

Will de Gaulle's Republic Survive the 'Most Stupid Right Wing in the World?'

by Christine Bierre

As the world monetary system stands on the verge of implosion, confronting world leaders with a choice much like that of the 1930s, between fascism and war or republicanism, the French state is being rocked by one of the biggest scandals ever. A brutal power struggle, threatening to destroy the remains of de Gaulle's Fifth Republic, has broken out in recent weeks, within the right wing which is now in power. The fight between Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin erupted around the so-called "Clearstream affair," referring to a Luxembourg-based financial clearing house.

In France, the first attacks against this company date back to a book published in 2001 by a *Libération* journalist, Denis Robert, which accused the company of being involved in dirty-money laundering. Later on, in 2003 and 2004, computer listings were circulated in France, containing the names of people who presumably held bank accounts at Clearstream, including the names of top-level French political and business-world personalities.

In 2004, a supposedly "anonymous informant," a "crow" as such cowards are called in France, sent the same computer lists to Judge Renaud van Ruymbeke, who was already checking the information contained in those papers. Among the politicians, the most prominent names accused in those listings were Nicolas Sarkozy; two former Socialist Ministers, Dominique Strauss Kahn and Jean Pierre Chévènement; Patrick Ollier (husband of current Defense Minister Michèle Alliot Marie), and arch-liberal Alain Madelin.

After an investigation which lagged until December 2005, Judge van Ruymbeke concluded that the accusations were totally fraudulent. But, from the end of 2003 to the end of 2004, when a first discrete investigation carried out by the DST (national secret service) concluded that the listings were fraudulent, to the time of Judge van Ruymbeke's own conclusions, the circulation of these lists in media and in political circles, amounted to a major smear job against those accused.

This entire affair has now become a terrifying tool in the hands of Nicolas Sarkozy in his bid for power. Furious that he discovered the existence of those listings only after the DST investigation had cleared him, and not having been previously informed by his political "allies," Sarkozy decided to counterpunch. In January of this year, he opened up a juridical investigation to find out who had concocted the fraudulent

listings, and how they had been circulated among the political elites for several years.

This new investigation, carried out by judges Jean-Marie d'Huy and Henri Pons, has now revealed that the primary suspect for being the "crow" is one Jean Louis Gergorin, the vice president of the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company, EADS, the conglomerate which produces the Airbus, who is also a close friend of Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin! Gergorin was first a high-level official at France's Foreign Affairs Ministry, and later joined the top French missile producer MATRA, then headed by Jean Luc Lagardère, where he maintained close contacts with the intelligence services. He was later redeployed by Lagardère to EADS, all the while remaining very close to de Villepin and the Chirac Presidency.

The investigation by Judges d'Huy and Pons received considerable assistance from Gen. Philippe Rondot, a senior intelligence officer who closely collaborated with the Chirac Presidency, and was advisor to Michèle Alliot-Marie until they had a falling-out last December, leading to his break with the administration. In a deposition to the judges, extracts of which were published by the leading French daily *Le Monde*, Rondot said he was asked by de Villepin, then Foreign Affairs Minister, to come to a meeting in January 2004, at which Gergorin was present, to discuss the implication of the Clearstream affair for certain political personalities. According to those extracts, which only *Le Monde* has seen in their totality, Rondot told the judges that de Villepin claimed he was acting with the knowledge of Chirac.

Rondot's statements indicate that it was Gergorin, viewed as a "brilliant" personality but also as a confirmed paranoid plotter, who was the primary instigator in this operation. He involved General Rondot and his friend, de Villepin, at a time in which Sarkozy's brutal attacks against Chirac had provoked the Chiraquians to launch a widespread effort to block Sarkozy. It has now been documented that computer specialist Imad Lahoud, hired by Gergorin, was the source of the fraudulent computer lists; that Gergorin met Rondot twice at the end of 2003, to get him to investigate those lists; that he was present and in command when Rondot was called to a meeting by de Villepin in January 2004. And, as the all-news station LCI revealed May 11, it was he who secretly met Judge van Ruymbeke in April 2004, and "negotiated" the different messages from the "crow" with the Judge!



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With dreams of grandeur, Nicolas "Sarkoleon" Sarkozy, hoping to attain the leadership of France, is part of a brutal power struggle which threatens to destroy what remains of de Gaulle's Fifth Republic.

Patriots Against Allies of The Anglo-American Neo-Conservatives?

The struggle between President Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy goes back many years, but took on a new and virulent form, during and after France's veto of George W. Bush's Iraq war, when Sarkozy became the rallying point for those who were favorable to the war, and to an alliance with the Anglo-American neo-conservatives. Since then, Sarkozy, with the full support of Tony Blair and the American administration, has openly led an opposition to Chirac from inside the government, severely weakening the Presidency. Two severe electoral defeats in 2004, the rejection by the French population of the European Constitutional Treaty in May 2005, and last November's suburban riots by the poor, weakened Chirac's position further in his own conservative camp, to the advantage of Sarkozy, who in 2004 had taken over the presidency of Chirac's party, the UMP, under the nose of the French President and his entourage.

Despite Chirac's lack of coherent policy, the evident corruption, and his terrible economic policies, many concerned Frenchmen, irrespective of party lines, still saw Nicolas Sarkozy, who internationally, and nationally, had endorsed the policies of a Gingrich-like revolutionary extreme right, as being a greater evil for the country. In recent months Sarkozy

has been trying to compete with the anti-immigration ravings of racist Jean Marie Le Pen, in hopes of capturing the extreme right-wing vote. His call for law and order in the poor suburbs, and his pronouncements that he would "clean up" the suburbs of its "human trash," were the elements which lit the fire leading to last November's riots. Sarkozy is also leading the camp of so-called "ultra-liberal reforms" in France, promising to bankers internationally that he will bring an end to the dirigist French Colbertist model, hated by the financial elites.

However, the reorientation of French policies by Jacques Chirac, after the Iraq war, have blurred such factional alignments. After the veto against the Iraq war in November 2003, France had a choice: pursue the struggle against the neo-conservatives by allying with those in China, Russia, Western Europe, and the United States, who were working against the fascist policies of those forces; or try to adapt and look for compromises with those forces.

Unfortunately, especially in the aftermath of Bush's reelection, the second path was chosen, and alliances were sought, using channels such as those of George H.W. Bush, a longtime "friend" of Jacques Chirac, to put together the alliance. Efforts to mend the trans-Atlantic relationship were undertaken at Chirac's initiative, leading to the setting up of an area of "limited collaboration" on policies involving Iran, the Middle East, and the Israeli/Palestinian question. As David Ignatius revealed in an article in the *Washington Post* on Nov. 16, 2004, a special collaboration was established between Maurice Gourdault Montagne, special diplomatic advisor of Jacques Chirac, and Condoleezza Rice; they have been meeting twice a month to coordinate their policies in those areas.

Ignatius also highlights the role played by Jean Louis Gergorin in this reformed alliance. While the first meeting between Gourdault Montagne and Rice was occurring in Washington, he reports, Franco-American personalities were meeting in Paris as part of the same effort. "The meeting was organized by Jean Louis Gergorin" of EADS and "by the CSIS [U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies]. On the American side, one found personalities such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Robert Blackwill".

Thus, in the recent months, the French government became, along with the British, one of the main instruments of an Anglo-American policy aimed ostensibly at pressuring Iran to abandon its nuclear program, but, in reality, using this as a pretext to go to war against Iran. While France has been largely playing its own game in this alliance, promoting its own interests in the Near East, and in Lebanon in particular, and having announced that it would not participate in any military venture, the collaboration with the war camp internationally has led the Chirac camp to lose the support it had with the majority of the French population.

The Agony of a Regime

If Nicolas Sarkozy can hold the French nation hostage as he has in the recent period, it is because we are in the last throws of the regime, an agony which was set in motion back

in 1981, when François Mitterrand became President, leading to two disastrous governmental alliances between Socialists and Chiraquians. Jacques Chirac replaced him, while keeping the same disastrous policies.

The adoption by Chirac, like Mitterrand, if not necessarily for the same reasons, of the Maastricht Treaty policies, which led to the loss of sovereignty of all European nations to an independent and supranational European Central Bank, has provoked a deep economic crisis in the country, which is what the French population is revolting against. The neo-liberal policies of financial deregulation adopted during those years, and the subsequent privatization of the large French public sector, have allowed a French financial oligarchy to wage war against the interests of the population as a whole. These policies, like those of the banking sector in the 1930s, include: imposing high levels of unemployment and cuts in the minimum wage, and in social security and retirement payments; and the weakening of labor.

The submission of the nation's policies to looting financier interests, has prevented the Chirac government from adopting any Grand Design for the nation. Unable to mobilize the nation around a mission, all governments since 1981, have relied more and more on Fouché style, police-state methods, such as the ones revealed by the Clearstream affair, to remain in power. A recently published book *Place Beauvau, The Hidden Face of the Police*, reveals that, since 1981, no one can expect to become President of France unless he has first been named to the Interior Ministry. The 145,000 employees of that mammoth ministry then collect all the dubious information which will be used to destabilize potential adversaries!

The "Clearstream affair," is not new. Every single Presidential campaign since then has been preceded and determined by some of the dirtiest scandals the police have been able to dig up, if not invent. The book reveals the extensive networks in the police, controlled by the Socialists, the Sarkozyists, and the Chiraquians; the incestuous relations between the police and the media; and how the media, via the Interior Ministry, publicizes the attacks between different political factions!

At this point, there is no hope that a real republican leader of the stature of a Charles de Gaulle, will emerge from within the ranks of that system, to carry out the deep reforms necessary to reestablish the full vigor of the Fifth Republic. All of them took part in the dismantling of the Republic; none of them objected to the takeover of the nation by financier interests. Jacques Cheminade, then a young, high-level civil servant with a brilliant career in front of him, preferred to quit his job in the 1980s in order to organize an opposition movement to this corruption, in collaboration with Lyndon LaRouche's efforts in the same direction in the United States, rather than condone what he knew would be disastrous policies. Jacques Cheminade, who has declared his candidacy for the French Presidency in 2007, is therefore the key to any attempt to reestablish the Fifth Republic.

Cheney's Ploy To Grab Central Asian Energy

by Ramtanu Maitra

Speaking before the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee on April 26, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher unravelled a dubious plan for Washington to gain control over Central Asian energy distribution. The plan called for the United States to develop an energy grid to integrate energy-rich Central Asia with energy-starved South Asia.

It is certain that if any attempt is made to implement it, however, the plan is destined to fail, just as the plan led by Vice President Dick Cheney and the neo-conservatives had earlier failed in Iraq. It is well established now that Americans were made to believe that gaining control over Iraq was a "cakewalk," that it would be a matter of months before Saddam Hussein would be gone, and Iraq's oil would be feeding American automobiles; it was only later that Americans came to understand the truth. The newfangled plan touted by Assistant Secretary Boucher will fail from the beginning, because the South Asian nations—both India and Pakistan—have no intention of making their future economic development dependent on energy resources supplied by the United States.

To begin with, both India and Pakistan have developed a capability for commercial nuclear power generation and would like to depend more and more on nuclear power in the future. India has already developed the full nuclear fuel cycle, and it manufactures its own reactors. It is now in the market to import reactors from Russia, France, and the United States. Pakistan, on the other hand, is in the process of ordering new reactors from China. In addition, it has been proven many times over to the South Asian nations that the United States is not a reliable partner, and there are many other nations in the region that are considered by both India and Pakistan as reliable suppliers of oil and gas.

Nonetheless, the grandiose plan laid out by Boucher, "to advance regional economic development and integration," suggests that Washington have a strategic dialogue with the countries of the region, including the most unstable, Afghanistan. Boucher said: "In partnership with multilateral development banks and other donors—we want to help build new links among the countries of the broader region and connect them more closely to the rest of the world. One of our leading objectives is to fund a greatly expanded Afghan power grid, with connections to energy sources in Central



Vice President Dick Cheney and Kazakstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Astana, Kazakstan on May 5. The Cheneyacs are offering to use Central Asia energy sources to supply energy-poor South Asia, but India and Pakistan aren't buying the U.S. plan.

Asia. It's a winning solution for both sides, providing much-needed energy to Afghanistan and serving as a major source of future revenue for countries like Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan."

Energy Integration or Geopolitics?

The Bush Administration's plan, as Boucher pointed out, includes new energy routes that will ensure that the next generation of South and Central Asian entrepreneurs have access to the resources they need to prosper.

"We want to give South Asians access to the vast and rapidly growing energy resources in Central Asia, whether they are oil and gas in Kazakstan and Turkmenistan, thermal power in Uzbekistan, or hydropower in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This vision is within our grasp. Within the next few years, we expect to see private investment lead to the establishment of a 500-kilovolt power line transmitting much-needed electricity from Central Asia across Afghanistan to Pakistan and India."

Prior to Boucher's testimony, a number of U.S. officials and policy makers had laid out an almost identical plan. For instance, Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, pointed out that the trade links of the ancient Silk Road need to be revitalized to provide Central Asia with greater access to the global economy, through both South Asia and Europe. In his statement before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the House International Relations Committee on Oct. 27, 2005, Fried said that to advance these goals, the United States is "hard at work with our partners in Afghanistan and Tajikistan to build the roads and bridges essential to revitalizing regional and global trade.

. . . In addition, we are exploring hydropower as a potential major source of revenue for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and a possible catalyst for economic growth in Afghanistan."

The recently issued "National Security Strategy—2006" expressed as much interest about the U.S. presence in Central Asia, but had somewhat of a slightly different formulation. It said: "Central Asia is an enduring priority for our foreign policy. The five countries of Central Asia are distinct from one another and our relations with each, while important, will differ. In the region as a whole, the elements of our larger strategy meet, and we must pursue those elements simultaneously: promoting effective democracies and the expansion of free-market reforms, diversifying global sources of energy, and enhancing security and winning the War on Terror."

U.S. Energy Secretary Sam Bodman was recently in Astana, Kazakstan, where he said Kazakstan should lead the effort to develop the energy sector infrastructure and set up additional transit routes for energy resources. Although he talked exclusively on that occasion about energy resources, it is worth noting that high-level U.S. officials have begun to give an impression that Washington has embarked on a new policy in Central Asia.

Challenging Russia and China

Addressing the U.S. House International Relations Committee on April 26, the same committee that Assistant Secretary Boucher addressed, Drew W. Luten III, Acting Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, U.S. Agency for International Development, pointed out, in no uncertain terms, that Central Asia is where the Russian, Chinese, Iranian, and South Asian nations' energy interests meet. He said that Kazakstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan all boast substantial petroleum reserves. Turkmenistan is the second-largest natural gas producing country in the former Soviet Union. Kazakstan has large oil and gas reserves. Its giant, offshore Caspian Kashgan field is one of the most important petroleum finds in 30 years.

"The United States, as a significant energy importer, has a vital interest in ensuring that efficient export outlets are developed and that Central Asia emerges as an important source of energy in the years ahead, not just for the United States but for the world market," said Luten.

There is a saying that when something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Washington's expressed concern about Central Asian energy development for the integration of Cen-