years I have visited, sometimes in the capacity of EU President, the United States, Russia, China, India, Japan and Brazil.

- Because she is arguing for more balance, France is also committed to the United Nations Security Council fully playing its role. Let us ensure that its legitimacy is not affected by it not being sufficiently representative. The discussions on its enlargement - complex though they are - have gone on long enough. We are therefore determined to

support any initiatives taken by the countries which are indisputably destined to join the permanent members in order to end the present deadlock.

- Finally, because she is arguing for more balance, France is striving to get everyone involved in drawing up the rules governing international society, and particularly the poorest countries which are suffering, without the means to cope with them, the effects of globalization. It is essential for them to be involved right from the initial stages when regulations are being devised, well before the international organizations meet to conclude the relevant negotiations.

Globalization

That's why I have proposed holding a small summit, but one which is representative of global diversity, in 2003 when our country chairs the G8. In addition to G8 members and the developing countries, the least developed countries must be well represented. Working *inter alia* on fulfilling the priority objectives set by the major UN conferences, this summit would encourage a coordinated approach to global problems. This would help us, in the framework of the international institutions, more effectively to manage together what are now rightly called our "global public goods".

This idea gained ground in Genoa. By lending its support to the New Africa Initiative, the G8 committed itself to responding to it in a spirit of partnership. Our country will ensure that the consultation procedure with Africa established in Genoa yields concrete results at the next summit in Canada.

Ever since Seattle, the major conferences have seen demonstrations

by tens of thousands of women and men coming from all over the world to express their concerns and desire to get their views more clearly heard. These demonstrators have often come to challenge the very principle of holding such international meetings. But I should like to tell them that, without these meetings, the world would be one fearing neither God nor man, subject solely to the law of the jungle.

I should like to tell them that these summits of elected representatives of countries and peoples are inspired by the concern to provide real answers to the problems facing us today. I should like to remind them that it is to the decisive impetus given by the G8, which does not itself wield power, but executes responsibility, that we owe the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, shutting-down of the Chernobyl power station, Global Health Fund, cancellation of the poorest countries' debt and battles against money laundering, drug trafficking and prostitution - to cite but a few essential issues.

In response to the fear aroused by insufficiently-controlled globalization, our democracies must heed the message addressed to them. While they must take action against the rioters, they must be open to dialogue with those interested in engaging in it. They must take more account of their aspirations. They must respond to the emergence of a world conscience among citizens by affirming in international life the values they uphold in national life.

This is why we must establish a new form of world governance creating at international level the social dialogue which is fundamental to democratic life. The path is already mapped out. For a few years now, business, trade unions and NGOs have been becoming increasingly involved and consulted, which, moreover, imposes on them a duty of transparency and accountability. But we must go further, improve the way consultations are organized, take more account of the NGOs'

knowledge of the problems, their particular expertise and their generous commitment which undoubtedly make them fully-fledged partners.

It was with this in mind that I met them this year before going to the Human Rights Commission and the Third Conference on the Least Developed Countries. It was with this in mind too that I announced, last year, that France was ready to host a world gathering of civil society to prepare for the next United Nations conference, ten years after Rio, on the environment and sustainable development. This suggestion was favourably received. I am delighted.

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