

Report from Paris by Laurent Rosenfeld

From bad to worse

A cabinet reshuffle has brought in the architect of foreign-policy disasters as the new foreign minister.

During the first week of December, President François Mitterrand announced that Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson would become European Commissioner beginning Jan. 1. Cheysson was held responsible for the failures of recent French diplomacy, especially in Chad.

The announcement that his replacement would be famed lawyer Roland Dumas also came as no surprise. Still, what is shocking about this personnel change is that the real author of the recent French foreign policy disasters now blamed on Cheysson is none other than Dumas!

Cheysson's removal was suddenly hastened because of the Franco-African summit during the week of Dec. 10, where he would not have been welcome. When Mitterrand realized that this summit was going to be a failure, he found it useful to demote Cheysson right away, implicitly blaming him for the Chadian sell-out. Claude Cheysson, heavyweight champion of the political blunder—for example, the day after Sadat's assassination, he stated that "an obstacle to peace between Arab states has been removed"—was obviously a convenient scapegoat.

Yet, under the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, foreign policy is traditionally the *chasse gardée* (private hunting reserve) of the President. Whatever is to be charged against the Anglophile Third-Worldist Claude Cheysson, he only implemented a policy that was decided directly by the President on all important matters.

More specifically, it was Dumas

who arranged all contacts between Qaddafi and Paris in connection with Chad, and who thus stands responsible for the fiasco.

A famous lawyer in Paris and François Mitterrand's long-standing personal friend, Roland Dumas, 62, has a long history of involvement in defense of terrorists, assassins, ethnic separatists, and various "beautiful people." He was the attorney for artists, such as the sculptor/painter Alberto Giacometti, the singer Plácido Domingo, the Paris Opera, film-maker Roger Vadim (who preceded Tom Hayden as Mr. Jane Fonda), and Pablo Picasso's family, as well as existentialist "intellectuals" such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

Monsieur Dumas could be called the Roy Cohn of France.

As Mitterrand's old personal friend, Dumas hoped he would become justice minister after Mitterrand's presidential victory in May 1981, but was frustrated in these expectations by another prima donna of the Paris bar, Robert Badinter.

His name came up in 1982 in connection with the assassination of mobster and French Connection boss Francis. Francis was apparently trying to convince Dumas to use his influence over Mitterrand to prevent the closing down of his gambling clubs in Paris.

Dumas has a history of sensitive missions on François Mitterrand's behalf: In 1965, he met with Communist Party Secretary-General Waldeck-Rochet in order to obtain the Communist leader's support for Mitter-

rand's "joint left" presidential candidacy against Charles de Gaulle; he was also sent to meet secretly with pro-Soviet Guinea leader Sekou-Touré.

Although Dumas did not get the Justice Ministry in 1981, he continued to fulfill confidential missions for the Elysée, including a secret trip to Tripoli and a secret meeting with Moroccan Polisario rebel leaders. On Dec. 18, 1983, he was appointed deputy foreign minister in charge of European affairs, just before the six-month period during which France was to assume presidency of the European Community.

When Mitterrand decided to find ways of getting out of the Chad quagmire, he used his old handyman, Roland Dumas. It was Dumas who negotiated with Qaddafi the fraudulent Sept. 16 agreement whereby French troops withdrew from Chad, but Libyan troops did not; Dumas was also Mitterrand's confidant during his trip to Morocco at the time of the "merger" between that country and Libya; finally, it was Dumas who set up the summit on Crete between Mitterrand, Qaddafi, and Greek Prime Minister Papandreou, the day before Egyptian President Mubarak revealed Qaddafi's failed assassination attempt against former Libyan Prime Minister El Bakouh, and a broader Qaddafi hit-list with Mitterrand's own name on it!

Dumas's appointment corresponds to the shift of French foreign policy toward a pro-Soviet decoupling of Europe from the Western alliance: the "New Yalta" policy. By appointing one of his closest personal friends, Mitterrand is taking this shift in hand and making sure that foreign policy proceeds according to his megalomaniac dreams of becoming the bridge between the Soviet junta and the Western world.