

Opinion/Commentary/Letters

France, West Germany strain nuclear ties

By ALAIN RAYMOND
PARIS — During the months ahead, France and West Germany will be locked in close and perhaps tense negotiations with the United States over the issue of nuclear proliferation. The view here is that Europe comprehends the U.S. position better than Americans appreciate European concerns on this issue.

Therefore, unless misunderstandings on the matter are cleared up, relations between the United States and its European allies could become sorely strained — to the detriment of the Atlantic community.

The problem has surfaced as the result of a French deal to sell nuclear installations to Pakistan and a West German agreement to provide Brazil with similar but larger-scale facilities.

These arrangements have been made at a time when the developing nations, confronted by the prospect of oil shortages, are reaching out to-

ward nuclear power as an alternative source of the energy they desperately need for economic growth.

But the United States, as well as the Soviet Union, sees risks in supplying these nations with nuclear know-how. For a plant capable of reprocessing uranium leftovers can produce plutonium, which can be used to manufacture atomic bombs.

Thus, in theory at least, to sell such plants abroad is to give to all kinds of countries the ability to build up nuclear arsenals. French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt are as sensitive to this danger as are President Carter and Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader.

In commercial terms, the problem is more serious for West Germany, since its \$5 billion contract with Brazil is bigger than any deals concluded by France. Yet the problem is in its political and longer-range economic dimensions equally important for France and West Ger-

many, which are Europe's principal exporters of nuclear technology.

The key question, then, is whether France and West Germany should submit to American and Soviet pressures and give up present and future nuclear markets — or whether they should stand their ground and face difficulties in their vital ties with the United States.

Although the United States is apparently still unconvinced, France has made it amply clear that it has not and will not sign any nuclear contracts without taking international atomic regulations into account.

In March 1976, after the deal with Pakistan was signed, the French government publicly announced that it contained five major provisions designed to safeguard against the use of nuclear facilities for military purposes.

Among other things, Pakistan agreed to place the French equipment under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency, a

United Nations body empowered to inspect nuclear installations. It also pledged to protect the plants against terrorists, and it gave France the right to exercise control over the production of irradiated fuels.

The provisions conformed to the guidelines set down by the Nuclear Suppliers Conference, which was organized by the United States in order to put restraints on nuclear exporters.

But despite these efforts, France was criticized by both U.S. officials and the American press for the Pakistan deal. By way of dealing with the criticism, the French government indicated that it would not drop the deal itself, but would be willing to cancel the contract at Pakistan's request.

The aim of this move was to give the United States the responsibility for persuading Pakistan to break the accord, so that France could not be accused of having reneged on the contract.

With all this, the U.S. pressure has rankled the French, and they are

wondering whether they are going to face further American pressure in the nuclear field.

France, for example, now possesses a major reprocessing plant with sufficient capacity to handle a large portion of European and Japanese radioactive waste. The Japanese, in fact, are currently negotiating an agreement with France to treat their spent nuclear fuel.

This capacity means that France, along with West Germany and Canada, have managed to overcome the monopoly in nuclear engineering that was once held by the United States. And it means more and more competition for the United States in commercial terms.

The French are bracing themselves, therefore, for the possibility that President Carter's campaign against nuclear proliferation may also be directed against France's own facilities. If so, it would weaken ties with the United States that are already frayed.



Carter's many faces shape foreign policy

WASHINGTON — The puzzlement about the Carter administration's foreign policy is pervasive, dominating conversations from Capitol Hill to Embassy Row. The frequent "clarifications" of comments from assorted foreign policy spokesmen in Geneva, New York and Washington, and the President's own eagerness to rush in verbally where others fear to tread — as with this week's discussion of "defensible borders" for Israel — have caused a degree of consternation among those who look to the American government as a source of stability in the world.

Making sense of what is going on may or may not be possible for those on the inside; it is certainly a challenge that intimidates any outsider. But it may be useful to go back to basics, and remind ourselves where Carter himself draws his fundamental notions about the way we relate to the world beyond our borders.

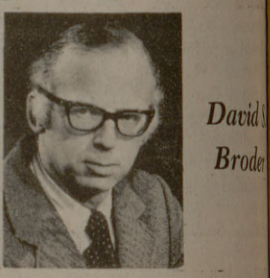
There are three different impulses at work on him, and, through him, on American policy. First, there is Carter the moralist. Anyone who thinks that the heavy emphasis on human rights in the first weeks of this administration is either accidental or a passing phase does not understand the depth of the moral passion in this President.

What is coming through now, in world diplomacy, is the same force that made Carter so powerful and effective in his campaign meetings in black churches: a strong empathy for the oppressed victims of a society. This belief in social justice and personal freedom, like all of Carter's root ideas, is universal in its application and intrinsic to his character.

The moral fervor finds expression in another way, too: the abhorrence of nuclear weapons. This goes beyond any calculated appraisal of the dangers of nuclear war or the costs of the nuclear arms race. It is more fundamentally a passionate rejection of the essential inhumanity of visiting technological terror on human beings. It is, if you will, another protest against torture.

The second strain in Carter's foreign policy is that of the "Trilateralist." His introduction to the international world came under the auspices of banker David Rockefeller and the Trilateral Commission — an assemblage of big shots from the United States, Europe and Japan.

As has been well-documented, Carter staffed his national security apparatus with colleagues from the commission, and its precepts color his approach to the world.



It is an approach that emphasizes above all else, the economic interdependence of the advanced industrialized countries, their potential profitable trade with Communist-bloc nations, and the obligations to the developing countries of the southern hemisphere. It is a world of multinational companies, where ideological could need to be submerged because, frankly, they are not good business or good economics.

Responding to this impulse, Carter has put heavier emphasis on international economic order — particularly on the multilateral organizations seeking to manage it than any previous President.

The third impulse is that Carter carried away from Ann Arbor and his years as a career Navy officer. It is a much more traditionalist view of the world, embodying conventional international interest, defined by sea and control over vital portions of the surface of the globe, guaranteed ultimately, by the availability of a massive American military power.

This was the view that shaped Carter's attitude toward Vietnam before he became an avowed presidential candidate. During his years as governor, when the war had been highly unpopular in this country, did not indulge in the rhetoric described Vietnam as a moral issue on American honor. It was, in his eyes, at worst a tactical or strategic mistake, made in an honest effort to preserve an important American sphere of interest.

That same "Ann Arborist" impulse shown in his quick defense of covert activities of the CIA, and dispatch of Navy units and Marines to counter the threat to American lives from Uganda's Idi Amin. Behind the smile, there are still eyes of the man who wanted to prey in a nuclear submarine.

That is the paradox of Jimmy Carter — moralist, Trilateralist, Ann Arborist. Whether and how these conflicting impulses can be worked into a coherent framework of foreign policy I would not guess. But a great ride on that question.

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