

# **EIR**SpecialReport

## **Avoiding world war: Do Giscard and Brezhnev know how?**

by Rachel Douglas

The most dramatic summit diplomacy of 1980 unfolded the weekend of May 17-18 when, heralded only by hints from Polish press officials, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France arrived in Warsaw for five hours of meetings with Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet president and party leader. Brezhnev, just days before, had presided over a meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders in the Polish capital that warned of the danger of world war. The two men issued no communiqué from their informal conversation, but they agreed on the advisability of a summit of major powers to ease international tension.

For once, the independent initiative of a continental European power was on the front page of every news daily in America. But this coverage reached rare heights of distortion. Basing judgement on the public statements of the Carter administration and accounts in the American press, one would have to conclude that the developments worthy of attention were:

- the onset of a Kremlin "peace offensive," plotted at the moment of sending troops into Afghanistan, designed to lure the European NATO members away from the United States;
- the irresponsibility of a French president who failed to consult with the White House before undertaking to talk with Moscow;
- an attempt by Giscard to upstage his friend, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany, whose own talks with Brezhnev will take place in Moscow at the end of June after lengthy preparations;
- the fact that the talks in Warsaw had, in the words of many commentators, "no results."

This mosaic of purported factors in the Giscard-Brezhnev summit hides Giscard's actual undertaking. What is afoot in Europe is a serious effort



Photo: Sygma

at a *war avoidance policy*, begun not on a French whim, but to avoid a world war that Paris sources describe as “otherwise inevitable.”

This Special Report presents the principles, which Washington does not grasp, of war-avoidance. We look at the problem through two sets of eyes. First, the thinking of France. Included are excerpts from the statements of Giscard and French Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet, followed by Soviet commentaries printed since the summit and reflecting its impact on Moscow. Secondly, the analysis “How to stop the threat of general nuclear war,” by contributing editor Lyndon LaRouche, provides policy-references by which to locate the European initiatives. We are witnessing the first steps of what LaRouche calls “short term war-avoidance,” with only an inkling, yet of a program for more lasting strategic stabilization.

### **The goal: open communication channels**

The mark of a successful world leader is the ability not only to know and uphold the self-interests of his own country, but to know what makes other powers tick, especially potential adversary powers. France had a clearer perception than the other allies of how seriously Moscow took the December 12, 1979 NATO decision to deploy “theater limited nuclear warfare” medium-range missiles in Western Europe, a step that, in combination with Persian Gulf destabilization and the rising promi-

nence of the “China card” in United States and NATO strategy, prompted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to avert what Moscow deemed a very threatening strategic configuration. Giscard grew increasingly concerned, especially after sparks flew between Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and the new American Secretary of State Edmund Muskie in Vienna May 15, that a wall of misunderstanding had dropped between the superpowers.

The purpose of the summit was to talk through that wall. “In a situation of tension,” explained the French president to the Paris daily *Le Figaro* May 24, “it is necessary for the major leaders of the world to know exactly the point of view of the others.” François-Poncet asserted in parliament that France aimed to prevent a dangerous diplomatic isolation of the Soviet Union.

The French leaders reviewed with Brezhnev and the summit’s host, Edward Gierek of Poland, their differing views on the Afghanistan crisis and their shared hopes for an international summit. Additionally, according to Paris sources, they learned with renewed emphasis of the Soviet preoccupation with Chinese foreign policy. It is now believed in French political circles that Moscow is excluding—in anticipation of the world summit—almost any response by force to provocations, barring the Soviets’ possible invasion of the Peoples Republic of China. The circumstances for such a Soviet move would be the “nuclearization” of China under visible NATO sponsorship, in combination with a renewed thrust to the

brink of war by the United States via one or several ventures of the Iran "rescue raid" variety.

## Momentum

Following the Warsaw summit, a rash of diplomacy broke out all over Europe. The date of Schmidt's trip to Moscow was finally set, for June 30-July 1. It will be preceded by a round of Soviet-West German contacts at the ministerial and ambassadorial level, dealing with protocol preparations, but also including a meeting of their bilateral economic commission to review prospects for West German investment in Siberia and other ways to expand trade. That session will be held in the Federal Republic of Germany, but a group of prominent industry figures, including the industrialists' association head Otto Wolff von Amerongen, has already gone to the U.S.S.R. to discuss business as well as "the general character of East-West relations," in the words of an associate spokesman.

Franco-Soviet diplomacy also has proceeded, with a Russian Central Committee delegation in Paris for discussions at the French Foreign Ministry.

The past month's steps by Europe, however, do not yet meet the minimum criteria for successful *short-term* prevention of war. They are merely stop-gap measures to pull the world back a few feet, no farther, from the very brink of war.

"Short-term war avoidance means, categorically, but *negatively*, the immediate termination of the International Monetary Fund 'conditionalities' and 'neo-Malthusian' policies," writes LaRouche.

Europe does hold the key to terminating the economic policies of austerity, and, in the Third World, genocide, that underly the danger of war. The key is in the European Monetary System, specifically its potential, known as "Phase II of the European Monetary System," to finance huge export programs for technology transfer to the developing sector that would not only lift that area of the world out of economic and political disintegration, but turn on the motor of a high-technology industry-centered recovery in the advanced sector.

Whether that key will be turned in the lock is another question.

The same week that saw Giscard fly to Warsaw witnessed a series of danger signs in the area of European economic policy.

Entertaining Mexican President José López Portillo in Bonn May 20, Helmut Schmidt stated that his government "fully supports" the position of the Brandt Commission on balancing the interests of "North" and "South." The Brandt Commission, named for former Chancellor Willy Brandt, stands for the opposite of the EMS's potential reversal of economic holocaust in the Third World. Its redistributionist program of "appropriate technologies" for the underdeveloped sector is an

IMF and World Bank blueprint, which would rechannel monetary resources to the Third World exclusively for debt servicing purposes, not for industrialization.

The same flaw was embedded in the "Triologue" document issued by the French government on European-Arab-African economic development cooperation. The Malthusian Club of Rome's catchword, "soft technology," espoused in the French proposal, undercuts the promise of France to make Europe the wellspring of industrial advance for Africa.

## Miscalculation in Washington

The interpretations put on the Giscard-Brezhnev summit by the U.S. State Department as well as the major American press testifies to profound, willful ignorance of European motives and policy on the part of the Carter administration. Compare the four alleged factors cited at the beginning of this article to the picture we have drawn of Giscard's attempt at war-avoidance.

**No results.** Secretary of State Muskie's words to this effect, in describing the Warsaw summit, must have been a projection from his own talks with Gromyko in Vienna three days earlier. From that encounter, reported *Le Monde*, Muskie emerged "slightly pale. The few phrases that he dropped in passing leave no doubt: after three hours of meeting—checkmate."

**Giscard upstages Schmidt.** West German government spokesman Klaus Boelling called the Warsaw summit "a valuable contribution" to reviving the East-West dialogue, which Schmidt will continue during his talks in Moscow. During the flood of Soviet-Federal Republic diplomacy occurring between the Giscard-Brezhnev meeting and Schmidt's journey to Moscow, a significant turn on Moscow's part took place. *Pravda* hailed West Germany for supporting the French initiative, and referred to Foreign Minister Genscher, scourged in the Soviet press for months now because of the NATO "Euromissile" decision and Genscher's close ties to Washington, as "a realistic politician."

**Giscard's failure to consult Washington.** François-Poncet scornfully rebutted Muskie's outburst, which had given the impression that Washington was oblivious to the allies' reaction to the abortive American military operation in Iran at the end of April, *about which they were not informed*. More fundamentally, the Carter administration persists on treating as a quirk that characteristic of French foreign policy which has been central to it since the rule of General de Gaulle: France is a *nation-state* with an idea of national self-interest that precludes bowing to superpower prerogatives assumed by the United States.

**Moscow's peace offensive.** There is no doubt that the Soviet leadership is concentrating on peace overtures to Western Europe, but to interpret them as a calculated wedge to break up NATO requires the assumption that there is nothing untoward about American foreign policy. It is the sense of the continental Europeans, who have called Jimmy Carter "incalculable," that Washington is inhabited by a group of dangerous geopoliticians. Moscow agrees. If Europe did *not* see, and respond to, some openings from the U.S.S.R., then there would be no powerful government pursuing any war-avoidance policy at all.

## The Soviet View

### *Commentaries by Pravda and the Tass news agency*

*Commenting on the Warsaw summit meeting of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Leonid Brezhnev, the Moscow daily Pravda on May 20 recalled the initiative of General de Gaulle in 1966 to visit the U.S.S.R. and begin detente.*

Soviet-French summit meetings have always attracted close attention ... for their influence on international life. ... The Soviet Union and France were the pioneers of detente in Europe. For many years, the relaxation of tension has served as a sort of axis around which the foreign policy activities of both powers has largely revolved. Against this background, it is understandable that the Warsaw talks were a natural step by the two countries.

Suffice it to recall that Soviet-French relations are backed by important documents and accords elaborated over a long period. Economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation is developing progressively. ... The views of the U.S.S.R. and France do not always coincide on certain questions in the foreign policy sphere. However, it is significant that there are many aspects in which their evaluations and views are similar and close, and there is a basis for expanding cooperation in the interest of peace and detente.

A program for the further development of cooperation between the Soviet Union and France ... was signed ... last year. This important document points out that the task of preventing war is a cardinal task for all states and that the policy of detente is the only way of ensuring peace.

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*Vladimir Goncharov, political news analyst for the Soviet news agency Tass, wrote the following commentary on May 21. As in Pravda's commentary and others, Gonchar-*

*ov returns to the figure of de Gaulle as the creator of detente, and France, therefore, as the natural arbiter in efforts to restore detente.*

The Soviet Union and France, as it is known, have been the first countries to pave the way for detente in international affairs in Europe. For many years the two states' foreign policy was aimed at consolidating and developing the process of detente, beneficial both to Europe and the whole world. And the recent Soviet-French summit is regarded around the world as a major positive event since, together with issues of bilateral relations between the U.S.S.R. and France, it examined the major problems of the international situation and initiatives aimed at reducing the present tension ...

As to a point of substance—the U.S. criticism of France for its desire to have its own position with regard to the Soviet Union. Here, one must stress the following: if the French President, General Charles de Gaulle had, back in his own time, heeded shouts from Washington then, probably, there would not have been any detente in Europe at all.

## The French View

### *Statements by Giscard d'Estaing and Jean Francois-Poncet*

*French President Giscard d'Estaing made his first public comments on his May 19th meeting with Brezhnev in a television interview May 23. The following are excerpts.*

**Q:** Mr. President, much has been said and written on your trip to Warsaw. So, quite simply, why this meeting with President Brezhnev?

**A:** For the following reasons: Everyone knows that there is serious international tension. You say so, French and world opinion are convinced of it as well. In a situation of tension, the great leaders of the world must know exactly the point of view of the others. Many of the catastrophes in world history over the past 50 or 100 years have been due to an absence of communication or explanation between the great leaders of the world. The purpose of this encounter was to have an extensive conversation with one of the main leaders, Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, so that he would be informed of our analysis of the international situation and for me to also know the manner in which he conceives it and analyzes it. ...

Look at the incoherent manner of the criticisms that have been made. The very same who find fault in me for not having gone to the funeral of Marshall Tito in Belgrade—forgetting that he did not come to the funerals of the French Presidents of the Republic, General de Gaulle

and President Pompidou—said: You should have gone to this funeral in order to have a conversation with Mr. Brezhnev. So they would have found a conversation of a few minutes between two wreaths and two funeral orations appropriate, whereas the choice was made to organize an in-depth conversation which, lasting five hours, permitted us, calmly and thoughtfully, to get to the bottom of things.

**Q:** Mr. President, there have been other remarks, other criticisms, on the results, or for some, the absence of results of this Warsaw meeting. What do you bring back to France from this meeting?

**A:** Those who have made these criticisms understood nothing, continue to understand nothing, about the purpose of this encounter. There are two different types of encounters in international life: negotiations, whose goal is to achieve results, and conversations, whose goal is to exchange points of view and thoughts.

... The essential result is that we now both have better knowledge of our reactions to the present situation and to possible developments. ...

**Q:** Certain newspapers, notably American newspapers, have talked about France going it alone, or of a breach in Atlantic solidarity. What is the situation exactly?

**A:** There are two things: those that can be explained and those that are unacceptable.

What can be explained: the big countries have a tendency to consider that they have a monopoly over international relations. A few days before my meeting with Mr. Brezhnev, the new American Secretary of State had a meeting with Mr. Gromyko. Everyone felt this meeting was perfectly natural, and it was said: finally, a meeting for the first time (since Afghanistan—ed.). But the idea that a leader of an independent state also meets with Mr. Brezhnev gives rise to irritation. Why?

Now we get to what is not acceptable: anything which tends to make believe that France does not have the right or the means to have an independent policy without immediately being accused of breaking western solidarity. How, on what subjects, on what measures was western solidarity broken by this trip? Was a decision made, was any action carried out that would modify or break western solidarity? None, unless it is the very principle of France having conversations and being able to have conversations with whom it wants. The fact of having an independent policy means that we have conversations with whom we wish. ... We have periodic talks with the Russians. I meet Mr. Brezhnev in general once a year.

**Q:** What do you think of the reactions then of political parties and circles following this meeting?

I have not run across one Frenchman who did not

understand the purpose of my trip. Those I have seen since understand that, in a situation of tension, the head of an important state—and what is important is France—has not only the right but the duty of having frank explanations with other leaders on this international situation....

We often hear soap box speeches about the independence of French policy. But each time there is a need for action or to show signs of life, we suddenly have the impression that this independence of ours has become too heavy a burden for some people's shoulders. Ah, well, this independence does not frighten me. The day there is no independent French policy, there will be no more French history. And the book will have to be closed. I am not the one who will close it.

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*French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean François-Poncet addressed the National Assembly May 21 on Giscard's meeting with Brezhnev, and responded to Secretary of State Muskie's charges against France. Muskie, accused France of harming the alliance by taking its action unilaterally, and refusing to consult with the United States government. Francois Poncet responded in an appropriately fiery nationalist tone.*

The dialogue has practically never ceased between France and the Soviet Union since the beginning of the crisis. Let there be no mistake: We are in the presence of events whose consequences put into question the very foundations of peace. It would be grossly to underestimate the gravity of the situation to believe that the methods and routines of current diplomacy are adequate. ... The President of the Republic wanted to throw the full weight of France into the balance for peace. ...

Afghanistan must not become a bridgehead directed against the Soviet Union. Nor a bridgehead that would inevitably become a threat to others....

The criticisms that have been made demonstrate a deep misappreciation of the principles of French diplomatic action, the objectives it pursues, the realities of the international scene. France conducts an independent foreign policy. France has conversations with whom it wants, when it wants, and doesn't need anyone's authorization. I would also like to note that the necessity of maintaining a dialogue with the Soviet Union is unanimously recognized....

To attempt to shut the Soviet Union out of the indispensable dialogue on the means to eliminate the causes of international tension is to also take the risk of throwing international relations into a cycle of incomprehension and misunderstanding, and to abandon oneself to the blind movement of series of events that could prove to be fatal.