

disagreements with President Giscard on this issue had forced his resignation.

With near-simultaneity, Debré himself escalated the Gaullist offensive on another front by announcing the formation of the "Committee for the Independence and Unity of France" in a press conference on Jan. 20. A battalion of Gaullist heavyweights was in attendance to declare their membership in the committee — an organization viewed as crucial in commanding international support for the Gaullist opposition to financial and military policies emanating from lower Manhattan.

Debré's campaign was immediately joined across the Channel by a faction of British parliamentarians, the leftist Tribune Group in the Labour Party. The Nov. 22 *London Times* reported that this faction has "launched a campaign in concert with Mr. Debré" to defeat a bill coming up in the House of Commons on the project for a directly-elected European Parliament. The European Parliament, which Giscard advocates, is viewed by the Gaullists and their allies as an attempt by NATO to impose a supranational government on Europe and overrule national sovereignty.

At his press conference, Michel Debré stated that he was vehemently against the election of the European Parliament precisely because of the war threats emanating from NATO circles. Debré counterposed the progressive cooperation of France with all European countries, in particular with Eastern Europe.

Among those announcing membership in Mr. Debré's "shadow cabinet" were former Minister Alexandre Sanguinetti, a proponent of West European disengagement from NATO; General Gallois, a staunch enemy of the "limited tactical nuclear warfare" theory associated with Carter advisor James Schlesinger; Louis Terrenoire, chairman of the Franco-Arab Solidarity Association; and Michel Habib-Deloncle, chairman of the Franco-Arab Chamber of Commerce. The Gaullist leader's initiative received favorable coverage in the Soviet Communist Party paper *Pravda* on Jan. 23.

#### *The Mitterrand Gambit*

With such momentum against the announced Carter policies of deindustrialization and war provocation against the Soviets threatening to propel the last "reliable" regime in Western Europe — Giscardian

## Chirac Explains His Decision To Run

*The following are excerpts from a declaration former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, the president of the Gaullist Party (RPR), made on radio Europe No. 1 on Jan. 23 concerning the conditions which led him to run for the Paris mayoralty:*

Referring to the "flow of nonsensical declarations emanating essentially from Independent Republican circles (President Giscard's party - ed.)" against his candidacy, Jacques Chirac warned: "I would like to tell these gentlemen to pull themselves together and stop their excesses... These elections are undoubtedly capital for the majority, and it is the reason why I am running... I would like to give them a piece of advice and tell them that if they are as respectful of our institutions as they claim to be, they should stop bringing the president on the forefront all the time under the pretext of protecting him," (a reference to Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski, known to be a long-time "protector" of the President's political career).

Asked about the reasons for his resignation from the post of Prime Minister in August 1976, Mr. Chirac explained:

"I first considered that, little by little, the idea was gaining credit in the nation that the (governmental) majority did not represent the majority of the country's electorate... Now, I consider that it is not possible for political men to assume a responsibility or to rule if they are not fully

legitimate. For me legitimacy is above legality... I clearly told the President that I would not remain at the head of a government which, some would think, was not legitimate. It was a fundamental question...

"The second reason was that I considered that, in the necessary effort for an economic recovery, there was a very important given which was the wait-and-see attitude of a number of economic agents, notably investors, and that the best way to unblock the situation and... permit initiatives able to relaunch investment was to lift the political uncertainty and call for early elections..."

"... Since the beginning of 1975, and notably at the end of 1975, I had demanded insistently that a plan of economic recovery be put into gear, verbally and in written form, and I had even demanded... that it be implemented in a very rapid fashion, I would even say in a muscled fashion, by decree — which is a constitutional and perfectly regular procedure in our country — which, in my mind, would have made it possible to create a shock of a nature to restore trust.

"In July and August, when I knew perfectly well that I intended to put an end to my functions, I had engaged in an important effort of reflection, notably with the leaders of a number of socio-professional circles, an effort which resulted in a note which I left on Aug. 10 to my successor's cabinet and which included a number of measures which, in their spirit and even in their details, were very close to what became later Mr. Raymond Barré's plan. Which explains the fact that today I have no difficulty in supporting it."