

Introduction

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In the early 1960s, faced with the emergence of the French *'force de frappe'*, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer candidly questioned the French ambassador François Seydoux: 'This bomb, I really wonder against whom it is conceived'.¹ The suspicious tone of this often-quoted statement sheds light on one of the main sources of bilateral quarrels and misunderstandings between the French and the West Germans as they both entered the nuclear era.

Indeed, the legacy of the Second World War and the bipolar division of Europe placed France and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) on a radically different trajectory with regard to the nuclear issue. Whereas France eventually managed to integrate the club of atomic powers, the hypothesis of a German nuclear bomb remained, according to the famous Gaullist quote, 'the last *casus belli* in the world', stressing the extent to which the Soviets – and, as a consequence, their Western adversaries – feared such a scenario.²

Behind the universal formulation of its clauses, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was signed in 1968 and became the lynchpin of the bipolar nuclear order, was all about setting in stone the FRG's irreversible renunciation of the possession of nuclear weapons.³ In return, the FRG would benefit from U.S. extended nuclear deterrence and therefore host ever more numerous and powerful U.S. nuclear weapons on its soil, while having only a marginal role in the command and control of these weapons, exactly like the other European allies hosting such weapons (the United Kingdom, Turkey, Italy, and later Belgium and the Netherlands).

By contrast, from the late 1960s to the 1980s, Fifth Republic France managed to develop the world's third nuclear arsenal, allowing Paris

to assert more forcefully its divergences with Washington and other European countries regarding the strategy of the Atlantic Alliance.⁴ From 1959 onwards, the increasing intensity with which France asserted its independence gradually led to its withdrawal from NATO's integrated command structures in March 1966, at the very same time that the FRG was fostering its strategic cooperation with the U.S. and the UK in the framework of NATO, this dual and contradictory process giving birth to a real taboo regarding nuclear issues between Bonn and Paris.⁵ In France, the possession of the 'bomb' nurtured the partially illusory idea of a fully recovered independence. In West Germany, the absence of a nationally controlled deterrent, coupled with the seemingly insuperable division of the country into two parts, reinforced the perception of an existential dependence on the U.S. This dissymmetry lies at the heart of the divergent French and German nuclear experiences during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, a few German political actors, especially Adenauer, Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl, were aware of the advantages that the French independent nuclear deterrent could offer from the West German point of view: increased diplomatic room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis a sometimes bullish U.S. ally, and, more fundamentally, a counterweight to the weakening of the U.S. strategic guarantee in the context of nuclear parity between the two superpowers. Perhaps even more importantly, when France, in the second half of the 1960s, used its independent nuclear deterrent as an instrument to overcome the East–West antagonism by promoting '*détente, entente et coopération*', this policy prepared in many ways the logic of the '*Ostpolitik*', thus contributing to the possibility of a German reunification in the long-term future.⁶

Hence, in spite of mutual misunderstandings and mistrust inherited from history, aggravated by an increasing nuclear structural asymmetry, there has been, at certain 'privileged moments' – the Second Berlin Crisis of 1958–63, or the Euromissile Crisis in the 1980s – a fertile strategic dialogue between French and German decision makers, including on nuclear issues.

A Necessary Reappraisal

This edited volume brings together young historians, as well as professors and senior experts, from Finland, France, Germany and Italy. Its central objective is to examine the paradoxical character of the nuclear interactions between France and (West) Germany from 1954 to the present day. Is there an insuperable nuclear incompatibility between France and Germany, jeopardizing any genuine project of a strategic Europe?

Recent research allows us to go further in exploring the various attempts to open up a substantial Franco-German strategic dialogue, the aims that the actors pursued, the lessons that were drawn from the partial failures of these attempts, and the recurring misunderstandings, disagreements and even disputes that hindered the deepening of the nuclear cooperation between the French and the Germans.

This collective effort of research has its origins in a series of contributions that were presented at an international conference held at the University of South Brittany, in Lorient (France), from 30 June to 2 July 2016. This conference was initiated in the aftermath of the Stresemann Workshop organized by Andreas Lutsch and hosted by the University of Mainz in 2015, on the diverse forms and expressions of 'Discontent over Cold War Security Architecture in Europe and the Search for Alternatives'.⁷ During this workshop, the different alternatives to bipolarity in Europe, the various forms of strategic revisionism of the Cold War era, and their practicability as policy options, were examined. One of the most striking conclusions of the participants was to emphasize the instrumental role played by the German-French strategic and nuclear relationship in defining what was possible or impossible to achieve in terms of revision of the security architecture in the Euro-Atlantic area. True, French and German ideas about structural strategic change and nuclear issues were quite different, sometimes contradictory and apparently incompatible, but also always intertwined and correlated with one another. At certain crucial moments of the Cold War in Europe, they were even convergent, giving way to fruitful diplomatic cooperation. Therefore, we felt the time had come to explore more systematically the history of the nuclear and strategic interaction between (West) Germany and France. In so doing, our hope was to contribute to the ongoing emergence of a German-French reading of the history of the Cold War.

This book is indeed a contribution to a broader, approximately fifteen-year-old historiographical trend, which, in an effort to de-bipolarize the narrative of the Cold War, has emphasized the highly constructive and decisive character of the dialogue between the French and the Germans regarding the 'German question'.⁸ The issue of Germany's future, as we know, remained at the heart of East-West relations until the reunification in 1990. It was intrinsically linked to the bipolar contest over the Euro-Atlantic and pan-European security architecture, throughout the Cold War. Let us add that one crucial aspect of the German question was the nuclear status of the FRG, that is, the question of whether the FRG should be allowed to develop, possess, or simply host nuclear weapons controlled by another power (the U.S. as it happened). Therefore, the German question and all its ramifications have generated an abundant

literature since the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, France's participation in the management and evolution of the German question has often been under-estimated or even misrepresented. Such an observation is all the more surprising since French diplomacy constantly considered, from the aftermath of the Second World War until the reunification in 1990, that the German question was a priority of its foreign policy, if not 'the central problem of the universe'.⁹

Admittedly, Paris adamantly defended the 1945 quadripartite regime defined in Potsdam, with the aim of being able to keep an eye on the ultimate destiny of Germany: the quadripartite rights and responsibilities were not only associated with the status of a victorious power, but they were also seen as giving France a form of political ascendancy over West Germany. Nevertheless, from the start of European integration in the 1950s to the treaty of Maastricht in 1992, France also determined its European policy by taking into account West German interests, and in close consultation with the FRG government. Thus, at the core of the French policy towards the German question, a dialectical logic can be observed between ascendancy and partnership. The problem, however, is that, in most of the historical analyses on France and the German question, the 'ascendancy' element prevails over the 'partnership' one.

This phenomenon is even more pronounced with regard to nuclear deterrence: the '*force de frappe*', the cornerstone of French military power and strategy since de Gaulle's presidency, seemed to offer the embodiment *par excellence* of the French desire for superiority. Thus, during the Cold War and in the years that followed its end, the predominant interpretation among historians was that France had been, and still was, anxious to do anything possible to keep its strategic superiority over (West) Germany and to prevent it from becoming again a major political and military power. Similarly, according to this interpretation, from the European Defence Community (EDC) crisis in the 1950s to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the leaders of the Fourth and Fifth Republics were stubborn defenders of the German division, despite all the rhetoric publicly deployed to convey the opposite message. Their East–West policy was supposedly guided first and foremost by the constant willingness to preserve the German and European status quo. This idea of France as a status quo power during the Cold War has been developed in the writings of such eminent historians as Georges-Henri Soutou and Marc Trachtenberg.¹⁰

From the 2000s, a substantial amount of archival material previously classified became accessible, in France and in Germany, but also in the United States and Britain, and permitted a new wave of historical research and publications. These various works led to the emergence of a

renewed, more balanced, interpretative framework. Relying in particular on unpublished French sources from the Élysée and the Quai d'Orsay, as well as various German archives, this new historiographical impetus led to a major reassessment of France's positions towards Germany at key moments in the history of East–West relations. Whether it is Charles de Gaulle during the Second Berlin Crisis, Georges Pompidou with *Ostpolitik* and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), or François Mitterrand at the end of the Cold War in 1989–90, several recent historical studies have demonstrated that French leaders in fact staunchly supported their West German allies, in word and deed, in their efforts to keep the hope for reunification alive, to gain some room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the political and territorial status quo of the division, and eventually to achieve the reunification process.¹¹ It is undeniable that this support was manifested above all in the best interest of France and, of course, misunderstandings and ulterior motives were not absent, as in any other bilateral relationship. Similarly, not all French political leaders and diplomats adopted a benevolent attitude towards Germany, and the reciprocal proposition is equally true. Nevertheless, the archives available today and the works that they generated show a fairly constant French comprehension towards the fundamental interests and preoccupations of the Germans with their future. Put simply, it seems that in order to achieve their common ultimate goal of overcoming bipolarity and strengthening European security and unity, Paris and Bonn often favoured different paths.

Based on innovative research and new archival evidence, mostly French and German, but also American, this book illustrates this more balanced perspective on the German–French relationship by focusing specifically on the nuclear issues. As already mentioned, during the Cold War, the nuclear domain was central to the overall equilibrium between France and the FRG, but at the same time it remained an extremely delicate subject for the Franco–German bilateral dialogue given all the asymmetries that separated the two countries. A consequence of this paradox is that nuclear issues have remained the poor relation of Franco–German studies and, in the end, very few articles or books have really examined the question thoroughly. Georges-Henri Soutou's book, *L'Alliance incertaine*, published in 1996 and the first to be based on archival work using both French and German sources, is a notable exception, but this path-breaking volume has not been translated into English.¹² More recent accounts of the Franco–German strategic relationship are also more diluted or limited in scope, and most of the time they address the nuclear question only marginally, reflecting in so doing the common sense view that nuclear deterrence has altogether lost its relevance in

the post-Cold War world.¹³ Thus, this book is the first one published in English that is entirely devoted to all aspects of the nuclear and strategic questions in the Franco-German relationship, from the 1950s until today. The in-depth analysis, based on multi-archival work, of the role played by military nuclear power in the Franco-German duo is an emerging project, and the objective of this book is to put forward renewed interpretations that go beyond the stereotypical vision of a nuclear relationship between France and Germany dominated solely by mutual suspicion, and marked by an insuperable incompatibility of their respective nuclear identities and strategies.

A reappraisal of the French and German nuclear interwoven histories seemed all the more necessary and timely as, after the referendum in favour of Brexit in the United Kingdom in June 2016, the election of Donald Trump to the post of President of the United States in November of the same year, and in the context of the growing influence of various populist movements across Europe, the deepest foundations of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture seemed to be at flux again. Renewed Russian activism in the international arena, with a distinct emphasis on the nuclear dimension, only reinforced uncertainties and security concerns. In this context, a debate has recently emerged, in Germany, regarding the possibility of a European, or Franco-German, or even national, nuclear deterrent as a response to the new uncertainties.¹⁴ This debate, which would have been unthinkable a few years ago (at least before the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014), reveals the extent to which the election of Trump, a proclaimed detractor of NATO, European integration and all other multilateral institutions, came as a shock for the Germans who, since the end of the Cold War, depend on the U.S. nuclear umbrella to ensure their security.¹⁵ This is only one example of the current significance of the Franco-German strategic and nuclear relationship within the broader debate about the future of Euro-Atlantic security architecture. While the victory in November 2020 of the advocate of multilateralism Joe Biden in the U.S. presidential elections came as a relief for most Europeans and NATO, the doubts and controversies that have arisen over Euro-Atlantic security architecture are unlikely to recede.

Main Findings

This book, we hope, will contribute to explaining enduring Franco-German nuclear disagreements, but also help to reconsider the nuclear relationship between France and Germany from a more balanced, less systematically pessimistic point of view. In particular, the contributions

of this book reveal a need to challenge still dominant interpretations of the Franco-German nuclear relationship during the Cold War in two complementary directions: on the one hand, the alarmist assessments about West German nuclear ambitions, in the 1950s and 1960s, should be called into question (1); on the other hand, the narrow view of Gaullism (or 'Gaullo-Mitterrandianism') as pure nationalism, the French independent nuclear policy being the expression *par excellence* of this hegemonic aspiration, must also be reconsidered (2).¹⁶ In contrast to this kind of double 'black legend' that surrounds both French and West German nuclear trajectories, our ambition is to highlight an underlying, non-linear process of convergence between the French and German nuclear policies, towards what can be called a *limited nuclear revisionism* (3). This long-term, intermittent trend of convergence seems to have culminated just before the end of the Cold War, in 1987–89, even though it did not lead to an irreversible overcoming of the Franco-German nuclear contradictions (4).

Alarmism about West German Nuclear Ambitions

Alarmism about the FRG's nuclear ambitions during the Cold War was both the result of the geopolitical centrality of Germany within the European bipolar order and a legacy of the past, related to the traumatic memories of Nazism and the Second World War. In such a context, a nuclearized West Germany, which might be tempted to recapture its Eastern territories by force, emerged as a nightmare scenario that may cause a global nuclear conflagration. This fear of a revisionist, nuclear-armed Germany largely contributes to explaining why the concerns about nuclear proliferation focused on the particular case of West Germany, rather than that of France. Nevertheless, worries about West German nuclear ambitions, which, as shown by Andreas Lutsch in Chapter 3, peaked in Washington during the Second Berlin Crisis in the early 1960s, often went hand in hand with growing suspicions regarding the geostrategic ambitions of de Gaulle's France. In order to seduce the Germans and divert them from NATO and the United States, the Machiavellian French president might be tempted to launch a clandestine programme of bilateral nuclear cooperation, before possibly turning to the East and engaging on the risky path of a reversal of alliance.¹⁷ Moreover, regardless of the possible collaboration on military nuclear technologies between France and the FRG, U.S. policymakers feared that the mere existence of the French '*force de frappe*' could increase, to an irresistible level, the pressure in West Germany for the development of an indigenous nuclear weapons programme. In that case the result would have been a 'domino

effect' proliferation, with potentially devastating consequences for all of Europe and the cohesion of the Western camp.

Thus, the alarmist interpretation of the West German nuclear trajectory can be traced back to the views expressed by various contemporaries, not only in the Soviet propaganda, eager to denounce the capitalist FRG as a revanchist, warlike and nationalist state, but also in Washington, during the 1960s, under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. The French were also worried at the time, perhaps more explicitly than ever before under the Erhard government (1963–66).¹⁸ Historians and international relations scholars, mainly from the United States, have since then tended to propagate these alarmist views, particularly in the 1990s immediately after the end of the Cold War.¹⁹ A recent ramification of the alarmist paradigm regarding West German nuclear aims concerns the reasons why the FRG agreed to set in stone its non-nuclear status by signing the NPT in 1969. A 'realist' interpretation tends to emphasize the role of 'alliance coercion' in that process, by depicting the FRG as being forced out of the nuclear race, rather than deliberately choosing to renounce any nuclear ambition in the military domain.²⁰

Two contributors to this book, Andreas Lutsch (Chapter 3) and Benedikt Schoenborn (Chapter 5), engage with the fast-growing literature related to the causes of nuclear proliferation, and examine more precisely the factors of West Germany's persistent choice of an attitude of nuclear restraint. Using different but complementary rationales, both tend to contradict the alarmist interpretation of West German nuclear policy. Lutsch emphasizes, on the one hand, the West German leaders' rational calculation that made them aware of the extraordinary dangers of any military nuclear endeavour undertaken without the approval of the American ally, either on a national basis or bilaterally with France. Concluding that there was no such thing as a national nuclear ambition under Adenauer, Lutsch also downplays the potential impact of the French nuclear status upon West German nuclear choices: in contrast to the views expressed by most U.S. policymakers in the early 1960s, who were afraid of a domino effect scenario of proliferation, he argues that a U.S. decision to assist the French nuclear military programme would have had no decisive impact upon West German nuclear policy. Schoenborn, on the other hand, underlines the major role that the normative and identity factors played in shaping Willy Brandt's nuclear concepts, even before he became chancellor and implemented the formal abandonment of any national nuclear ambition through the NPT. In Brandt's view, because of the Nazi past, the FRG had a specific role to play in the search for peace, which required the explicit choice of a non-nuclear status and an active commitment to disarmament, in order to

progressively restore the trust of the international community towards the Germans.

In the reunified post-1989 Germany, the strength of the German public opinion's anti-nuclearism came to the fore with a distinct intensity. After the sudden end of the Cold War, nuclear deterrence seemed to have become an irrelevant and embarrassing vestige of the past. The predominance of this non-nuclear, even anti-nuclear, attitude appears as a belated vindication of Brandt's concepts regarding the international role and identity that Germany should assign to itself. As shown by Guillaume de Rougé and Oliver Meier (Chapters 11 and 12), this attitude has in any case become a major source of divergence with nuclear France, making nuclear cooperation a non-starter for the bilateral dialogue, at least until the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014.

France's Nuclear Policy as a Symptom of Hegemonic Aspirations

In parallel to the alarmist interpretation of West German nuclear ambitions, France's nuclear policy during the Fifth Republic – famously called a 'nuclear monarchy'²¹ – came to be seen as the most obvious symptom of de Gaulle's hegemonic nationalism, in particular towards West Germany, and after de Gaulle, of his successors' wish to maintain a clear margin of political-strategic superiority vis-à-vis Bonn.

One plausible origin of this influential interpretation of French nuclear policy towards Germany seems to lie in the complex and awkward relationship between de Gaulle and Raymond Aron, a prominent intellectual figure of post-war France and renowned analyst of strategic issues.²² As shown by Joël Mouric in Chapter 1, Aron never ceased to observe with deep interest the evolving debate about the German question and nuclear strategy. Although he got involved in *France Libre* in London during the war and then joined the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, the Gaullist political movement, in the late 1940s, one can also find in Aron's writings a parallel drawn between de Gaulle's foreign policy conceptions and those of Napoléon Bonaparte or later those of Charles Maurras, the interwar theoretician of 'integral nationalism' and anti-Semitic polemicist. This deliberately polemical analogy was used in the second half of the 1960s to depict a de Gaulle engulfed by hubris, conveying the idea that the French president was pursuing an over-ambitious foreign policy and wanted to establish France's hegemony over the FRG and Western Europe. In the same vein, Aron also criticized de Gaulle's successors, in particular François Mitterrand, who seemed to be keen to reaffirm as soon as he was elected the main tenets of the Gaullist nuclear doctrine. Similar criticisms against the Gaullist, or to use Védérine's concept, the

'Gaullo-Mitterrandian' nuclear policy can be found in the writings of a variety of figures, either diplomats, political scientists or historians, all of whom either knew Aron himself personally or were strongly influenced by his thought.²³ Thus, what could be called an Aronian 'school of thought' on French foreign policy progressively emerged and, according to us, produced an unbalanced description of France's nuclear policy and strategy, particularly when it came to (West) Germany.²⁴

True, a qualitative asymmetry between West Germany's and France's nuclear statuses appeared in the 1960s, and only intensified until the late 1980s with the progressive building of the French nuclear deterrent. Inevitably, it became a source of strategic inequality between Bonn and Paris. It often caused frictions, even conflicts of national interests at certain junctures. However, far from falling into complacency with a situation that left them with a comfortable margin of superiority towards their ally in the strategic domain, the French presidents repeatedly attempted to reduce the potentially negative repercussions of this inequality, by offering compensations, or making an effort to take into account West German interests in adapting French nuclear policy, doctrine and armaments. Furthermore, according to the political scientist Stanley Hoffmann, an unwritten rule at the core of the Franco-German partnership from the 1970s was to maintain 'a balance of imbalances': West Germany's superior financial and industrial power counterbalanced France's military might and superior diplomatic status, a situation that would last until the end of the Cold War.²⁵ Therefore, according to this analysis, Franco-German strategic cooperation was undeniably situated in a long-term equalitarian horizon.

Accordingly, even though any form of technological cooperation with the FRG in order to produce nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles was excluded from 1958 onwards, an underlying, long-term objective of the French presidents was to cultivate the spirit of 'national independence' among Germans. They tried to find ways of reconciling, as much as possible, the necessary limitation of German military power in the Cold War context with the principle of strategic autonomy that was applicable to Germany as much as to France. De Gaulle recommended, for example, that a German officer be entrusted with the operational conduct of a potential 'battle of Germany', in contrast to NATO's integrated chain of command, led by an American general (SACEUR), as emphasized by Frédéric Gloriant in Chapter 4.

As an alternative to the nuclear domain, Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand attempted to suggest other areas for military and strategic bilateral cooperation (such as conventional weaponry or spatial technologies). The most recent example of such an approach is the FCAS

project (Future Combat Air System) that the two countries agreed in 2018 to jointly develop. Although this aircraft is not intrinsically a nuclear weapon, it will be 'dual-capable', that is, able to deliver both conventional and nuclear strikes. As such, if both governments took the necessary decisions to move forward, the FCAS could become 'the first German-French military project with a distinct nuclear dimension', as mentioned by Oliver Meier in Chapter 12.

Insuperable Nuclear Incompatibility between France and Germany?

Coming back to the central question of whether there was during the Cold War, and still is today, an insuperable nuclear incompatibility between France and (West) Germany, preventing the two countries from engaging in substantial strategic cooperation paving the way to the building of an autonomous European strategic unit, the overall answer that can be drawn from the various contributions of this book is a qualified no.

True, the depth of the German-French nuclear antinomies that are aptly summed up by Frédéric Bozo's phrase 'nuclear conundrum' is not disputable. In no way is it our goal here to deny that nuclear deterrence was, and remains, a particularly difficult subject for the German-French duo.

A striking asymmetry can be noticed in the first place between the French and the Germans in the degree of intellectual curiosity and interest that they respectively manifested for each other's nuclear policy. Thus, there was no German equivalent of the 'public intellectual' Raymond Aron, whose lifelong reflexion on the German question and its nuclear dimensions (in particular whether or not a German bomb should be permitted) demonstrates that the nuclear status of West Germany was key to the strategic and foreign policy debate in France (see Chapter 1 by Joël Mouric); as a matter of fact, West Germany's nuclear status was also at the heart of the two superpowers' concerns, as already said. By contrast, in West Germany, the interest in French deterrence and nuclear strategy remained marginal throughout the Cold War, not to mention the post-1989 era dominated by indifference that sometimes turned into frank hostility (see Chapters 11 and 12 by Guillaume de Rougé and Oliver Meier). For understandable reasons, most of the nuclear debate among West German strategists during the Cold War focused on NATO and U.S. extended nuclear deterrence, seen as the ultimate guarantee of West German security.²⁶

More generally, apart from a few individual exceptions (Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl), when French nuclear policy occasionally drew some attention in Germany, it was mostly in the shape of diplomatic attempts to normalize it (through a convergence with NATO

procedures and strategic doctrine), or to neutralize the unpleasant aspects of the French deterrence policy, in particular when it came to the French tactical nuclear weapons, the (too) short-range ballistic missiles *Pluton*, quite infamous in Germany. According to Frédéric Bozo's analysis in Chapter 10, the Franco-German 'nuclear conundrum' had three dimensions that reinforced one another. Firstly, France's accession to nuclear military power laid in stark contrast to the non-nuclear status of the FRG, which became part of the global nuclear order via the NPT in the 1970s. Secondly, in strategic terms, France's uncompromising independent posture within the Western alliance and challenge to U.S. leadership were at loggerheads with Germany's unconditional Atlanticism and crucial role in the U.S.-led security system in Europe. Most importantly, it was at the military level that the contradiction of national interests seemed to be the most insurmountable: in case of war in Europe, 'France's deterrence concept was based ... on the defence of the national "sanctuary"'. Would France's nuclear guarantee also cover the FRG, or would the latter serve as a mere glacis? How could Paris dissipate the unpleasant impression, seen from Bonn, that the French deterrence doctrine involved turning the German territory into a nuclear battlefield, given the limited range of the *Pluton* (100 km)? In fact, until the early 1980s, the 'sanctuary/glacis' model remained a 'blind spot' in the Franco-German relationship. As shown by Ilaria Parisi in Chapter 7, it proved impossible for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt to relaunch the bilateral dialogue on European defence in the late 1970s in large part because of the dispute over *Pluton* and the FRG's demand for a consultation mechanism on French tactical nuclear use.

Yet Paris and Bonn actively and repeatedly tried to overcome their nuclear differences and asymmetries, as strong as they were. In an iterative and dynamic process that has too often been overlooked so far, they worked in parallel or even together during several episodes of privileged strategic rapprochement during the Cold War. This book reveals an underlying, non-linear process of convergence between the two countries, based on a limited nuclear revisionism vis-à-vis the bipolar order imposed by the Cold War. Although these dynamics did not lead in the end to an irreversible resolution of the German-French 'nuclear conundrum', the mere fact that there were such attempts to deepen the strategic dialogue, including on nuclear matters, provides ample evidence that the nuclear incompatibility between the French and the Germans cannot be described as absolutely insuperable.

The term 'limited nuclear revisionism' refers to a common, if latent, inclination of the French and West German Cold-War-era foreign policies to call into question the bipolar security architecture.²⁷ In other words,

the two countries had in common a certain amount of discontent vis-à-vis the division of Europe (and Germany) into two antagonistic blocs and thus acted with determination to gradually transform the bipolar international order, not necessarily together, but in parallel, and with the same long-term strategic objective: the reunification of Germany and Europe. In many respects, French and German nuclear policies can be better understood by taking into account this revisionist tendency, which Paris and Bonn shared even though it took different forms and intensities in each country. This limited revisionism was in any case a major factor underlying the different phases of German-French strategic and nuclear rapprochement.

As far as the FRG was concerned, 'limited revisionism' was the logical result of the division of Germany after the defeat of 1945. Thus, it was a moral (and political) imperative for any post-war West German chancellor to make visible efforts to keep alive the hope of reunification, even though there was no question of pursuing this objective either by force or through a rapprochement with Moscow, which would have involved calling into question the FRG's strategic ties with the West (the so-called *Westbindung*). In nuclear terms, this limited revisionism took two diverging forms in the history of the FRG: Adenauer's deliberately cultivated ambiguities regarding the FRG's nuclear ambitions, and Brandt's acceptance and formalization of the non-nuclear status of Germany through the signature of the NPT, seen as a precondition for his *Ostpolitik*. These two contradictory nuclear postures paradoxically derived from the same need to preserve or regain some room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the two superpowers, so as to prepare for the overcoming of the bipolar division of Europe and Germany, but without undermining the FRG's fundamental security interests and solidarity with the Western camp.

As for France, 'limited revisionism' manifested itself through the steadfast solidarity expressed towards West Germany in defence of the long-term horizon of reunification. Keeping this horizon open was deemed indispensable so as not to despair the West Germans and keep them firmly anchored within the Western camp. Thus, in the French conception of the German question, the long-term objective of reunification and the strength of the *Westbindung* went hand in hand. That is why French leaders and diplomats fought with such obstinacy, most notably during the Second Berlin Crisis, against any tendency to make concessions to Moscow that would have contributed to recognizing the existence of the East German state, and in so doing, to freezing the status quo of the division of Germany into two states. In addition, when in the fall of 1961 the British and Americans suggested discussing with the Soviets the non-nuclear status of the FRG, Paris staunchly resisted this idea, side

by side with Chancellor Adenauer. The latter wanted indeed to keep this diplomatic card for himself, if one day it became possible to engage in real negotiations on reunification with the Soviets (see Chapter 4 by Frédéric Gloriant). Similarly, in the heyday of détente, during the CSCE in the early 1970s, the French negotiators skilfully defended the notion of peaceful change of borders, demonstrating ‘Paris’s will to stay the course towards reunification of the continent’ and of Germany, as shown by Nicolas Badalassi in Chapter 6. More generally, if French policymakers adamantly opposed any plan for reunification in exchange for a German neutralization (involving a unified Germany outside the Atlantic Alliance), it was absolutely not because they feared a reunified Germany, but because in French eyes such a scheme could not fail to result in a unified, but ‘Finlandized’ Germany, that is to say, a Germany in Moscow’s sphere of influence. In this vein, François Mitterrand’s nuclear policy towards the FRG constantly aimed at ‘neutralizing neutralism’, by taking into account German concerns (see Chapter 8 by Dominique Mongin) and by convincing Bonn that France was not ‘a nuclear Switzerland’. The latter formula meant that France’s ‘vital interests’ could not be limited geographically to the national territory; German territory would be *de facto* covered by the French deterrent and would not be considered as a mere glacis (see Chapter 10 by Frédéric Bozo).

Bridging the Franco-German Nuclear Gap: A Job Left Unfinished

Throughout the Cold War, three phases of strategic rapprochement between France and the FRG with a clear nuclear dimension can be distinguished, each of them being related to an episode during which the security guarantee provided to Europe by the United States was subject to a serious crisis, with the credibility of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence being weakened for various political and strategic reasons. The pattern is striking: every time there is a weakening of the transatlantic link, the response is a rise of German-French solidarity and of strategic ‘Europeanism’.

In the aftermath of the Suez Crisis and the launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviets, in 1957–58, the F-I-G agreement evoked by Jenny Raflik in Chapter 2 is the one and only example of a project involving Franco-German (as well as Italian) cooperation in order to produce together nuclear weapons and delivery means. However, the project was abandoned in the summer of 1958 as soon as de Gaulle came back to power and brought to an end the nuclear dimension of the F-I-G project. The second phase of Franco-German strategic rapprochement culminated during the era of de Gaulle and Adenauer, in 1961–63, at the

same time as the Second Berlin Crisis was shaking the Atlantic Alliance on its basis. If the joint production of nuclear armaments was never again seriously envisaged after 1958, a bilateral strategic dialogue developed in the early 1960s that included nuclear matters, both at the political and military levels. Most importantly though, the 'Continental' strategic solidarity which de Gaulle had called to since 1960 found an opportunity to materialize on the occasion of the Second Berlin Crisis. Progressively, a German-French common conception emerged regarding this crisis, in which the German question, and in particular the *Westbindung* and the nuclear status of the FRG, was at stake. This rapprochement resulted in the signature of the Élysée Treaty in January 1963, which foresaw a systematic coordination of the two security and defence policies. The 1963 treaty, however, remained to a large extent a dead letter because of the preamble added by the Bundestag in June 1963 that reaffirmed the primacy of NATO in the defence policy of the FRG. The third phase of German-French strategic rapprochement took place in the midst of the Euromissile Crisis, starting in 1981. During what happened to be the second major Europe-centred nuclear crisis of the Cold War era, the *Westbindung*, the FRG's nuclear status, and so the German question, were at stake once again. Building on what had been achieved before, and in an attempt to relaunch the strategic dimension of the Élysée Treaty, Mitterrand and Kohl not only gave the impetus to a renewed strategic dialogue and coordinated their actions to weather the Euromissile Crisis, but they also broke new ground on the most delicate nuclear issues: the use of French tactical (or pre-strategic) nuclear weapons and the question of extending French nuclear protection to German territory. Thus, in the 1980s, the nuclear proximity between Bonn and Paris reached an unprecedented degree, which appears to be even more exceptional in retrospect, compared to the following twenty-five years. Dominique Mongin in Chapter 8 emphasizes the centrality of Germany in Mitterrand's nuclear strategy and armaments policy. Yannick Pincé in Chapter 9 even argues that nuclear deterrence became, in the shadow of the Euromissile Crisis, a subject of transnational German-French politicization: any decision taken in the nuclear field in France became a subject of domestic debate in Germany, and vice versa, with both Mitterrand and Kohl supporting each other against their respective political opponents.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, these privileged phases of rapprochement did not lead to a final and irreversible resolution of the Franco-German nuclear conundrum. At least three limits hampered the nuclear dialogue between France and the FRG, and were not overcome during the Cold War. First, as is noticeable during the Second Berlin Crisis, even when the two diplomacies pursued the same general

objective, most of the time they did not act together. At the East–West level for example, they never took major joint initiatives, as de Gaulle suggested more than once. Perhaps West Germany’s (non-)nuclear status and the issue of reunification were subjects of national interest that were too sensitive and existential: it was impossible, even for an admirer of de Gaulle like Adenauer, to let them become the field of experimentation of a still hypothetical joint foreign policy between France and West Germany. Therefore, on nuclear issues and concerning the German question, the actions of French and West German diplomats were frequently parallel, rather than coordinated in advance or even jointly executed.

Secondly, as shown by Benedikt Schoenborn in Chapter 5, France’s and West Germany’s nuclear identities were to a large extent a legacy of the past, and history did not have the same normative consequences for the French and the West Germans. According to Brandt, the Nazi past compelled Germany to renounce any access to nuclear weapons, if only to give some credibility to its new peaceful identity, which was not the case for France. Therefore, after the FRG joined the NPT in the 1970s, France and West Germany had adopted once and for all two divergent forms of nuclear identities, based on *grandeur* and national independence in one case, and on nuclear restraint and faith in the U.S. security guarantee in the other. These contradictory roles in themselves did not exclude cooperation between France and Germany, but they could not fail to produce disagreements on certain topics (to begin with, disarmament and arms control) and make it more difficult to establish the kind of bilateral strategic partnership that de Gaulle had in mind when signing the Élysée Treaty.

The third limit was related to the nuclear dimension of European defence, in other words, the scenario of a Europeanization of the French nuclear deterrent. This topic was raised more than once, in particular in the 1970s (see Nicolas Badalassi’s Chapter 6 and Ilaria Parisi’s Chapter 7), but an agreement between Paris and Bonn proved out of reach, even under Mitterrand and Kohl. According to Frédéric Bozo’s analysis in Chapter 10, the bilateral negotiation that had begun in 1986 to set up a consultation mechanism regarding the possible use of French pre-strategic weapons (the *Plutons* and *Hadès*) on, or from, German territory had not been far from success in April 1989. True, the Germans had insisted on retaining a veto right against the possible deployment of the *Hadès* onto German territory, while the French had refused the idea of targeting restrictions, which amounted in their view to a joint targeting policy, in other words an unacceptable infringement on France’s sacrosanct autonomy of decision. However, in the same period of time, the French

were also contemplating a major reduction of the number of *Hadès* to be produced, which was 'in essence untying the Gordian knot'. As for the Germans (Egon Bahr in particular), they were not far from recognizing the possibility of a European defence system based on the French deterrent. 'The end of the Cold War came too soon', concludes Frédéric Bozo, and in many respects the failed negotiation of April 1989 on nuclear consultation can be considered a missed opportunity to lay the basis for a Franco-German and European deterrent posture.

Book Outline and Acknowledgements

This book is chronologically organized. The first three parts deal respectively with a different period of the Cold War: (I) the beginning of the Franco-German strategic dialogue until the era of de Gaulle and Adenauer; (II) the emergence and development of *Ostpolitik*; and (III) the Euromissile Crisis and the end of the Cold War. Part IV focuses on the most contemporary controversies on nuclear deterrence and arms control and shows how deep the remaining divergences between the French and German nuclear perceptions are.

This volume would not exist without the support of the CERHIO (Centre de recherche en histoire de l'Ouest) of the University of South Brittany (Lorient), which hosted the original conference in June–July 2016. In particular, we would like to thank Sylviane Llinares, head of the CERHIO, Eric Limousin, dean of the faculty of Lettres, Langues et Sciences Humaines, and Christophe Cerino, director of the submarine base and museum of Keroman. We are also grateful to the Nuclear Proliferation International History Program (NPIHP) of the Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington DC), and in particular to the two co-directors of the NPIHP, Christian Ostermann and Leopoldo Nuti, who personally contributed to the success of the 2016 conference through their amicable advice at each step of the process, their indispensable intellectual input and financial support. Many thanks also to the research team ICEE (Intégration et coopération dans l'espace européen) of the University Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle, and particularly Christine Manigand and Frédéric Bozo, who encouraged, supported and funded our project from its inception. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to our colleague and friend Guillaume de Rougé for his invaluable help and for being one of the initiators of this project, to Christine Leah and Elmar Hellendorn for their enthusiastic participation in the Lorient conference, and most importantly, to all the contributors to this book, whose flexibility and rigour have made it a truly collective scientific endeavour.

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Notes

1. F. Seydoux de Clausonne, *Mémoires d'outre-Rhin* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1975), 225.
2. A. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle. Vol. 1* (Paris: de Fallois, 1994), 346.
3. A. Lutsch, *The Persistent Legacy: Germany's Place in the Nuclear Order*, Nuclear Proliferation International History Project Working Paper no. 5 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2015).
4. F. Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).
5. H. Haftendorn, 'The NATO Crisis of 1966–1967: Confronting Germany with a Conflict of Priorities' and F. Bozo, 'The NATO Crises of 1966–1967: A French Point of View', both in H. Haftendorn, G.-H. Soutou, S.F. Szabo and S.F. Wells Jr. (eds), *The Strategic Triangle: France, Germany, and the United States in the Shaping of the New Europe* (Washington/Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 77–102 and 103–26.
6. On the analogies and differences between de Gaulle's *détente* and Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, see B. Schoenborn, *La mésentente approuvoisée: De Gaulle et les Allemands, 1963–1969* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2007), 319–23.
7. See A. Lutsch's report: 'Stresemann Workshop 2015: Illusionary Visions or Policy Options? Discontent over Cold War Security Architecture in Europe and the Search for Alternatives, 05.07.2015–08.07.2015 Mainz', www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6152 (accessed 17 November 2019).

8. This approach is perfectly illustrated by the recently published book edited by F. Bozo and C. Wenkel, *France and the German Question, 1945–1990* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).
9. C. de Gaulle, *Discours et messages*, vol. 1, *Pendant la guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1970), 483 (speech to the Consultative Assembly, Paris, 22 November 1944).
10. M. Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); M. Trachtenberg, 'The de Gaulle Problem', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14(1) (2012), 81–92; G.-H. Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954–1996* (Paris: Fayard, 1996); G.-H. Soutou, *La guerre froide de la France, 1941–1990* (Paris: Tallandier, 2018). See also the review of the latter book by N. Badalassi in *Relations internationales* 178(2) (2019).
11. F. Gloriant, *Le grand schisme: La France, la Grande-Bretagne et les problèmes euro-atlantiques, 1957–1963*, PhD thesis, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, 2014; Schoenborn, *La mésentente apprivoisée*; N. Badalassi, *En finir avec la guerre froide: La France, l'Europe et le processus d'Helsinki, 1965–1975* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014); C. Hiepel, *Willy Brandt et Georges Pompidou: La politique européenne de la France et de l'Allemagne entre crise et renouveau* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2016); D. Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); F. Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification*, trans. Susan Emanuel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).
12. See note 10. The only books in English which tackle similar questions are S.A. Kocs, *Autonomy or Power? The Franco-German Relationship and Europe's Strategic Choices, 1955–1995* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), which does not rely on archives but on open sources, and encompasses all aspects of the defence and security bilateral relationship; and B. Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949–2000* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1999), the perspective of which is not focused on the bilateral Franco-German relationship, but rather examines each of the three main West European players separately.
13. See for example U. Krotz and J. Schildt, *Shaping Europe: France, Germany, and Embedded Bilateralism from the Élysée Treaty to Twenty-First Century Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), in particular chapter IX simply entitled 'Foreign and Security Policy', 212–33; and B. Irondelle and R. Kempin, 'Convergence croissante ou divergence persistante? La coopération franco-allemande en politique de sécurité et de défense', in R. Marcowitz and H. Miard-Delacroix (eds), *50 ans de relations franco-allemandes* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2013), 111–43. In these two books only one chapter is devoted to foreign and security policy issues, and in both cases the nuclear dimension is marginal, to say the least. See also, in German, J. Leonhard (ed.), *Vergleich und Verflechtung: Deutschland und Frankreich im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2015), in which the contribution by U. Lappenküper, 'Die deutsch-französische Sicherheitspartnerschaft zwischen Kommerz, Kontrolle und europäischer Einigung', 79–104, offers an interesting panoramic overview of the politico-strategic relationship between France and (West) Germany from 1945 to 2013, and emphasizes the significant, if not decisive role of the nuclear question in the final failure of the French project to establish a solid German-French defence partnership at the core of an autonomous European strategic unit.
14. For a summary of this rapidly aborted debate, see T. Volpe and U. Kühn, 'Germany's Nuclear Education: Why a Few Elites Are Testing a Taboo', *The Washington Quarterly* 40(3) (2017), 7–27. See also Oliver Meier's chapter in this volume.
15. Z. Laïdi, 'L'Europe au défi du moment gaullien', *Le Débat* 206(4) (2019), 48–59; see also R. Cohen, 'Europe to Mike Pence: No, Thank You', *New York Times*, 18 February

- 2019, an op-ed with the very telling subtitle, 'The Trump administration manages to turn Germans into Gaullists, ready to flirt with Russia and contemplate strategic independence'.
16. 'Gaullo-Mitterrandianism' is a neologism created in the 1980s by Hubert Védrine, Mitterrand's diplomatic adviser and then Secretary General to the Presidency, in order to underline the common principles on which were based both de Gaulle's and Mitterrand's foreign policy conceptions, in contrast to Atlanticism or what would later be called 'Occidentalism'.
 17. Schoenborn, *La mésentente apprivoisée*; O. Bange, *The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
 18. Schoenborn, *La mésentente apprivoisée*, 162–66, 368 and 380; Trachtenberg, 'The de Gaulle Problem'.
 19. This is the case, among historians, of Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*. As for political scientists, a series of articles were published in the early 1990s by eminent U.S. scholars of the 'neo-realist' school, who gloomily predicted, in post-Cold War Europe, a return to pre-1914 balance-of-power strategies and national rivalries: K. Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', *International Security* (Fall 1993), 44–79; J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security* (Summer 1990), 5–56; C. Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Arise', *International Security* (Spring 1993), 5–51. All argued that Germany would inevitably develop a national nuclear weapons arsenal, since 'for a country to choose not to become a great power [would be] a structural anomaly' (Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure', 66). On this 'neo-realist' view of the plausible nuclear trajectory of the reunified Germany, see the summary and critical remarks by Kocs, *Autonomy or Power*, 1–14.
 20. G. Gerzhoy, 'Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint: How the United States Thwarted West Germany's Nuclear Ambitions', *International Security* 39(4) (2015), 91–129.
 21. S. Cohen, *La monarchie nucléaire: Les coulisses de la politique étrangère sous la Cinquième République* (Paris: Hachette, 1986).
 22. N. Bavez, 'Le grand fossé: Aron et de Gaulle', *Revue de Politique française* 2 (1999), 67–77, <https://www.parutions.com/pages/1-4-7-1598.html> (accessed 17 November 2019).
 23. Among others, the philosopher and political scientist Pierre Hassner, the diplomat Jean-Marie Soutou, and the historian (and son of the latter) Georges-Henri Soutou.
 24. This 'Aronian' interpretation of Gaullism found an echo in the United States, in the works of Marc Trachtenberg, particularly in his article 'The de Gaulle Problem', already cited. To provide a more complete picture of the diverse strands of Aronianism, it should be added here that a few other French and American scholars, also deeply influenced by Aron's thought, sympathized with certain aspects of de Gaulle's foreign policy (Pierre Manent, Stanley Hoffmann, Daniel J. Mahoney).
 25. S. Hoffmann, 'La France dans le nouvel ordre européen', *Politique étrangère* 55(3) (1990), 503–12 (504). The expression in French is 'équilibre des déséquilibres'.
 26. There were a few exceptions though, such as Lothar Rühl, who did his PhD thesis in Paris in 'Sciences-Po', on the defence policy of the Fifth Republic, under the supervision of the well-known specialist of German-French relations Alfred Grosser: *La politique militaire de la Cinquième République* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1976). Rühl then became a journalist for *Die Welt* and a senior official in the *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung* (the FRG ministry of defence) in the 1980s.
 27. The notion of 'limited nuclear revisionism' is borrowed from A. Lutsch, 'In Favor of "Effective" and "Non-Discriminatory" Non-Dissemination Policy: The FRG and the

NPT Negotiation Process (1962–1966)', in R. Popp, L. Horowitz and A. Wenger (eds), *Negotiating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Origins of the Nuclear Order* (London: Routledge, 2017), 36–57 (here 38). In Lutsch's article, the concept refers specifically to the FRG's willingness, in the 1960s, 'to achieve incremental enhancements to Germany's position and influence within the nuclear order – but on a limited scale, that is without becoming an atomic power' and by staying firmly anchored within the NATO framework. In this introduction, the scope of this notion is much larger in time and space, encompassing both France and West Germany, throughout the whole duration of the Cold War.

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