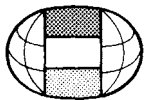


North-South Relations

The 'trialogue' approach to Third World development



Since becoming President of the Republic of France in 1974, Valery Giscard d'Estaing has identified France as that nation which will bring Europe, Africa, and the Middle East together in an ambitious program of industrial development premised on the transfer of advanced technology and scientific expertise from Europe to these Third World sectors.

Labeled the "Triologue," this policy has been built on the foundations and institutions created for Middle East and Africa policy by Giscard's predecessor Charles de Gaulle during the latter's 11-year regime.

The key to the Triologue's success is to bring Arab monetary resources into the funding of European technological transfers to the African continent. To accomplish this, Giscard has singled out certain countries and diplomatic approaches as central.

In the Middle East, Giscard has sought to build what the French daily *Le Figaro* calls a "Paris-Riyadh-Baghdad axis": France in alliance with Iraq and Saudi Arabia and the small states on the Saudi kingdom's borders.

Also in the Arab world, but with an eye to the African continent, Giscard has attempted to develop, against considerable odds, a relationship-in-depth with Algeria, the nation with which France fought a bitter civil war from 1954-1962.

For Giscard and his collaborators, Algeria is an entree into Africa, a pillar of French strategy toward the continent. This strategy has depended on using French influence to weaken the British hold over such strategically central countries as Sudan and Nigeria and to cool down "hot spot" crises, while speeding up the industrial and agricultural development of "francophone" (French-speaking) nations such as the Ivory Coast, Congo, and Cameroon.

De Gaulle, Pompidou and Jobert

In his Arab policy, Giscard can bring into play the capabilities that de Gaulle studiously developed.

Starting in the late 1950s, de Gaulle oversaw a comprehensive rethinking of French Afro-Arab strategy. Up to that point, France had been the primary arms suppliers

of Israel and had maintained close ties with the Israeli defense and intelligence establishment, seeing Israel as a "weapon" that could be used against apparently hostile states such as Nasser's Egypt and preindependence Algeria.

Upon assuming the presidency, de Gaulle seriously questioned this strategy and evolved the notion that for France to achieve viable national sovereignty the country had to take the lead in industrializing and developing areas formerly ruled by colonial governments. The policy shift away from Israel was given added justification when it was discovered that elements of Israeli intelligence were abetting de Gaulle's enemies in the OAS right-wing terrorist organization and were even attempting, through the Permindex "Murder, Inc." organization, to have de Gaulle assassinated.

Once these discoveries were made, de Gaulle cleaned out much of the Zionist penetration into French intelligence and put such pro-Israel generals as Zeller and Challe (later to become a manager of the Israeli state navigation company, Zim) on trial for treason.

De Gaulle also began to fashion those networks in leading policy institutions to implement the new French policy. To this day, Gaullist advisers in these institutions—the Institute for Asian Studies, responsible for training elites and administrators in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt; the National Center for Strategic Studies; the Ecole Nationale d'Administration; and the Polytechnique—the leading institutions building the framework for French policy toward the Third World.

With the onset of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, de Gaulle's policy openings toward the Africans and Arabs increased. He regarded Israel as the initiator of that conflict and ordered an arms embargo. Not surprisingly, this drew the Zionists' wrath and Israeli intelligence moved into the forefront of attempts to destabilize the French government during the 1968-1969 period.

Israel may have drawn satisfaction from de Gaulle's step down from power, but his successor, Georges Pompidou, continued and refined the general's foreign policy design.

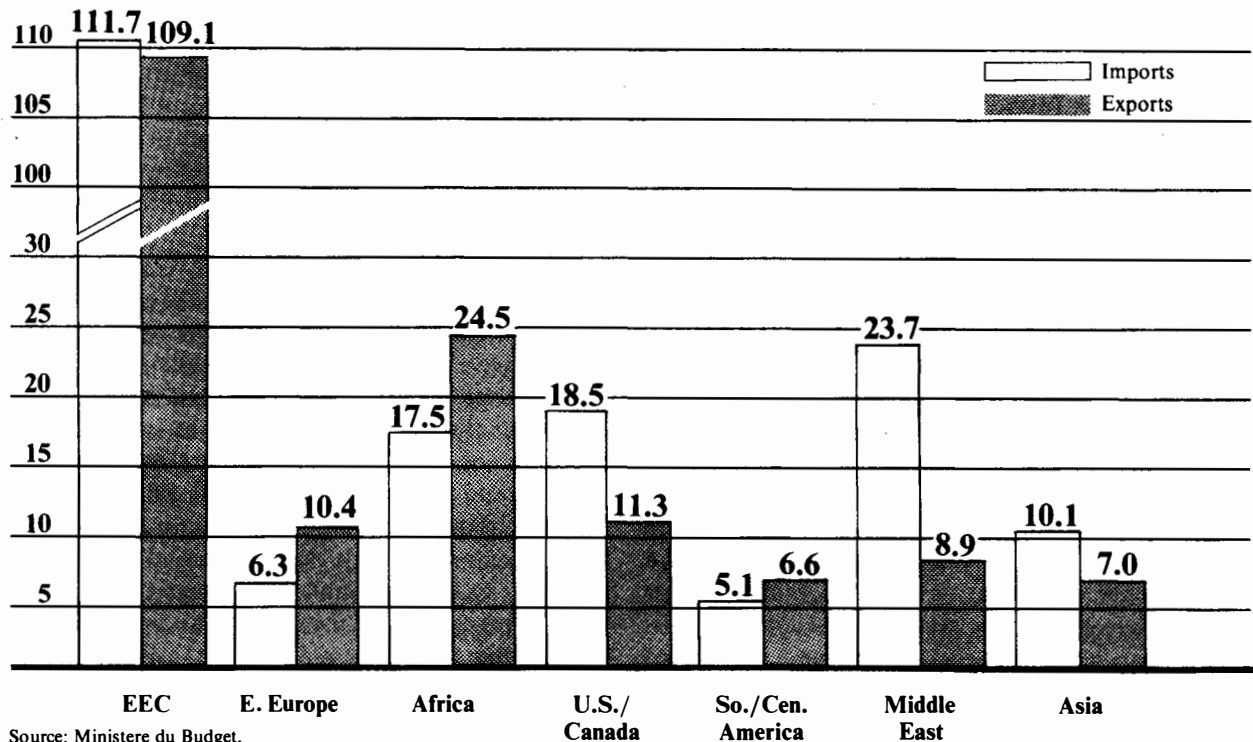
When the U.S. dollar was decoupled from gold in 1971 Pompidou and Foreign Minister Michel Jobert put together a plan to build a new gold-based world monetary system based on a series of French-Arab monetary and strategic agreements. The early 1970s saw the rise of Arab financiers as important money brokers.

Jobert sealed a number of bilateral oil deals between France and the Arab world during the 1972-1974 period, promoting, in the process, a whole cluster of European-Arab bilateral oil-for-technology deals. It was then that Henry Kissinger and the major oil multinationals arm-twisted Europe into joining his International Energy Agency. Only France, at Jobert's insistence, stayed out

France: World trading partner

(French imports and exports by region, Jan.-June, 1979)

(In billions of francs; 4.2 = \$1)



Source: Ministère du Budget,
Direct. Gen. des Douanes et Droits Indirects

of the IEA. Jobert's notion of Euro-Arab cooperation was made concrete in January, 1974 with his invitation to Saudi Oil Minister Yamani to become the first Arab minister ever to address a European Economic Community ministerial summit.

'Move toward Gaullism'

In mid-1974, Giscard came to power and Jobert was demoted. The *New York Times* temporarily breathed a sigh of relief. *Times* editor C. L. Sulzberger called Giscard a "French Kennedy," and predicted a shift in French orientation to one favorable to London and Manhattan.

This tune didn't last for long. Giscard soon indicated that he intended to maintain cooperative relations with the oil-producers and to resist Kissinger's IEA campaign. A French television editorial in late 1974 made it official: Giscard's position on the question of relations with the oil-producers was a "move toward Gaullism."

From this anti-Kissinger vantage point, Giscard was able to negotiate with Saudi Arabian King Faisal for the convening of a "North-South" dialogue in 1975 which would provide the framework for economic and political negotiations between the consumers and producers of

oil. But on the eve of the first scheduled meeting, King Faisal was assassinated.

Out of the French-Saudi connection was born the "trialogue" concept. In the spring of 1975, Giscard made the first-ever visit by a French head of state to post-independence Algeria. In discussions with then-President Houari Boumedienne, Giscard worked out a comprehensive plan for "three-way cooperation" between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The first stage would be represented by multibillion-dollar energy-for-technology deals between France and Algeria.

These two countries, Giscard said in an April 10, 1975 speech, "are called upon to play a special role because of their original and open position within the regions to which they belong. Naturally turned toward the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Mideast, France aspires to bring closer together Europe, the Arab world, and the African continent. Traditionally open toward the Mediterranean West, having more than any other country the will to rapidly assimilate the technological and conceptual contribution of the West without breaking its eastern ties, Algeria is already in close touch with the developed world and is engaged in a rapid process of industrialization."

In an interview the next day, Giscard declared: "We have examined together the grand initiatives which could be undertaken in terms of cooperation, i.e., large-scale projects around which our two countries could meet. And in these big projects one can see the seeds of what could be undertaken between Europe and the whole of the Arab countries."

1979: Trialogue launched

During 1978-1979, as the European Monetary System took shape, the Trialogue approach has taken on new dimensions. The term itself has been utilized more frequently in accounts of Giscard's policy.

Thus, on May 21 of this year, the French financial paper *Les Echos* reported that the "trialogue" would be the feature item of Giscard's diplomacy at an African summit in Kigali, Rwanda. Similarly, in early July, when France's Prime Minister Raymond Barre traveled to Iraq for meetings with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, *Le Matin* reported that "the trialogue" would be the central topic of their discussions.

At the African summit meeting, Giscard spoke before the leaders of all the francophone countries, but at a locale, Rwanda, that was, significantly, not a former French colony—a symbolic gesture of the intent of Giscard's African diplomacy to move beyond the limited boundaries of former colonial relationships. In fact, one non-French-speaking country, Liberia, current chairman of the Organization of African Unity, was invited to attend the conference.

Throughout the year, Giscard has maintained a policy toward the African continent of moving in on British turf. He traveled, for example, to Sudan in spring of this year, on the way back from the Franco-African summit. Giscard's diplomacy gave President Numiere enough maneuvering room to come out and attack the Camp David Mideast treaty. At the same time, French trade deals with Nigeria have increased, and Paris has been the site of the first foreign visit by the new President of Kenya, Arap Moi.

Giscard has also built a close relationship over the past months with Zaire's President Mobutu, in an attempt to undercut the Hapsburg-run Belgian Union Miniere interests in that country. Giscard's input into Zaire has enabled the French to play a key role in mediating the formerly tense relations between Zaire and Angola. These efforts, aided on the one side by French oil interests in Angola, have resulted in Zaire kicking out of its territory the leading rebel against the Angolan regime, Holden Roberto, who for years used the Congo-Zaire as a base for tribal incursions into Angolan territory.

Prime Minister Barre's trip to Iraq was even more momentous in its policy implications. At their meetings, he and Saddam Hussein agreed to "deepen and enlarge

the domains of cooperation and consultation between the two countries" and to work together to "assure progress, justice and economic stability in the relations between the developed and developing countries."

During the same week in July, Giscard made a special trip to the United Arab Emirates to secure energy supplies for France in return for technical and economic assistance to the UAE. Reports circulated at the time of major French offers to ensure the security of the states of the region, as well as to motivate a special summit between the EEC and the oil-producers of the Gulf and to launch a new diplomatic offensive to supersede the Camp David treaty.

Given the fears of both Saudi Arabia and Iraq of regional destabilization flowing out of the Iran crisis, *Le Matin* noted, both governments were probably counting on France being able to "take the lead, in the name of the EEC or not, in the creation of a sort of 'collective security pact' for the Middle East." Giscard is looking for the creation of a "mechanism of Euro-Arab cooperation that would form the primary pole of the Euro-Arab-African rapprochement, the idea for which he launched at the beginning of this year."

This "Giscard plan" would counteract the Camp David treaty and aid the "search for an overall peace in the Middle East."

The article concluded with speculation that the European Monetary System could provide the basis for extensive nuclear and related exports to the Arab world.

While the Iran crisis has appeared to overshadow Giscard's "trialogue" diplomacy, leading policy-making quarters recognize that France now has the unique capability to help solve that crisis in a way that could avoid war and economic dislocation. This was the underlying theme of Giscard's television interview in late November in which he stressed that only a "new world monetary system" could avert more Iran-style crises.

The key to the French capability lies not only in its friendly networks in countries near Iran, such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia, but in France's recent careful cultivation of the "Bakhtiar option." For several weeks, deposed Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar has been in Paris, preparing cassette tapes of propaganda against the Ayatollah Khomeini and sending these into Iran through areas of anti-Khomeini strength such as Azerbaijan, the scene of recent revolts. Bakhtiar, whose son, Guy, is a career officer in the French secret service, is a figure around whom the Iranian opposition forces could rally in the coming weeks, especially as the Iranian economy continues to unravel and social chaos spreads. Bakhtiar is also a figure whom regional neighbors of Iran could support and who could help bring Iran into the matrix of energy-for-technology arrangements that have been shelved by the Khomeini regime.

—Mark Burdman