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*“French fears over power shifts: the October War, the catalyst for the deterioration of Franco-American relations in 1973?”*

## ABSTRACT

*Ironically, while the “Year of Europe” was meant to privilege transatlantic consultations, 1973 became the “Year of the Middle-East” as disputes over the Arab-Israeli conflict and the energy crisis came to permeate transatlantic relations. Instead of providing a European perspective on those two events, this essay investigates their impact on French foreign policy-making and Franco-American relations. Drawing on French and American archival material, it shows that the “Year of Europe” controversy between France and the US was caused by bilateral misunderstandings rather than irrevocable conflicts of interest. Its main contention is that Franco-American antagonisms more forcefully climaxed in the aftermath of the October War in 1973, not so much because of issues specific to the internal workings of the Arab-Israeli war, but because of what it revealed about the structure of the international system and the state of transatlantic relations in the eyes of the French. Europe’s exclusion from the cease-fire negotiations exacerbated French fears of a US-Soviet monopoly on Middle-Eastern affairs. While underlining the irony of such anxieties, this study demonstrates that they triggered a reassessment of France’s foreign policy agenda. By taking the lead in accelerating the process of European integration and reviving Euro-Arab ties, the Pompidou government sought to counterweight the twofold threat of a US-Soviet “condominium” and of American leadership in the West. In turn, this policy shift brought France’s new foreign policy objectives in direct conflict with those of the US. On the one hand, the Pompidou government’s new policy aimed to build a politically unified Europe as an independent world actor with its own identity. On the other hand, the US wanted to reaffirm the solidarity of the Atlantic Community and to revitalize the Eisenhower administration’s design for US leadership of the alliance. While this essay provides a rare Franco-American viewpoint on these issues, it also brings a new perspective on scholarly debates over the limits of Soviet-American détente.*

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My gratitude also belongs to Dr. Emmanuel Murlon-Druol who directed me to archives and gave me some advice. Thanks to his warning, I could anticipate the fact that my research at the French National Archives would be restricted as all post-French Revolution records have been moved from the Paris site to the new site in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine this year. Several documents from the 1970s are indeed unavailable since the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 and will remain so until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

I have also received some help from a friend studying at the Sorbonne University in Paris who lent me his identification number and password to access the online resources of the Sorbonne library. Indeed, to review pre-2011 articles from the monthly periodical *Le Monde Diplomatique*, it is necessary to get either a personal or a university subscription to the online archives of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. All articles cited in this essay have been accessed through the Sorbonne University Internet portal with this borrowed identification number and password.

Lastly, my thanks go to Dr. Sarah Snyder for her support and constructive commentary throughout the year. Her suggestions helped me improve both the structure and content of my work.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Archives Diplomatiques
APNW	Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War
CHAN	Centre Historique des Archives Nationales
DNSA	Digital National Security Archive
EC	European Community
ECG	Energy Coordinating Group
EPC	European Political Cooperation
EU	European Union
<i>FRUS</i>	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
Memcon	Memorandum of Conversation
NATO	North Atlantic Council Organization
NSC	National Security Council
ONU	Organisation des Nations Unies
Telcon	Telephone Conversation
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

In his memoirs published in 1982, Henry Kissinger – assistant to the president for national security affairs (1969-1975) and Secretary of State (1973-1977) – claimed that the reason for the “confrontation” with France in 1973 “are not fully clear to me even today”.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Franco-American relations had experienced a lull between 1969 and 1972 accounts for Kissinger’s bewilderment. Indeed, the first two years of Georges Pompidou’s presidency (1969-1974) were marked by a revival of bilateral cooperation, especially in the nuclear field.<sup>2</sup> While President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) and Kissinger admired Pompidou whom they considered as a “strong, decisive and dominant President”, White House sources illustrate American officials’ genuine conviction that there were opportunities for closer consultations with France.<sup>3</sup> The picture drastically darkened with Kissinger’s announcement of the “Year of Europe” initiative on 23 April 1973 at the annual luncheon of the Associated Press, which was designed to revive transatlantic cooperation.<sup>4</sup> The latter troubled a short period of cordial and cooperative relations as France rejected Kissinger’s appeal for an “Atlantic Charter” and embarked on drafting a counter-proposal in the European Community (EC) framework. Yet, if the “Year of Europe” set the stage for deteriorating Franco-American relations, this essay will first argue that bilateral disputes over Kissinger’s proposal were primarily caused by misunderstandings between the two countries rather than irremediable conflicts of interest.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, the fourth Arab-Israeli War – sparked by Egypt and Syria’s surprise attack on Israel on 6 October 1973 – radicalized Franco-American antagonisms by giving rise to a multifaceted rivalry between the two countries. France and the United States disagreed on issues specific to the internal workings of the Middle-East war – such as conflict management and the nature of a cease-fire resolution – but their dispute came to represent much wider transatlantic problems. Indeed, in late October 1973,

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 163.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Maurice Vaisse, “Les relations spéciales franco-américaines au temps de Richard Nixon et Georges Pompidou”, *Relations internationales*, No. 119, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 388; Memorandum of Conversation (Memcon), 26 January 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969-76: Volume XLI* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2012), 531-34; Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 23 February 1970, Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Kissinger Transcripts, Document KT00100.

<sup>4</sup> Kissinger, *The Year of Europe Speech*, 23 April 1973, found at: [http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/ffus/YearEur\(text\).pdf](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/ffus/YearEur(text).pdf). Accessed on 28 December 2012.

<sup>5</sup> This essay will therefore challenge the dominant scholarly paradigm which identifies the two countries’ conflicting perceptions of Europe’s role in the West as the main cause for their disputes on the “Year of Europe”. See for example, Georges-Henri Soutou, *La Guerre de Cinquante ans: Le Conflit Est-Ouest, 1943-1990* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 520-525.

Europe's exclusion from the cease-fire negotiations dramatized the US's tendency to resolve matters solely with the Soviet Union and heightened French fears of a US-Soviet "condominium".<sup>6</sup> If prior to the October war, Pompidou was sceptic as to the possibility of moving toward political unification in the EC, the perceived threat of a US-Soviet collusion in the Middle-East and the Arab oil embargo were key in triggering a reassessment of policy. This essay will therefore secondly argue that, while the October War revived the degree of mistrust that characterized Franco-American relations since the 1960s, it also brought the two countries' foreign policy agendas in direct conflict.

A source-based diplomatic study of Franco-American relations in 1973 is key to understand why fears of a US-Soviet "condominium" prevailed in French official and press circles while, in practice, an important part of American diplomacy was to make the Soviet Union irrelevant in the peace process of the October War.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, even though the 1973 Arab-Israeli war produced a significant clash in Franco-American relations, in English-language literature, it has generally been subsumed within the scholarship on Soviet-American détente, the Middle Eastern conflict and transatlantic relations in the 1970s. Moreover, while the body of historical monographs on transatlantic relations in the 1970s has grown, the latter have tended to concentrate on German-American relations or on the break in the British-American "special relationship".<sup>8</sup> More specifically, the impact of the "Year of Europe" initiative and of the 1973 October War on French policy-making has been little explored by non-francophone historians who have generally approached those events through the lens of British or American sources.<sup>9</sup> If this is partly because access to archives from the French foreign ministry – the Quai d'Orsay – is restricted, it is also perhaps because scholarly debates on European integration history have largely revolved around Edward Heath's distinctive commitment to the EC in British history and Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik. Additionally, a wider array of studies have focused on Franco-

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<sup>6</sup> A term defined in international law as a theory of boundary dispute resolution which exists when two or more states exercise joint sovereignty over a territory because previous attempts at negotiations have failed, in: Joel H. Samuels. "Condominium Arrangements In International Practice", *Michigan Journal of International Law* 19:727 (2008), p.728.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Shearman, *Détente, Soviet-US relations and the October War in the Middle-East, 1973*, Russian and Soviet Studies Center Discussion Paper Series No. 5 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), 16.

<sup>8</sup> One notable exception in English-language literature is: Aurélie Gfeller, *Building A European Identity. France, the United States, and the Oil Shock, 1973-1974* (United States: Berghahn Books, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Keith Hamilton, "Britain, France, and America's Year of Europe, 1973", *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17:4 (2006); and Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009).

American relations during President Charles de Gaulle's era (1959-1969), notably because it was characterized by France's withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military structure.<sup>10</sup> France was not alone among European countries in voicing an unfavourable response to Kissinger's "Year of Europe" speech and in objecting to US diplomatic endeavours in the Middle-East. However, this study has made the choice to focus on France, first because a broader EC perspective on those questions can already be found elsewhere and secondly, because most European initiatives directed against US policies stemmed from France.<sup>11</sup>

By paying attention to the diplomatic, economic and (latent) cultural dimensions of the Franco-American dispute, this essay will maintain that French resistance to US policy was spurred by a combination of bilateral misapprehensions, American ambivalence and French prejudice. The recognition that France and the US disagreed over the best strategy to use in the Middle-East conflict rather than over ultimate goals will point to the main issue at the root of French hostility: American deviousness in conducting the cease-fire negotiations. Lastly, by underlining the existence of a causal link between French fears of a US-Soviet "condominium" and the fact that Pompidou took the lead in framing a declaration on European identity and devising a Euro-Arab policy, this study will fill a gap in the Cold War literature on the effects and limits of Soviet-American détente. A focus on the period from March 1973 to June 1974 (the signing of the Ottawa Declaration that put an end to a series of transatlantic disputes) will bring to light the correlation between the escalation of Franco-American disputes and the changing structure of the international system.

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<sup>10</sup> See for example, Robert Paxton and, Nicholas Wahl (eds), *De Gaulle and the United States: a Centennial Reappraisal* (Oxford: Berg Publisher, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Kissinger said as much in his memoirs when he explained that "the word Europe is in fact a misnomer. The opposition to us was led by France" in: *Years of Upheaval*, 729. For a study of transatlantic relations through the three-sided lens of British, French and West German sources see: Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the dream of political unity* (California: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

## **I. Kissinger's "Year of Europe" initiative: an untimely and counter-productive enterprise which set the stage for broader Franco-American disputes**

I. 1) A seemingly odd French reaction to an American attempt to reinvigorate interest in the Atlantic Alliance

As his trip to Europe in 1969 underlines, Nixon came to office with the intention of renewing the US's commitment to Europe. If the Johnson administration, predominantly preoccupied with the Vietnam War, had largely neglected European matters and paid little attention to the idea of NATO reforms, Nixon was determined to engage in "two-way street" consultations with America's allies so as to "shift the focus of American policy from crisis management to crisis prevention".<sup>12</sup> Kissinger's "Year of Europe" initiative nonetheless had the exact opposite effect as European countries – especially France – saw it as US attempt to reaffirm its hegemony over the West and subordinate its allies.<sup>13</sup> If Kissinger's motivations lay elsewhere, he did nonetheless believe that American leadership in Atlantic affairs was still essential because "the Europeans plainly had not developed the cohesion, the internal stability or the will to match the power of the Soviet Union".<sup>14</sup> The creation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970 following the EC-Six's approval of the Davignon Report and the enlargement of the EC in the early 1970s also convinced Kissinger that reinvigorating the Atlantic Alliance was necessary.<sup>15</sup> This objective lay at the core of his proposal for an "Atlantic Charter" which he explained to the French ambassador to the US, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet in March 1973 arguing that it would be "helpful to get an overall framework to discuss economics, defense and political issues".<sup>16</sup> France was to occupy a central role in this transatlantic plan and ironically, in his memoirs, Kissinger even suggested that the idea originally came from Pompidou.<sup>17</sup> If it is commonly accepted that such a claim was an exaggeration, France's hostile reaction to the proposal for an "Atlantic Charter" nevertheless seems

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Nixon, *Speech to the North Atlantic Council*, NATO Headquarters in Brussels, 24 February 1969, found at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2411>. Accessed on 25 January 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Jobert, *Mémoires d'Avenir* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), 230.

<sup>14</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 382.

<sup>15</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 131.

<sup>16</sup> Memcon, 29 March 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Document KT00690.

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 23 February 1970, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Document KT00100; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 131.

puzzling considering the fact that Pompidou's aim was to put France in a favoured strategic position of negotiator between America and the EC and that Kissinger's plan largely supported that objective.<sup>18</sup>

#### I. 2) Reviving old memories in France: the "Year of Europe's" resemblance to Kennedy's 1960s "Grand Design"

Kissinger's initiative nonetheless presented a long-contentious debate in Franco-American relations as it reminded French officials of President John F. Kennedy's "Grand Design" (July 1962), namely his call for a mutually beneficial Atlantic partnership. Although it was based on the principle of equality, Kennedy's plan for a European-American partnership affirmed America's atomic monopoly and therefore implied that the US would maintain a leadership role in the West. The proposal had unsurprisingly met de Gaulle's harsh criticisms. Indeed, de Gaulle's anti-Atlanticist and anti-integrationist conception of Europe was based on France's independence with regard to the US and on the preservation of each member's sovereignty (a "Europe of states").<sup>19</sup> Having served as de Gaulle's Prime Minister between 1962 and 1968, Pompidou shared his predecessor's political vision and remained faithful to the Gaullist principle of national independence. But if French historians generally argue that Pompidou followed de Gaulle's footsteps on the question of European integration, such views tend to overlook the fact that Pompidou adopted a much more European outlook on the question of economic cooperation.<sup>20</sup> As the domestic and international context evolved, Pompidou appointed Europeanists in his government (supporters of European integration) – markedly Jacques Chaban-Delmas as Prime Minister and Maurice Schumann as Foreign Minister – and ensured that his European policy would be more flexible and pragmatic than de Gaulle's.<sup>21</sup> The French President also adopted a much friendlier policy toward the US and distanced himself from de Gaulle's anti-American reputation.<sup>22</sup> However, de Gaulle's influence

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<sup>18</sup> Compte-rendu de l'entretien Pompidou/Shriver, 23 Juillet 1969, CHAN, 5AG2 1022.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *France and the United-States: From the Beginnings to the Present* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 219-230.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Christine Manigand, "L'Europe des Gaullistes, 1948-1979", *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'Histoire*, No. 116 (2012), 9-21; Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France, 1943-2003* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2005), 119-130.

<sup>21</sup> Pompidou, "Discours prononcé à la Conférence de la Haye", 1<sup>er</sup> Décembre 1969, *Entretiens et Discours 1968-1974*, Volumes 1 et 2 (Paris: Plon, 1975), 77.

<sup>22</sup> For an account of the Gaullist challenge to US policy see, Piers Ludlow, "Transatlantic relations in the Johnson and Nixon eras", *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 8:1 (March 2012), 49-52.

remained strong and Pompidou also had to take into consideration the prevailing Gaullist political views in French public and intellectual circles, characterized by a form of hostility towards American cultural imperialism.<sup>23</sup> As French officials drew an analogy between Kissinger's "Year of Europe" speech and Kennedy's "Grand Design", the overriding impression was that the US tried to reassert its hegemonic role and hamper European independence.<sup>24</sup> Long-dated fears of American supremacy therefore produced a series of misconceptions in French official circles.

I. 3) The project's inherent weaknesses also ensured the Pompidou government's refusal to further institutionalize transatlantic relations along US lines

US officials initially misapprehended the French government's reaction to the proposal for an "Atlantic Charter", under-estimating its degree of opposition to it.<sup>25</sup> The French historian Georges-Henri Soutou nonetheless argues that the deterioration of Franco-American relations following the "Year of Europe" initiative was predictable because the two countries' policies were "irreconcilable": the Gaullist elite in France vehemently supported the concept of European independence while the Nixon administration did not genuinely want Europe to play an autonomous role on the international stage.<sup>26</sup> However, in theory, the Pompidou government's conception of a transatlantic relationship based on the principles of both national independence and inter-governmental solidarity was compatible with Kissinger's initiative.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the latter aimed to "restore an emotional basis for the alliance" but nonetheless supported a "strong" and "autonomous" France.<sup>28</sup> Pompidou's greatest Gaullist conviction was that "Europe had to establish its autonomy and assert the singularity of its personality with regard to the US", but he did not follow de Gaulle's isolationist policy as he recognized the importance of the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>29</sup> He was not a fervent Europeanist either: even though he supported the process of European

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<sup>23</sup> The 1970s in French literature were marked by a new current of cultural anti-Americanism, see for example, Philippe Roger, *L'ennemi Américain: Généalogie de l'Antiaméricanisme Français* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Memcon, Jobert/Kissinger Meeting, 17 May 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00727, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Internal paper on French-American bilateral issues for meeting of President Nixon with President Pompidou, 11 May 1973, Presidential Directives, Part II, DNSA, Document PR01151, 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Soutou, *La Guerre de Cinquante ans*, 525.

<sup>27</sup> Compte-rendu de l'entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 18 May 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 117.

<sup>28</sup> Memcon, 17 May 1973, DNSA, KT00727, 3.

<sup>29</sup> All of the translations of French primary sources found in this essay are my own. Pompidou, "Déclaration à la séance d'ouverture de la conférence des chefs d'état à Paris", 19 Octobre 1972, *Entretiens et Discours*, 104.

economic cooperation, he adopted a cautious step-by-step approach on the issue of European political integration, partly because he did not want to antagonize the US.<sup>30</sup> If the “Year of Europe” initiative set the stage for deteriorating Franco-American relations, it is first and foremost because of the unskilful way in which it was framed. Specifically, Kissinger’s presumptuous claim that America had “global responsibilities” while Europe had “regional interests” was seen as a US attempt to ensure that Europe remained subordinated to an American set of policy principles.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Kissinger’s statement was meant to be “descriptive, not prescriptive”, in other words, he welcomed the possibility for Europe to play a global role.<sup>32</sup> Michel Jobert, Pompidou’s newly appointed Foreign Minister, also vehemently criticized Kissinger’s assertion that “the political, military, economic issues in transatlantic relations are linked by reality”, seeing it as a way of blackmailing Europeans into trading a continuous American security presence in Europe for European concessions in the economic field.<sup>33</sup> But in a meeting on 17 May where Kissinger clarified the rationale of his approach to Jobert – arguing that the issue of linkage was inevitable because of Congress – the French foreign minister complained that Kissinger was “more convincing now than in [his] New York speech”.<sup>34</sup> Kissinger’s speech also coincided with the escalation of the Watergate scandal, a factor which led French officials and journalists to believe that the speech was only a cover to distract international attention from domestic troubles.<sup>35</sup> The recognition that France objected to the American initiative because of clumsy procedural technicalities rather than because of substance nonetheless suggests that, at this stage, the two countries’ interests were not “irreconcilable” but that they suffered from a lack of transparency.

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<sup>30</sup> Compte rendu du second entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 31 May 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1023.

<sup>31</sup> Kissinger, *The Year of Europe Speech*, 23 April 1973.

<sup>32</sup> Memcon, Kissinger/Kosciusko-Morizet Meeting, 14 May 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00723; Telcon Kissinger/Peter G. Peterson, 26 May 1973, DNSA, Kissinger telephone conversations, KA10151, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Jobert, *Mémoires d’Avenir*, 232.

<sup>34</sup> Memcon, 17 May 1973, DNSA, KT00727, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Schneidermann, “L’Europe vassale ou indépendante? La théorie et la pratique de l’alliance selon M. Kissinger”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Mai 1974.

I. 4) A series of misapprehensions and technical disputes also caused by French prejudice: inflated fears of a US-Soviet “condominium”

French hostility to Kissinger’s address must also be understood against the backdrop of changing international circumstances. The Pompidou government supported the concept of détente based on increasing East-West cooperation.<sup>36</sup> However, the thriving process of Soviet-American détente triggered suspicion in France by raising the threat of Europe’s “neutralisation” and of a US-Soviet “condominium”, terms repeatedly used by French government officials.<sup>37</sup> Disagreements over the US’ military negotiations with the Soviet Union climaxed with the signing of the US-Soviet Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War (APNW) in June 1973. Indeed, the Pompidou government feared that the US was retreating from the nuclear defence of Europe.<sup>38</sup> Such apprehensions account for the inconsistency of the French government’s initial response to Kissinger’s proposal for an “Atlantic Charter”.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, French officials – like their European counterparts – had been informed of the speech’s content beforehand and did not object to it.<sup>40</sup> The summary of the speech that was sent to the Quai d’Orsay probably did not include the condescending expressions which were contained in Kissinger’s final address and which alienated the French government. This would explain why Kissinger got the impression that Jobert was willing to “take the lead in shaping an outcome consonant with our objectives”.<sup>41</sup> The Pompidou government’s growing reservations about the “Year of Europe” in June must nonetheless also be understood in the context of improving US-Soviet talks on the signing of the APNW and of the planned US-Soviet Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) negotiations.<sup>42</sup> Even though the French government was continuously kept informed of the progress of negotiations, it was concerned that MBFR negotiations would exacerbate the imbalance in

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<sup>36</sup> Pompidou, “Allocution prononcée lors du diner offert au Kremlin”, 6 octobre 1973, *Entretiens et Discours*, 174.

<sup>37</sup> Pompidou, “Conférence de Presse tenue à l’Elysée”, 27 septembre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 633.

<sup>38</sup> Soutou, “La problématique de la détente et le testament stratégique de Georges Pompidou,” *Cahiers du Centre d’Études d’Histoire de la Défense*, Cahier No. 22 (2004), 90-92.

<sup>39</sup> In his memoirs, Jobert claims that he had been very clear with Kissinger on his government’s opposition to the project but in reality his initial response was ambiguous: Jobert, *Mémoires d’avenir*, 237-8.

<sup>40</sup> See for example, Kosciusko-Morizet confirming to Kissinger that the Quai d’Orsay had received a summary of his speech before he delivered it publicly, Memcon, 26 April 1973, DNSA, Kissinger transcripts, KT00708.

<sup>41</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 164.

<sup>42</sup> Jobert, “Discours devant l’Assemblée Nationale”, 19 Juin 1973, *La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II*, AD.

conventional forces on the international stage and was unconvinced by the idea of a document which called for bilateral US-Soviet consultations in case a nuclear war was to erupt.<sup>43</sup> As the *Boston Globe* underlined in August 1973, a cartoon repeatedly published in the French press showing “Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev smiling at each other while holding a struggling young miss, ‘Europe’, under water” captured the state of French anxieties over the US-Soviet rapprochement.<sup>44</sup> Hence, to account for the intensity reached by French misgivings, one must also recognize that timing proved doubly detrimental, first because of Watergate and secondly because of the concrete progresses in Soviet-American military negotiations which reinforced French fears of European subordination.

#### I. 5) Franco-American disagreements also aggravated by Michel Jobert’s growing influence on Pompidou’s policy

Even though Kissinger remarked in his memoirs that it is hard to know the extent to which Jobert influenced Pompidou’s thinking, Pompidou’s changing attitude in the course of the month of May does suggest that Jobert encouraged him to take a harder stance on the “Year of Europe” because of the growing possibility of a US-Soviet “*tête-à-tête*”.<sup>45</sup> Specifically, in his 18 May meeting with Nixon, Pompidou explained that he was not “shocked” by Kissinger’s idea of Europe being a “secondary” power. He even appeared quite open to the idea of establishing an American-European framework of consultation.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, during the Reykjavik Summit (opened on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May), Pompidou adopted much more pronounced Gaullist views and refused to commit to any procedure for the establishment of an “Atlantic Charter”. For instance, he rejected the US plan for preliminary four-power talks with West Germany and Britain, preferring to proceed through conventional bilateral channels instead.<sup>47</sup> The fact that Pompidou’s illness was already quite severe in the course of the summer 1973 accounts for Jobert’s growing influence on the President’s thinking and for the leading role of the Quai d’Orsay in organizing the Reykjavik summit in May. The shift in Pompidou’s attitude also confirms the argument that Franco-American

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<sup>43</sup> Jobert, “Discours prononcé devant l’Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies à New York”, 10 octobre 1973, *La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II*, AD.

<sup>44</sup> Randolph Kidder, “France is worried by US”, *Boston Globe*, 5 August 1973, 45.

<sup>45</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 173.

<sup>46</sup> Compte rendu de l’entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 18 May 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 117.

<sup>47</sup> Compte rendu du second entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 31 May 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1023.

disputes over the “Year of Europe” owed less to actual deep-seated disagreements on transatlantic relations than to external factors, such as the influence of personalities, Kissinger’s ill-advised speech and mounting French fears of a US-Soviet “condominium” over Europe’s head.

Other topics of friction also disrupted Franco-American relations since the December 1971 Azores Summit between Nixon and Pompidou. Nixon’s unilateral decision to suspend dollar-gold convertibility on 15 August 1971 caused irritation in Paris as Pompidou was committed to a system of fixed exchange rates based on gold.<sup>48</sup> Resentment also grew in Washington against the EC’s protectionist policies and the Common Agricultural Policy promoted by France.<sup>49</sup> But while George-Henri Soutou argues that economic issues were crucially detrimental to Franco-American relations, cooperation on defence matters continued to improve and bilateral exchanges remained cordial and constructive until September 1973.<sup>50</sup> Franco-American disputes on monetary issues and on the state of transatlantic relations – although significant – did not drive the two countries apart in the summer of 1973. The “Year of Europe” produced a series of noteworthy misunderstandings between the two countries but it did not generate an irreversible clash of conceptions. The turning point came in October 1973 as the Arab-Israeli war and the US’s diplomatic undertakings in the conflict heightened the Pompidou government’s anti-Atlanticist views, expanded its policy of bilateral cooperation with Arab states and triggered a multi-layered rivalry between France and the US on the structure of the international system.

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<sup>48</sup> Entretien Debré/Pompidou, 1er Septembre 1971, *Entretiens avec Georges Pompidou* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996), 81-82.

<sup>49</sup> Kidder, “France is worried by US”, *Boston Globe*, August 5, 1973.

<sup>50</sup> Soutou, “Georges Pompidou et Valéry Giscard d’Estaing: deux réconciliations et deux ruptures avec les Etats-Unis?”, *Relations internationales*, No. 119 (2004), 311.

## II. The October War, the catalyst for the deterioration of Franco-American relations in 1973: a dispute over strategies exacerbated by ironic French fears and mounting bilateral mistrust

II. 1) Since the 1967 Six-Day war, France and the US disagreed over the best strategy to use to resolve the Middle-East conflict rather than over ultimate goals

The US gradually became a major Western power in the Middle-East – superseding the pre-1945 leading positions of France and Britain – as the Cold War American paradigm of confronting the Soviet Union came to permeate the region.<sup>51</sup> However, until the 1967 Six-Day War, the Middle-East was one of the few topics that did not cause disagreements between France and the US as both had analogous objectives in the region.<sup>52</sup> In addition, de Gaulle had successfully revived Franco-Arab relations through the 1962 Evian Peace Accords with Algeria without affecting France’s relationship with Israel.<sup>53</sup> The 1967 Six-Day War nonetheless disrupted Franco-Israeli ties as de Gaulle denied Israel’s territorial gains, thus paving the way for diverging Franco-American policy priorities in the Middle-East conflict of 1973.<sup>54</sup> The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 242 voted on 22 November 1967 asked for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”, a clause which de Gaulle and later, Pompidou interpreted as requesting Israel’s withdrawal from “all” territories.<sup>55</sup> Even though France also requested the recognition of Israel by Arab states, its seemingly pro-Arab position clashed with the US’s post-1967 diplomacy which placed priority on Israel’s strategic importance in the region.<sup>56</sup> As Kissinger underlined, the UNSC resolution 242 became a “symbol of the deadlock in the Middle-East” as each country interpreted it in a way that suited its

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<sup>51</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle-East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 8, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Garret Martin, “At odds in the Middle-East: Paris, Washington, and the Six-Day War, 1967” in: Daniel Möckli and Victor Mauer (eds.), *European-American Relations and the Middle East: From Suez to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2011), 63.

<sup>53</sup> Gfeller, “A European Voice in the Arab World: France, the superpowers and the Middle-East, 1970-74”, *Cold War History* 11:4 (2011), 660.

<sup>54</sup> Yves-Henri Nouailhat, “Les divergences entre la France et les Etats-Unis face au conflit israélo-arabe de 1967 à 1973”, *Relations internationales*, No. 119 (2004), 335.

<sup>55</sup> UNSC, Resolution 242, 22 November 1967, found at <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1967/scres67.htm>. Accessed on 2 March 2013; “Intervention du représentant français au Conseil de Sécurité de l’ONU sur la situation au Proche-Orient”, 13 Juin 1973, *La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents I*, AD.

<sup>56</sup> Garret Martin, “At odds in the Middle-East” in: *European-American Relations and the Middle East*, 72-3.

“preconceptions”.<sup>57</sup> But despite disagreements on how to manage the conflict, Franco-American objectives remained quite similar: while France wanted to prevent the Middle-East from becoming a Cold War battlefield, the US aimed to ensure the stability of the region and the territorial integrity of all states. Franco-American disputes over the October War therefore initially emerged because of French complaints about the US’s strategies rather than because of incompatible “political perspectives” as Kissinger suggests in his memoirs.<sup>58</sup> French officials blamed the US for paying insufficient attention to their warnings of an imminent threat in the Middle-East, for failing to persuade the Israelis to make earlier concessions and for not putting enough pressure on the Soviets to stop the supply of arms to Arab states.<sup>59</sup> Pompidou had repeatedly raised the problem of the Arab-Israeli conflict, claiming that it was increasingly “unsettling” and asking Kissinger for suggestions.<sup>60</sup> During his Reykjavik summit with Nixon in May, Pompidou also warned that Arab states were in an advantageous commercial position and might use their oil leverage to politically influence consumer nations.<sup>61</sup> As Nixon was stuck between two “domestic crises” – the release of Watergate tapes and Vice-President Spiro Agnew’s resignation – Kissinger had the upper-hand in US foreign policy matters. In his memoirs, he explains his administration’s rationale for adopting a step-by-step approach arguing that a full Israeli withdrawal would not have inevitably led to peace, on the contrary, it would have strengthened Arab radicalism.<sup>62</sup> Such a strategy was not compatible with France’s insistence on guaranteeing “a comprehensive peace settlement in the region”.<sup>63</sup> However, since 1967, France was still willing to discuss these questions with Washington and to work towards a common initiative.<sup>64</sup> In 1973, such disputes were significant in another respect: they heightened French reservations about the reliability of American policy. As Kosciusko-Morizet explained to Kissinger on 26

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<sup>57</sup> Kissinger, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 9.

<sup>58</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 720.

<sup>59</sup> Jobert, “Discours devant l’Assemblée Nationale”, 17 Octobre 1973, La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II, AD.

<sup>60</sup> Compte-rendu de l’entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 18 Mai 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 117.

<sup>61</sup> Compte-rendu du troisième entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 1 June 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1023.

<sup>62</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 708.

<sup>63</sup> “Intervention du représentant français au Conseil de Sécurité de l’ONU sur la situation au Proche-Orient”, 13 Juin 1973, La Politique Etrangère de la France II, AD.

<sup>64</sup> Memcon, 11 October 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00843.

October, “in the past, France has had a different conception, not on aims but on tactics” hence “it is not possible for France to follow the US with closed eyes”.<sup>65</sup>

II. 2) Securing its economic and strategic interests in the Middle-East inevitably led France to adopt a pro-Arab stance and oppose US policies

France also opposed the US’s strategy because of its stakes in maintaining a privileged position in the Arab world. Specifically, the threat of a superpower confrontation in the Middle-East endangered the process of European détente. Even more notably, as the main oil exporting country in Europe, France was dependant on imports from Arab states to cover most of its petroleum requirements (petroleum represented over 60% of France’s total energy consumption while over 60% of total crude oil imports was of Middle-Eastern origin).<sup>66</sup> While France shared a common history and a cultural heritage with Arab states in North Africa (dating back to the Napoleonic era and the years of colonization), the region’s proximity to Europe and its major oil supplies established favourable conditions for Franco-Arab economic cooperation.<sup>67</sup> White House officials therefore rightly perceived France’s position in the Arab-Israeli dispute as “operating on the reality that Arab oil keeps France going”.<sup>68</sup> France’s policy – although officially portrayed as neutral – appeared to lean heavily toward the Arab camp, a fact which accounts for the country’s refusal to allow American planes to overfly its territory to resupply Israel during the October War.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “Kosciusko-Morizet’s call on Secretary”, 26 October 1973, State Department Cable 211737 to US Embassy in France, Document 75, found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm>. Accessed on 22 February 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Internal Paper, 11 May 1973, DNSA, Presidential Directives Part II, PR01151.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Balta, “L’Europe et le Monde Arabe: les conditions de la coopération économique s’annoncent particulièrement favorables”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Mai 1972.

<sup>68</sup> Internal Paper, 11 May 1973, DNSA, Presidential Directives Part II, PR01151.

<sup>69</sup> Memorandum, Secretary of Defense Schlesinger to President Nixon, 1 November 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976: Volume XXV* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2011), 804.

## II. 3) Mounting French mistrust of US policy

The two countries' diverging strategies and diplomatic positions in the Arab-Israeli conflict caused Franco-American disputes to escalate in 1973. However, had disagreements between the two countries been restricted to such issues, Franco-American relations would not have deteriorated in the way they did. If the October War represented a turning point in Franco-American relations, it was not so much because of factors specifically related to the Arab-Israeli conflict itself. Indeed, Franco-American disagreements over strategies in the Middle-East were apparent since the Six-Day War of 1967. Rather, the October War reinstated the state of mistrust that had characterized Franco-American relations in the 1960s. In personal conversations with Michel Debré (Pompidou's Defense Minister until April 1973) Pompidou complained that the Soviets and the Americans remained silent before the Egyptian-Syrian attack, which he believed they must have known about.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, Washington's announcement on 25 October that US forces were being placed on a nuclear combat alert caused disbelief in France. While the British Ambassador to the US, Cromer, had been informed of the seriousness of Brezhnev's threat to send military contingents to Egypt, Kosciusko-Morizet complained to Kissinger about the "lack of consultation during the crisis".<sup>71</sup> The French Ambassador – who was known for being one of the few French diplomats generally sympathetic to US policy – came to understand Kissinger's remark that "imminent danger did not brook an exchange of views".<sup>72</sup> But the historian Marc Trachtenberg's contention that the French were more understanding than their European allies on this issue seems exaggerated in light of Jobert's declarations.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, in a speech to the French National Assembly on 12 November 1973, Jobert remarked that the US's military strategies could not be trusted and asserted the necessity of establishing a common defense policy that would "guarantee Europe's independence".<sup>74</sup> As the alert

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<sup>70</sup> Entretien Debré/Pompidou, 9 Octobre 1973, *Entretiens avec Georges Pompidou*, 178.

<sup>71</sup> "Kosciusko-Morizet's call on Secretary", 26 October 1973, found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm>.

<sup>72</sup> Nixon retrospectively claimed that Brezhnev's letter "represented the most serious threat to US-Soviet relations since the Cuban Missile Crisis" in: Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 939; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 713.

<sup>73</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, "The French factor in US Foreign Policy during the Nixon-Pompidou period, 1969-1974", *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13:1 (2011), 44.

<sup>74</sup> Jobert, "Déclaration à l'Assemblée Nationale", 12 Novembre 1973, *La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II*, AD.

meant that US troops stationed in Europe would be called upon, Jobert criticized the US for failing to consult its European allies beforehand. This atmosphere of mistrust proved key in triggering a realignment of the Quai d'Orsay's defense policy, one that would move away from Atlantic cooperation and closer to European unity.

#### II. 4) The principal issue at the root of French hostility: American deviousness in conducting the cease-fire negotiations and French misconceptions

If the October War almost brought the US and the Soviet Union in direct military confrontation, it actually put to the forefront the superpower's complicity in the eyes of the French. During the war, France and Britain contributed to discussions in UN meetings to establish a cease-fire but they largely remained formal participants as the main negotiations were carried by the US and the Soviet Union.<sup>75</sup> Despite Kissinger's assurances that the French and British ambassadors were regularly kept informed of the progress of negotiations, Pompidou denounced Europe's "absence from the cease-fire negotiations" claiming that a superpower "tête-à-tête" was not only "dangerous" but also "illegitimate considering Europe's historical, geographic and economic ties to the Middle-East".<sup>76</sup> The French press largely shared those views, notably *Le Monde Diplomatique* which denounced the contradictions in Kissinger's policy, one day rejecting the idea of a "condominium" and a few weeks later, imposing a US-Soviet peace settlement.<sup>77</sup> As France was a permanent member of the UNSC, the fact that the 22 October resolution 338 stated that negotiations were to be held "under appropriate auspices" rather than UN auspices was seen as a deliberate tactic to exclude the country from the negotiating table.<sup>78</sup> On 18 October, during a telephone conversation, Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the US and Kissinger agreed that consultations on a cease-fire resolution should be conducted "between the US and the Soviet Union", Kissinger emphasizing that he was "no more eager to have our allies there" than Dobrynin was.<sup>79</sup> However, in reality, Kissinger's underlying rationale for excluding mandatory powers from peace negotiations was to curb the expansion of

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<sup>75</sup> Nouailhat, "Les divergences entre la France et les Etats-Unis", 341-42.

<sup>76</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 712; Pompidou, "Déclaration à l'issue du Conseil des Ministres", 31 Octobre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1036.

<sup>77</sup> Claude Julien, "Un ordre mondial ébranlé: Les contradictions de la solidarité atlantique", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Décembre 1973.

<sup>78</sup> UNSC Resolution 338, 22 October 1973, found at: <http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1973/scres73.htm>. Accessed on 2 March 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Telcon Kissinger/Dobrynin, 18 October 1973 in: Henry Kissinger, *Crisis*, 286-87.

international pressures, not to establish a US-Soviet “condominium” in the Middle-East. French anxieties were also particularly ironic in the context of the October War as an important part of Kissinger’s diplomatic strategy was actually to decrease Soviet influence in the region.<sup>80</sup> As he tried to explain to the French Ambassador, the crucial issue in the Middle-East for the US was Soviet conduct, not the “Arab-Israeli problem.”<sup>81</sup> French misapprehensions on the joint US-Soviet imposition of a cease-fire on 25 October are all the more significant because they had a crucial impact on Franco-American relations and on Pompidou’s foreign policy priorities.

## II. 5) A causal relationship between French anxieties over a US-Soviet “condominium” and Pompidou’s new stance on the issue of European integration

Even though Pompidou accepted British entry into the EC, he was initially against European integration. The French historian Pierre Mélandri’s contention that Pompidou wanted to build an economic and political Europe from the early years of his presidency therefore appears to be mistaken.<sup>82</sup> If Pompidou supported the process of European economic unification, from 1970 up until September 1973, he viewed the construction of a politically unified Europe as a long-term possibility.<sup>83</sup> In a press conference at the Elysée Palace on 27 September 1973, Pompidou explained to Jean Lecerf, a journalist from the French daily newspaper *Le Figaro*, that the formation of a European Union (EU) was going to be a difficult process.<sup>84</sup> The fact that he set the goal of its construction for 1980 certainly showed that Pompidou now accepted the validity of the EPC framework.<sup>85</sup> But this date also underlined Pompidou’s uncertainties as to the form a political EU would take (a federation or confederation of states). Responding to a journalist from the French radio channel *Europe 1*, Pompidou also explained that the EC Nine were far from ready to establish an autonomous and unified European defense policy.<sup>86</sup> The fact that Pompidou made

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<sup>80</sup> Memorandum, Scowcroft to Kissinger, 20 October 1973, Document 47; and Message from Kissinger to Scowcroft, 20 October 1973, Document 48, found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm>. Accessed on 22 February 2013.

<sup>81</sup> “Kosciusko-Morizet’s call on Secretary”, 26 October 1973, found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm.v>.

<sup>82</sup> Mélandri, “La France et l’Alliance atlantique sous Georges Pompidou et Valéry Giscard d’Estaing”, *La France et l’OTAN, 1949-1996* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1996), 532.

<sup>83</sup> Pompidou, “Conférence de Presse tenue à l’Elysée”, 2 juillet 1970, *Entretiens et Discours*, 79-80.

<sup>84</sup> Pompidou, “Conférence de Presse tenue à l’Elysée”, 27 septembre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 633.

<sup>85</sup> Pompidou was initially against the EPC, for more details see, Gfeller, *Building a European Identity*, 90-91.

<sup>86</sup> Pompidou, “Conférence de Presse tenue à l’Elysée”, 27 septembre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 633.

such declarations in September 1973 is significant as it underlines a clear discursive shift between September and late October 1973. Georges-Henri Soutou argues that the turning point in Pompidou's European policy came in June 1973 as a result of the US-Soviet APNW which signalled the threatening start of an "excessive" process of détente between Moscow and Washington".<sup>87</sup> But if at this point, Pompidou had certainly stopped opposing the EPC framework, he only plainly changed his stance on European integration following the imposition of a US-Soviet peace settlement in the Middle-East. Indeed, in his eyes, it dramatized the US's tendency to resolve matters solely with the Soviet Union and rendered "indispensable Europe's unity and solidarity in dealing with foreign policy issues".<sup>88</sup> In his declaration to the Council of Ministers on 31 October, Pompidou claimed that the French government had to propose to its European partners the establishment of regular EPC foreign policy summit meetings so as to ensure the harmonisation of their political views.<sup>89</sup> While Pompidou's new determination to conduct European integration points to French anxieties over an increasingly bipolar international stage, it also underlines the Pompidou government's clear departure from de Gaulle's policy toward Europe.<sup>90</sup> An April 1973 White House assessment of French policy stated that "continuity with Gaullist policy is assured" not foreseeing the fact that the international context would force a re-evaluation of Pompidou's foreign policy.<sup>91</sup> In turn, State Department officials did not predict the clash that Paris's new European policy would provoke with Washington's Atlantic outlook.

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<sup>87</sup> Soutou, "The linkage between European integration and détente" in: Piers Ludlow (ed.), *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 12, 27.

<sup>88</sup> Pompidou, "Déclaration à l'issue du Conseil des Ministres", 31 Octobre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1036.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Gfeller, *Building a European Identity*, 93.

<sup>91</sup> Internal Paper, 16 April 1973, DNSA, Presidential Directives II, Document PR01148, 1.

### **III. In forcing a re-evaluation of Pompidou's policy towards Europe and the Middle-East, the October War put France's foreign policy agenda in direct conflict with that of the US: disagreements over strategies turned into a battle for influence in the Middle-East**

#### III. 1) The oil crisis added fuel to the fire

The oil embargo announced by Arab states on 17 October 1973 initially directed against the US and the Netherlands incited fears of acute shortage in Europe. Indeed, as Jobert explained to French deputies in October 1973, Arab states produced about 1 billion tonnes of oil per year, with about 100 million going to the US, 250 million to Japan and 650 million to Europe, of which 110 million to France.<sup>92</sup> The Swiss historian Aurélie Gfeller argues that oil restrictions did not play a predominant part in Pompidou's policy re-evaluation.<sup>93</sup> However, the shift in the world energy equation did contribute to the French government's intent to strengthen Europe's ties to the Arab world. To be sure, the oil factor indirectly affected French policy because France itself – like Britain – was listed as a “friendly” country by Arab states and therefore did not suffer from major oil cutbacks like Italy and Japan or the Netherlands and Portugal that were totally embargoed from Arab supplies.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Jobert, “Réponse aux questions des députés sur le conflit au Proche-Orient”, 17 Octobre, La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II, AD.

<sup>93</sup> Gfeller, “A European Voice in the Arab World”, 665.

<sup>94</sup> See table below: Memorandum, Jan Lodal and Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to Secretary of State Kissinger, 4 December 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976: Volume XXXVI* (Washington Government Printing Office, 2011), 729.

Reduction in Oil Imports from Arab Sources  
for December 1973

	Pre-Crisis Forecast (Thousand b/d)	Post-Crisis Forecast (Thousand b/d)	Reduction in Expected Arab Oil (%)	Reduction in Expected Total Oil (%)	Oil Reduction in Terms of Total Energy (%)
France	2,250	2,110	6	4	3
UK	1,550	1,460	6	3	2
Italy	1,765	1,470	20	14 <sup>3</sup>	11 <sup>3</sup>
West Germany	1,685	1,405	20	10	6
Belgium/ Luxem- bourg	490	410	20	13	8
Japan	2,500	2,075	20	9	7
Canada	200	165	20	2	1
Nether- lands	2,900	0	100	322 <sup>3</sup>	188 <sup>3</sup>
Portugal	100	0	100	64	42
U.S.	2,400	0	100	13	6

<sup>3</sup> “Total Oil” and “Total Energy” calculated in terms of domestic consumption. The Netherlands re-exports some 80% of its imports. Italy re-exports some 20%.

In a televised and broadcasted interview on 20 December 1973, Pompidou reassured the French public by explaining that “considering, the present state of supplies and our relatively privileged position, France will not be subject to a serious shortage in the next few months”.<sup>95</sup> However – despite Nixon’s public declaration that America was “heading toward the acutest shortage of energy since World War II” – French officials recognized that the impact of the oil embargo would be much more severely felt in Europe and Japan than in the US.<sup>96</sup> The Pompidou government therefore saw Kissinger’s proposal on 12 December 1973 for an Energy Coordinating Group (ECG) and Nixon’s invitation on 9 January 1974 for all major industrial consumer nations to participate in a Washington Energy Conference as mere opportunistic attempts to revive the plan for an “Atlantic Charter” by taking advantage of European countries’ rising energy bills and balance of payment deficits.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Pompidou, “Entretien radiotélévisé avec M. Cavada”, 20 Décembre 1973, *Entretiens et Discours*, 270.

<sup>96</sup> Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, 984.

<sup>97</sup> Pompidou, “Entretien avec les journalistes à l’Elysée”, 3 Janvier 1974, *Entretiens et Discours*, 285; Telcon Nixon/Kissinger, 12 February 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, KA12015; Telcon Kissinger/John McCloy, 8 February 1974, DNSA, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, KA12002.

### III. 2) Fears of a US-Soviet “condominium” intertwined with transatlantic disputes over the role that Europe would play in the Middle-East

French fears that the US might exploit the energy crisis and Europe’s vulnerability to re-establish a form of economic hegemony over the West played a significant part in emboldening Jobert to propose a Euro-Arab partnership, namely a consolidation of Europe’s cultural, economic and technological ties to Arab oil producing countries. In a speech to the French National Assembly on 12 November 1973, Jobert underlined the necessity of persuading European countries to adopt a unified voice in the Middle-East and to institutionalize Europe’s links with Arab states. Arguing that the October War had demonstrated Europe’s inability to influence world events and that the oil embargo undermined Europe’s strategic interests, he lamented:

Treated like a ‘non person’, humiliated in its inexistence, Europe, through its dependency on energy, became a forgotten victim in this second battle of the Middle-East conflict [...] Europe can and should learn an essential lesson from this. People all around the world expect more than Europe’s wakening, they expect its birth.<sup>98</sup>

Jobert had advised Pompidou to revitalize Europe’s relationship with the Arab world since his appointment as foreign minister but his declaration to the National Assembly showed that the Pompidou government now endorsed this view as well. On 4 March 1974, the EC Nine sanctioned the Euro-Arab dialogue (with the support of the League of Arab States), a decision vehemently denounced by the Nixon administration both through words and active efforts to rally European countries around Washington’s plan for an energy conference.<sup>99</sup> Nixon’s public declaration that US troops would be withdrawn from Europe if Europeans continued to behave without consulting the US showed how strong the administration’s resentment was. Kissinger also criticized the French initiative for overtly trying to dissociate European policies in the Middle East from the US.<sup>100</sup> The US press largely mirrored these views, portraying France as “the centre point of tensions within Europe and between the US and Europe”.<sup>101</sup> French anxieties over a US-Soviet “*tête-à-tête*” therefore became entangled in broader

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<sup>98</sup> Jobert, “Déclaration à l’Assemblée Nationale lors de la discussion du budget de son ministère”, 12 Novembre 1973, *La Politique Etrangère de la France: Textes et Documents II*, AD.

<sup>99</sup> Telcon Kissinger/John McCloy, 8 February 1974, DNSA, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, KA12002.

<sup>100</sup> Telcon Kissinger/Sonnenfeldt, 5 March 1974, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, KA12076; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 718-19.

<sup>101</sup> Ashley Keith, “Signs of hostility from France?”, 10 April 1974, *The Washington Post*; “France hits US-Soviet ‘domination’”, 13 November 1973, *Boston Globe*, 16; Kidder Randolph, “France fears US using energy crisis to re-establish economic leadership”, 10 February 1974, *Boston Globe*, 56.

transatlantic disputes over the role that Europe would play in the Middle-East. By accelerating the EPC process and by strengthening Euro-Arab ties, France sought to counterweight the process of Soviet-American détente and the superpowers' competition for hegemony in the region.<sup>102</sup> The October War is therefore emblematic of the ways in which Soviet-American détente and West European unity collided.<sup>103</sup> If de Gaulle had been a strong defender of French power on the international stage, decolonization largely put an end to France's great power status.<sup>104</sup> The changing international context convinced Pompidou that France's global influence now depended on the construction of a politically unified Europe as an independent world actor. Similarly, the Nixon administration's foreign policy initiatives – détente with the Soviet Union and drafting an "Atlantic Charter" to reaffirm the solidarity of the Atlantic Alliance – were spurred by an awareness of declining US power on the international stage.<sup>105</sup> While the Nixon administration primarily pursued détente to safeguard American interests in an era of nuclear and strategic parity, it also aimed to maintain the security of the Atlantic Alliance by rallying Europeans around an American policy of détente.<sup>106</sup> US officials were therefore sceptic of West Europeans' rapprochement to the East, notably through Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Similarly, in the Middle-East, they feared that Europeans' pro-Arab stance would make them turn toward Moscow.<sup>107</sup> If Washington recognized that organizing a world energy conference under its own auspices would allow a reassertion of its leadership role, such an initiative was antithetical with the French government's intent to stress Europe's role in dealing with foreign policy issues.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Gfeller, "A European Voice in the Arab World", 664.

<sup>103</sup> On the question of whether European détente and Soviet-American détente were parallel or mutually exclusive phenomena, see for example, Odd Arne Westad, and Poul Villaume (eds.), *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations and the Cold War, 1965-1985* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009), 7-17; and, Ludlow (ed), *European Integration and the Cold War*, 1-11, 174-180.

<sup>104</sup> Gfeller, *Building a European Identity*, 195.

<sup>105</sup> Fredrik Logevall, and Andrew Preston (eds), *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>106</sup> Thomas Schwartz, "Legacies of Détente: a Three-way Discussion", *Cold War History* 8:4 (2008), 516.

<sup>107</sup> Transcript, "Secretary's Staff Meeting", 23 October 1973, Document 63, found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/index.htm>. Accessed on 22 February.

<sup>108</sup> On 18 January, the French – refusing US leadership in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the ensuing oil crisis – proposed that a world energy conference be held under UN auspices.

### III. 3) Competing for a voice in the Middle-East: the French initiative for a European “Declaration on the Middle-East”

European countries’ exclusion from the cease-fire negotiations encouraged them to draft their own joint statement on the situation in the Middle-East. The final text of the “Declaration on the Middle-East” published in Brussels on 6 November 1973 largely reflected the French position on the conflict, partly because it called for negotiations in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 and urged Israel “to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967”.<sup>109</sup> Its insistence on the numerous historical connections between Europe and the Arab world gave it a clear pro-Arab focus. If it was highly criticized by Israel, it also reinforced the Nixon administration’s impression that Europe – under France’s lead – was trying to build itself on an anti-American footing.<sup>110</sup> The feeling of rancour transpiring from Kissinger’s memoirs must also be understood through the wider historical perspective of post-war transatlantic relations. Indeed, Kissinger could not understand how France and other European countries could be so disapproving of the country “that had restored their economies and on which they continued to rely for their security”.<sup>111</sup> Through the “Year of Europe” initiative, Kissinger had aimed to ensure transatlantic consultations on foreign policy issues but by choosing to dissociate themselves from Washington, Europeans showed that they objected both to the style and substance of American diplomacy in the Middle-East.

### III. 4) Michel Jobert: the centre of Franco-American disputes

Franco-American disputes were aggravated by Jobert’s increasingly categorical stance towards Washington. If his origins as a Moroccan pied-noir account for his determination to broaden France’s ties to the Arab world, his intent to develop a common European position on the Middle-East also derived from his sensitivity to the domestic difficulties faced by his government. Indeed, left-wing political and media circles in France – feeling that the French government let the US deal with the Middle-East crisis on its own and that the construction of Europe was a new way of

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<sup>109</sup> “Declaration on the Middle-East, Brussels, 6 November 1973”, Christopher Hill and Karen Smith (eds), *European Foreign Policy: Key Documents* (London: Routledge, 2000), 300.

<sup>110</sup> Memcon, 3 December 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00932.

<sup>111</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 733.

reintegrating France into NATO – accused Pompidou of being too “Atlantic” and of betraying Gaullism.<sup>112</sup> While Kosciusko-Morizet tried to explain this domestic context to Kissinger, in hindsight, the latter still wondered why Jobert “worked to thwart [American] policies with demonic skills”.<sup>113</sup> Kissinger’s exchanges with Jobert displayed more animosity than his discussions with Pompidou (who had for example been more understanding of Kissinger’s “Year of Europe” speech).<sup>114</sup> This probably accounts for Kissinger’s contention that “the principal cause of disappointment was the ascendancy of Michel Jobert coinciding with the physical decline of Pompidou and the political collapse of Nixon at home”. Indeed, despite his flattering portrayals of Jobert’s analytic skills, the overriding impression Kissinger conveys in his memoirs is that Jobert’s confrontational position exacerbated his own bitterness towards French and European attitudes.<sup>115</sup>

### III. 5) An ironic turn for the US: 1973 ended with an EC “Declaration on European identity” rather than a revival of Atlantic relations

Efforts to reaffirm Europe’s identity culminated in the publication of a “Declaration on European Identity” on 14 December 1973 during the Copenhagen meeting between the nine European foreign ministers.<sup>116</sup> While the process had been initiated in response to the “Year of Europe” initiative during the summer of 1973, the October War decisively stimulated it. There had been divergences of opinion among the Nine on the content of such a declaration but the final text was very similar to the French draft proposal.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, the latter stressed the cultural and civilizational specificities of Europe, concepts that had been central to de Gaulle’s Fouchet Plan in 1961.<sup>118</sup> Its emphasis on a common European civilization mirrored the persistence of a cultural anti-American tradition in France, a deep-rooted phenomenon which predated

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<sup>112</sup> Soutou, “The linkage between European integration and détente” in: *European Integration and the Cold War*, 33.

<sup>113</sup> Memcon, 3 December 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00932, 9; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 164.

<sup>114</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 388, 419, 423; Compte-rendu de l’entretien Pompidou/Nixon, 18 Mai 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 117.

<sup>115</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 163-64.

<sup>116</sup> “Declaration on European Identity by the Nine Foreign Ministers, Copenhagen, 14 December 1973”, *European Foreign Policy: Key Documents*, 92-97.

<sup>117</sup> Proposition de texte “De l’identité européenne”, 4 septembre 1973, CHAN, 5AG2 1035.

<sup>118</sup> Gfeller, “Imagining European Identity: French Elites and the American Challenge in the Pompidou-Nixon Era”, *Contemporary European History* 19:02 (May 2010), 143.

de Gaulle's presidency and re-emerged under a new European guise in the 1970s.<sup>119</sup> The Nixon administration viewed the "Declaration on European Identity" as an additional indication that European countries – under Jobert's influence – were pursuing the "old Gaullist dream of building Europe on an anti-American basis".<sup>120</sup> Such feelings were exacerbated by the fact that negotiations for an EC-US draft declaration following the refused American proposal for an "Atlantic Charter" had reached a deadlock.<sup>121</sup> This lack of progress was partly due to Franco-American disputes over the wording of a document.<sup>122</sup> The French draft proposal for a declaration on European identity also had political implications as it linked European defense with political independence. Indeed, defense considerations were paramount in French foreign policy-making, especially since the Senate had signed the Mansfield Amendment on 26 September 1973 (on the reduction of US troops in Europe).<sup>123</sup> The Pompidou government struggled to reconcile its defense policy – which was highly dependent on the US – with its new crucial objective, building a united Europe capable of affirming its identity and security. The inconsistency between France's desire to minimize association with the US and the government's awareness that an American military presence in Europe was necessary became a central point of friction between French and American officials. Indeed, Kissinger denounced the fact that "Jobert wanted America fully committed to defend Europe but wished to reduce our political links to Europe to the greatest extent possible".<sup>124</sup>

Ironically, Kissinger's "Year of Europe" initiative – which had aimed to redefine transatlantic relations – culminated in a declaration which asserted Europe's distinct political, military, cultural and economic personality. The Nixon administration's attempt to monopolize the conduct of a peace settlement in the Middle-East and the EC Nine's growing feeling of economic vulnerability following the energy crisis had indeed produced an identity crisis in Europe. The Pompidou government – which was itself deeply worried about changing international dynamics – capitalized on this context to lead the dance towards European integration.

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<sup>119</sup> David Strauss, *Menace in the West: The Rise of French Anti-Americanism in Modern Times* (London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 267-285.

<sup>120</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 165.

<sup>121</sup> Memcon, Kissinger/Andersen, 25 Septembre 1973, DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, KT00811.

<sup>122</sup> The US proposal contained the word "partnership" which had become a "dirty word" for the French who believed "partnership implies a contractual relationship which amounts to European subservience" in: National Intelligence Estimate, 5 December 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976: Vol XXXVI*, 749.

<sup>123</sup> Mélandri, *Une Incertaine Alliance: Les Etats-Unis et l'Europe, 1973-1983* (Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne, 1988) 87, 97.

<sup>124</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 706.

Misapprehensions about foreign policy objectives were at the centre of Franco-American disputes in 1973. While they caused France's hostile response to Kissinger's "Year of Europe" initiative, they were also at the root of France's opposition to a US-Soviet monopoly on the Arab-Israeli peace settlement. This essay's central claim is nonetheless that those two events had different implications. The "Year of Europe" controversy did not provoke an irrevocable clash of perceptions between the two countries. Conflicting interests on the structure of the international system and the state of transatlantic relations more forcefully climaxed in the aftermath of the October War which exacerbated French anxieties over the US's strategy of détente and acted as the catalyst for the deterioration of Franco-American relations in 1973 and early 1974. By shifting his policy in support of European integration and by returning to a vehement anti-American style of Gaullism, Pompidou put his country's interests in direct conflict with those of the US. His goal – under Jobert's influence – was no longer to put France in a privileged position between the EC and the US. Rather, it was to counterbalance American influence in Europe and in the Middle-East by accelerating the EPC process. By underlining the impact of French anxieties over the prospect of a US-Soviet "condominium", this study has sought to enlighten historiographical debates on the limits of Soviet-American détente.<sup>125</sup> While the American historian Craig Daigle argues that the priority placed on détente was to blame for the outbreak of the October War, this essay sheds light on another limit of détente in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict: the degree of mistrust it triggered in France and more broadly, its impact on Franco-American and intra-Western affairs.<sup>126</sup> This study has also sought to challenge the contention that transatlantic matters or questions over the impact of European integration only marginally preoccupied US policy-makers in the 1970s.<sup>127</sup> While the "Year of Europe" was part of an American strategy to form a united Atlantic Alliance against the Soviet Union, this does not weaken the fact that it was also motivated by genuine American interests. Moreover, a source-based study shows that the EC's move toward political integration after the

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<sup>125</sup> See for example, Westad, *The Fall of Détente: Soviet-American Relations in the Carter Years* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997); and Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1994).

<sup>126</sup> Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1969-1973* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 6-8.

<sup>127</sup> See for example, Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Searching for a balance: the American perspective" in: Ludlow, *European Integration and the Cold War*, 153, 170.

October War and its rejection of American policies – encouraged chiefly by France – worried American officials much more than is usually suggested.<sup>128</sup>

Several scholars emphasize European countries' failure to influence US policy in 1973, and more broadly, to assert their political role during the Cold War.<sup>129</sup> But as the wording of the Ottawa Declaration in June 1974 came from the French draft for an EC-US declaration, perhaps we should turn to the study of European countries' role in rapidly overcoming the 1973 crisis.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Memcon, Kosciusko-Morizet/Kissinger Meeting, 3 December 1973, DNSA, KT00932; an article in the *Boston Globe* also notably quoted Kissinger saying “the biggest problem American foreign policy confronts right now is not to regulate competition with its enemies but how to bring our friends to the realisation that there are greater common interests than simply self-assertiveness”, Jhabvala Darius, “US, Europe, once close, drifting apart”, 17 March 1974, *Boston Globe*, 1.

<sup>129</sup> See for example, Mélandri, *Une Incertaine Alliance*, 102; Möckli, *European Foreign Policy During the Cold War*, 2.

<sup>130</sup> Soutou, “Georges Pompidou and US-European relations” in: Marc Trachtenberg (ed.), *Between Empire and Alliance: America & Europe during the Cold War* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2003), 190.

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