



Andrew Moravcsik, “De Gaulle Between Grain and Grandeur: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958-1970 (Part 1),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (Spring 2000): 3-43.

_____, “De Gaulle Between Grain and Grandeur: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958-1970 (Part 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 3 (Fall 2000): 4-68.

Responses (in *JCWS* 2.3):

Stanley Hoffmann, “Comment on Moravcsik”: 69-73.

John T.S. Keeler, “A Response to Andrew Moravcsik”: 74-76

Alan S. Milward, “A Comment on the Article by Andrew Moravcsik”: 77-80.

John Gillingham, “A Test Case of Moravcsik’s “Liberal Intergovernmentalist” Approach to European Integration”: 81-86.

Jeffrey Vanke, “Reconstructing De Gaulle”: 87-100

Marc Trachtenberg, “De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and Europe”: 101-116.

Rejoinder (in *JCWS* 2.3):

Andrew Moravcsik, “Beyond Grain and Grandeur: An Answer to Critics and an Agenda for Future Research”: 117-142.

Commentary by **Irwin Wall**, University of California, Riverside, irwin.wall@ucr.edu
Published by H-Diplo on 9 January 2001

Upon reading the exchange between Andrew Moravcsik and his imposing array of critics I have the sense that he conceded a great deal of ground which I do not need to go over again. I do think he has made a contribution to our understanding of de Gaulle’s European policy. My first reaction, before I had read deeply, was that I had found a kindred spirit in Moravcsik, someone else willing to take de Gaulle down a peg or two, to show that he was not necessarily or always a visionary giant concerned with the broader picture, “the vision thing” as a former President named Bush once so inelegantly put it. The general was rather in many respects an ordinary statesman, subject to the same mundane needs of trying to balance the complexities of international relations and economics against the competing demands of domestic interest groups, some of which had a virtual stranglehold on policy decisions.

My own approach to de Gaulle is similar: I have tried to show in my newest book (*France, The United States, and the Algerian War, 1954-1962*, University of California Press, 2001) that de Gaulle never intended to let go of Algeria when he came to power, that in fact his entire diplomacy was oriented from 1958 to November 1960 toward a vain hope of holding on to France’s most valuable overseas possession, that he in fact won the war there on the ground, but was forced ultimately to negotiate a peace by external pressure, first from the United States, then by the United Nations and World Opinion, and finally by a war-weary public in France itself. I believe that Moravcsik is certainly right that the elements of continuity between de Gaulle’s

foreign policy and that of the Fourth Republic are much more striking than the evidence in favor of a total break. I argue this for Algeria, but it is easier to prove in the area of the Common Market and the French insistence on a Common Agricultural Policy, which was an unconditional demand of the French as the price for their entry into the EEC from the signing of the Treaty of Rome onward. The Fourth Republic, Moravcsik correctly points out, was as tough or tougher than de Gaulle on this question throughout its negotiations with its partners among the five and with the British, whose initial efforts to submerge the Common Market in a broader Free Trade Area of the OEEC countries it firmly resisted. It had yielded nothing when de Gaulle inherited the negotiations, named for the British negotiator Maudling, and ended them in November 1958.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the CAP became a French condition for British entry to the Common Market, or that de Gaulle provoked a crisis over it leading to the “Empty Chair” episode in 1965. I am convinced by much of what Moravcsik says in these two specific instances. But my agreement stops there. Let me begin with sources. These are not lacking as Moravcsik appears to claim. The French Diplomatic Documents are available, published, from 1954 through 1962 and the volumes come off the presses continuously. The holdings of the Quai d’Orsay are available through most of the 1960s. There is a plethora of memoirs by people close to de Gaulle: Triboulet, Debre, Foccart, Chaban-Delmas, in addition to Moravcsik’s favorite, Peyrefitte, whom he overuses shamelessly. Of these Peyrefitte is by far the most imaginative -- he was, after all, a writer -- but he is far from entirely reliable. Admittedly his quotes from de Gaulle are juicy; if de Gaulle did not say some of the things Peyrefitte attributes to him he should have, but that they ring true does not make them so.

Peyrefitte has a fatal weakness that Moravcsik overlooks, Peyrefitte believes, or asserts, that important diplomatic initiatives that failed were not meant seriously to succeed. This is very self-serving, if not of Peyrefitte himself, then of the general, none of whose initiatives ever failed if it is true. Unfortunately this will not hold up when examined in the documentary record. For example, Peyrefitte quotes de Gaulle as saying he never meant anything by the September 18, 1958 memorandum to the UK and the U.S. proposing a directorate of France and the two Anglo-Saxon powers over NATO and the Western World except to provoke a refusal and then pursue his policy of independence. I have studied this in extensive detail, and I believe de Gaulle’s assertion to be self serving nonsense: countries do not engage in years of protracted negotiations, not only with each other, but internally within their own bureaucracies and constituencies, unless they expect at least partial success. De Gaulle wanted solidarity in Algeria and help with his nuclear weapons program from the U.S. and the UK, in exchange for which he would be a loyal NATO partner and solid ally. Both Eisenhower and Macmillan looked for ways to satisfy his nuclear demands; Macmillan understood in fact that if could satisfy de Gaulle on nuclear collaboration the way would be open for Great Britain to enter the Common Market, an aspect of the negotiations Moravcsik ignores. Another example: Peyrefitte also says the plan to partition Algeria in 1961 between its European and Muslim populations was a trial balloon simply meant to scare the rebels into making more negotiating concessions. But Debre and Jean Morin, de Gaulle’s last Resident Minister for Algeria, understood it to be meant in deadly seriousness, and they communicated that to the rebels, who angrily demonstrated against the idea. Similarly, since the Fouchet Plan failed, Peyrefitte writes it off as a feint, and Moravcsik follows him in believing it. But the stenographic accounts of the meetings between the six at Foreign Minister and Head of State levels in the DDF series should be enough to dispel any such notion.

Moravcsik misunderstands the Fouchet plan negotiations because he fails to see the broader picture. The Fouchet plan was not meant in isolation, but as part of a diplomatic ensemble that reveals de Gaulle as nothing if not a geopolitician. There were three parts to this ensemble: first, the September memorandum proposing a “Directorate” of the three nuclear powers with world interests in the west; second, the French union established by the constitution of the Fifth Republic in 1958, which established a federal union of African states run from Paris, which was to control the Presidency and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Higher Education, and Economics of the Union; and Third, a confederal union of European states, the Six, with a secretariat in Paris, not Brussels. De Gaulle here resurrected the popular idea of Eurafrique, a combination of Europe and Africa with Paris at its center, the capital so to speak, representing Europe and its African hinterland in the councils of the Big Three, the UK, U.S., and France.

This broader picture of Gaullist diplomacy is not discussed either by Moravcsik or his critics in the symposium. Moravcsik also seems not to grasp the reason de Gaulle went the route of the Fouchet plan to establish European Political Cooperation (EPC): de Gaulle wanted EPC to be established independently of Brussels, precisely because the Brussels mechanism was to be truly supranational, and he could countenance supranational institutions only in the economic sphere, to which Brussels in his view had to remain limited. De Gaulle resented the pretensions of the authorities in Brussels to act as if they constituted a sovereign state. The only states for him were the ancient established ones of Europe. And finally there was a self- interested calculation in all this: de Gaulle wanted EPC as a confederal arrangement because France, on a one on one basis with Germany, or Italy, or Belgium, could generally have its way. It could bully each individually; it was not strong enough to prevail over them if they acted together. And it was through lining up their support, one by one, that de Gaulle almost achieved success. The problem was the small countries, which did not want to take dictation from the bigger ones, a problem on the agenda of the EU today. The Dutch particularly would not accept the Fouchet Plan unless it was made consistent with NATO and included the English, and this made it in turn unacceptable to de Gaulle. Moreover, it was the Dutch who pointed out to the French during the negotiations that what de Gaulle defined as a “European” policy was always the policy of France, pure and simple: the emperor, indeed, had no clothes.

Moravcsik appears to concede the point to his critics that de Gaulle did not separate economics and geopolitics, he was a relentless modernizer as Stanley Hoffmann says. So were most of the politicians of the Fourth Republic before him, and economic modernization was and had to be the basis of French geopolitical hegemonic claims; I will not belabor this point here. But what I mean to say is that de Gaulle did not apply geopolitics to the Common Market because as an economic mechanism he wanted it rigidly separated from the political sphere. In trying to accomplish this absolute dichotomy between the EEC and EPC he probably had to fail; but his approach explains why he bargained so hard over the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) within the Common Market mechanism, and hoped to keep the British out, as Moravcsik I think correctly says, until the CAP was irrevocably established.

This is not to say, however, that de Gaulle would not have traded British membership earlier for a meaningful collaboration on the French nuclear program, which probably cost the French much more than agricultural subsidies, and on which extensive savings could have been realized had

France not had to rediscover the wheel so to speak, make over again all or most of the costly mistakes the Americans had made on the way to the construction of their own nuclear program. That is, as the proverbial saying goes, another story. But it is one in the absence of which we cannot achieve a fuller understanding of what was going on. Moreover, the rejection of Great Britain's application to join the Common Market was multi-causal; some of the reasons one could not expect de Gaulle to have articulated for diplomatic reasons, but they were there nevertheless. De Gaulle never forgot Churchill's wartime comment: he must never make Churchill choose between France and America, for Churchill would always chose America. Eden aligned himself with France during the Suez operation, but no sooner had it begun than he lost heart and ceded under American pressure, leading to abject failure. After that Macmillan set the British on a resolute policy of cultivating again the so-called special relationship with the Americans from which the French were always to feel excluded. Great Britain then slavishly followed the Americans in pressuring France on Algeria, joining Washington in sending arms to Tunisia, offering with Washington good offices to settle the crisis over the French bombardment of the Tunisian village, Sakiet, in February 1958, and sending a virtual ultimatum to the Gaillard government which caused it to fall and led to de Gaulle's coming to power. Great Britain remained aligned to the United States thereafter, joining with the Americans in continued pressure on de Gaulle over Algeria which finally forced him to accept Algerian independence. Meanwhile the British accepted American nuclear help which was denied in turn to France. De Gaulle was acutely aware of all this and deeply resentful of it when he was confronted with Britain's EEC application.

Trachtenberg makes the point that historians understand some things, in a way contemporaries had to understand them, almost instinctively, even in the absence of documentary evidence. That may be a stretch, but it is probably true. But there is another thing that we should instinctively understand and often don't even in the face of documentary evidence that cries out for such understanding. I refer to what is commonly called linkage. Politicians are like jugglers, they deal with many issues at the same time, several in the same day, perhaps all in the same week, and many in the same set or subset of negotiations. They often look for concessions in one area in exchange for gaining political ground in another. By dealing with EC and CAP in isolation Moravcsik misses this crucial point. There was never a dichotomy between geopolitical and economic calculations in de Gaulle's diplomacy; they were always linked, and cannot be separated in the way that Moravcsik tries to do.

Copyright © 2001-2004 by H-Diplo, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For other uses contact the H-Diplo Article Discussion Co-ordinator, George Fujii, gfuji@umail.ucsb.edu.
