

De Gaulle Between Grain and *Grandeur*: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958–1970 (Part 2)

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[This is the concluding part of the article; for the first part, see the previous issue of the Journal. This part continues the analysis of four case studies of de Gaulle's diplomacy, turning to the third and fourth of them: the rejection of British membership in the EEC, and the "empty chair" crisis of 1956–1966. It then offers an extended discussion of the implications of the four cases for our understanding of French policy in Europe during this crucial phase of the Cold War.]

British Membership: "For France to maintain its agriculture with England as a member, England would have to stop being England"

From 1958 through early 1969, Gaullist France remained implacably opposed to British membership in or association with the European Economic Community (EEC). In December 1958, after gaining West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's support, French President Charles de Gaulle vetoed British proposals for a free trade area (FTA) outright. He called on the British, disingenuously, to join the EEC and to accept the obligations adopted by the other Community partners, particularly regarding the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), external tariffs, and social harmonization. In early 1960, Britain organized the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) with Denmark, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Ireland—a move designed almost exclusively to exert greater pressure on France—and called for an EFTA-EEC agreement. Uncompromising French obstruction again scuttled the negotiations. When Reginald Maudling, the chief British negotiator, asked Robert

Marjolin, an EEC Commissioner who had been a French negotiator of the Treaty of Rome and a technocrat relatively open to transatlantic ties, what France would do if Britain agreed to all its conditions, he replied: “We [would] just have to think of new reasons to make your membership impossible.”¹

Little changed in mid-1961 when British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan took the step called for by de Gaulle by announcing Britain’s application for EEC membership. Instead of welcoming the decision, de Gaulle termed it “an unpleasant surprise” and encouraged Macmillan to withdraw it. Well before the negotiations collapsed, de Gaulle confidentially affirmed to close advisers his absolute rejection of British membership, but he did not press for immediate action.² De Gaulle was little concerned at first, for he expected British domestic opposition to block the necessary economic and political concessions on the related issues of Commonwealth preferences and agriculture.³ Yet Macmillan persevered. When French officials realized in mid-1962, to their surprise, that Macmillan was in fact genuinely willing and able to make all the economic concessions on Commonwealth preferences that France had been requesting, French demands hardened. Pessimistic prognoses were issued in an attempt to force a British withdrawal, thereby transferring to London the responsibility for the collapse of negotiations. A committee was reportedly formed in the Quai d’Orsay to design further means of impeding British entry. Seeking to impose a *fait accompli*, the French rapidly sought an agreement on the CAP that would be directly at variance with British proposals, while deliberately misleading the British

1. AA: LA 304/214, Braun (German Embassy, London) minute, 10.4.1961, cited in Sabine Lee, “Germany and the First Enlargement Negotiations 1961–1963,” Unpublished paper, 1996, p. 12, also pp. 3–7. Even Marjolin did not think British membership was possible until the CAP was in place. See Robert Marjolin, *Le travail d’une vie, Memoires, 1911–1986* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1986); Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984–1988): Vol. 2, p. 630; Gabriele Brenke, “Europakonzeptionen im Widerstreit: Die Freihandelszonen-Verhandlungen 1956–1958,” *Vierteljahreshfte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 1994), pp. 595–633; Carol Levy Balassa, *Organized Industry in France and the European Common Market: Interest Group Attitudes and Behavior* (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1978), pp. 83–95, 191, 320ff; Leon N. Lindberg, *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), pp. 142–143, 147–149; Richard Lamb, *The Macmillan Years, 1947–1963: The Emerging Truth* (London: John Massey, 1995), pp. 110, 114–117, 120ff; Herbert Schneider, *Großbritanniens Weg nach Europa. Eine Untersuchung über das Verhalten und die Rolle der britischen Handels- und Industrieverbände, Gewerkschaften und Farmerorganisationen zwischen 1955 (Spaak-Komitee) und 1961 (EWG-Beitrittsverhandlungen)* (Freiburg/Breisgau: Rombach, 1968), p. 116; Robert J. Lieber, *British Politics and European Unity: Parties, Elites, and Pressure Groups* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 72–90; and Sir Norman Kipping, *Summing Up* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), p. 160.

2. Alain Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Fayard, 1994), pp. 104–111, 303–304; Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 3, pp. 332–337.

3. Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, p. 144.

about their actions. In retrospect, Pierson Dixon, the British ambassador in Paris, saw this as the “end of the negotiations.” He reported back that de Gaulle would probably wait until the November 1962 elections, which required support from pro-EEC farmers and centrist parties, and would then veto Britain’s application.⁴

The British, however, continued to make important concessions. By December 1962 most participants believed that a final agreement was just around the corner, and a marathon session in January 1963 was widely expected to resolve most of the outstanding issues.⁵ But after an unexpectedly successful showing in the November parliamentary elections, de Gaulle announced at a cabinet meeting on 17 December 1962 that he would veto Britain’s entry, and he seemed to ridicule Macmillan by citing the famous Edith Piaf song, “Ne pleurez pas Milord (“Do not cry, my Lord”), a quotation that soon leaked.⁶ At a celebrated press conference a month later, on 14 January 1963, de Gaulle delivered the coup de grace, explaining at length why Britain was unready to adopt a “genuinely European” approach.⁷ The negotiations collapsed. When the government of Harold Wilson explored a second membership bid in 1966–1967, de Gaulle first discouraged and then informally vetoed the move.

4. Alastair Home, *Harold Macmillan*, Vol. 2 (New York: Viking, 1988), p. 257. Also Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 299–304; Macmillan on Dixon, in Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, pp. 144, 166, 172–175; Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (New York: Overlord Press, 1998), pp. 134, 142; Alessandro Silj, “Europe’s Political Puzzle: A Study of the Fouchet Negotiations and the 1963 Veto,” Occasional Paper No. 17, Center for International Affairs, Cambridge, MA, 1967, p. 82; Sir Pierson Dixon, *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon, Don and Diplomat* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), pp. 282–3, 292; Christopher Steel, Ambassador in Bonn, cited in Anthony P. Adamthwaite, “Britain, France, and the Integration of Western Europe, 1957–1961,” Working Paper No. 17, Center for German and European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, CA, 1992, p. 8, also pp. 3, 9–10; and Andrew Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 162. On Macmillan’s initial pessimism, due to French opposition, Wolfram Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945–63* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 191–192; and Wolfram Kaiser, “The Bomb and Europe: Britain, France, and the EEC Entry Negotiations, 1961–1963,” *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1995), p. 85.

5. F. Roy Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe, 1945–1967* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 299–305; and Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, pp. 196–197, 202. Also Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold, *Europe’s Would-Be Polity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 234; and Françoise de la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique aux Communautés européennes,” in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle: Europe*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Documentation française, 1992), pp. 192–202; p. 196.

6. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 333; Charles Cogan, *Charles de Gaulle: A Brief Biography with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1995), p. 141; and Pierre Maillard, *De Gaulle et l’Europe* (Paris: Tallandier, 1995), pp. 184–185. The context of the original, found in Peyrefitte, suggests it is doubtful that the statement was meant as ridicule.

7. For a verbatim transcript, see Edmond Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle et la construction de l’Europe (1940–1966)*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Général de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1967): Vol. 2, pp. 283–286.

At the end of the decade, however, de Gaulle and his successor, Georges Pompidou, reversed course. During the final months of de Gaulle's presidency and the first few of Pompidou's, French policy softened. In 1969 de Gaulle approached the British government about establishing an intergovernmental substitute for the EEC, which he termed the "European Economic Association." Although the negotiations failed because of embarrassing British leaks—precipitating the "Soames Affair"—Pompidou went on to pursue an even more conciliatory policy. In his first press conference as president on 10 July 1969, Pompidou noted that France had no objection in principle to British EEC membership on appropriate terms, a statement that opened the door to the entry of Britain in 1973.⁸

How can we best explain this pattern of rejection through 1968, followed by tentative initiatives for closer cooperation under de Gaulle and a strong move to accept Britain as a member by Pompidou?

The consensus view has long been that de Gaulle's hostility toward Britain, more than any other act, demonstrates that geopolitical interests lay behind his European policy. De Gaulle, it is alleged, was already souring on Europe because of the demise of the Fouchet Plan, and he feared that Britain would be a "Trojan horse" for U.S. geopolitical designs like the Multilateral Force (MLF). British entry, the argument goes, would frustrate his long-term vision of an alternative European confederation. The General's most celebrated biographer, Jean Lacouture, endorses this consensus when he asserts that the "real problem [was] the participation of Britain in the realization of Charles de Gaulle's grand design, the construction of a Europe of States."⁹ The most prominent of the recent French analysts, Maurice Vaïsse, says "the profound reason is, even after the failure of political cooperation, the desire to push London to the margins of European cooperation."¹⁰ Elsewhere Vaïsse conclusively attributes de Gaulle's veto to the failure of the Fouchet Plan: "The decision to oppose the British . . . was taken as a result of the failure of the negotiations for a European political union."¹¹ John Newhouse, long the authoritative English-language interpreter of de Gaulle's policy, concludes:

8. Andrew Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle* (Dartmouth: Aldershot, 1994), pp. 417–418; and Simon Z. Young, *Terms of Entry: Britain's Negotiations with the European Community, 1970–1972* (London: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 4–5.

9. Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 3, p. 318.

10. Maurice Vaïsse, *La grandeur: Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), p. 208. Also de la Serre, "De Gaulle et la candidature britannique," pp. 192–202.

11. Maurice Vaïsse, "De Gaulle and the British 'Application' to Join the Common Market," in George Wilkes, ed., *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community, 1961–63* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 67.

For de Gaulle the political consequences were, as always, controlling. . . . What he wanted was French supremacy in Western Europe [and] the meaning of [accepting Britain into Europe] was plain. France would not be the sole nuclear power in the European community, and French political influence would be that much less.¹²

Among more recent interpreters, Charles Cogan elaborates the consensus view that de Gaulle's overriding goal was French politico-military dominance in Europe:

De Gaulle's reasoning appears to have been the following: . . . He thought he could establish nuclear hegemony over the rest of the continent of Western Europe by virtue of: (1) the suppression of the Multilateral Force, which would have put nuclear weapons in the hands of continental powers, (2) the exclusion of Great Britain, a nuclear power, from a continental grouping by his veto of British entry into the Common Market.¹³

Others cite de Gaulle's anger at Macmillan's failure to provide a clear signal of British willingness to engage in nuclear cooperation and to inform him of the Polaris nuclear deal signed with the United States at Nassau on 21 December—an interpretation apparently cultivated by French officials.¹⁴

Such appraisals of de Gaulle's vital geopolitical interest in blocking British accession are based almost entirely on de Gaulle's general writings and utterances—the sort of speculative interpretation of symbolic rhetoric we dismissed in Part 1 of this article—rather than on direct evidence of a concrete calculation about the geopolitical implications of British association or membership. The sources themselves tell a very different story. Direct evidence for a link between geopolitical ideas and the British veto is almost non-existent, and the concrete evidence for a commercial motivation greatly outweighs what evidence there is of geopolitical and ideological motivation.

The preponderance of evidence suggests instead that de Gaulle vetoed British membership above all because Britain, a country with a domestic ag-

12. John Newhouse, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 226. Macmillan did offer bilateral nuclear cooperation in exchange for British membership, but this leaves open the fundamental source of de Gaulle's opposition. Consistent with the interpretation here, Macmillan did so in an unsuccessful effort to overcome more fundamental French commercial concerns. For documentary evidence, see Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), chaps. 2 and 3.

13. Charles Cogan, *Alliés éternels, amis ombrageux: Les États-Unis et la France depuis 1940* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1999), pp. 243–244. The French and English editions differ slightly.

14. Serge Bernstein, *La France et l'expansion: Le république gaullienne, 1958–1969* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), p. 249.

ricultural structure entirely different from that of France, was almost certain to block generous financing for the CAP. Having liquidated much of its agriculture in the nineteenth century in favor of massive commodity imports, Britain was loath to purchase expensive grain from Europe, which would greatly increase food prices, sever long-standing ties with the Commonwealth, and perhaps threaten existing British agriculture. The French government understood that the British, once inside the EEC, would have every incentive to collude with the West German government to block the development of the CAP—an accurate fear, as we shall soon see. Ludwig Erhard and other leading West Germans—Adenauer aside—would surely have joined them. The United States was already working through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) toward a similar end. De Gaulle was quite aware that this potential alliance between West Germany, Britain, and the United States would eliminate the principal French advantage of the customs union over other available forms of trade liberalization, such as a European FTA or GATT agreement.

The critical point was not immediate British concessions on Commonwealth imports, but future British disposition toward the CAP. The distinction is critical, for even if the British had been inclined to concede to the French trade demands in exchange for membership, the British government had no way to provide a credible commitment to permit centralized financing arrangements to be created, arrangements required six more years of difficult negotiation over prices and financing. British membership would kill the CAP. Hence the French government had nothing to lose by opposing Britain, even at the risk of destroying the EEC itself, for if French opposition alienated the five other governments and undermined the EEC in favor of a British FTA, the outcome would be little worse in economic terms than an EEC that included the British.¹⁵ These concerns were what dominated de Gaulle's calculations about British membership and constitute in themselves a sufficient explanation for both his repeated vetoes and their ultimate reversal.

Let us turn first to the discourse of de Gaulle and other French decision makers. The General often spoke about Britain's lack of readiness to be "truly European." He stressed the existence of conflicts between the French (and Europeans generally) and the "Anglo-Saxons," describing Britain as a "Trojan horse" and warning of "American dominance." He proclaimed the need for a "European Europe."¹⁶ Such metaphors, taken out of context, constitute

15. This calculation was based in part on de Gaulle's assessment, shared by the French *Patronat*, that French industry was increasingly competitive on a global basis and that, with the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations under way, industrial trade liberalization was probable and desirable in any case. See Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chaps. 2 and 3.

16. Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 3, p. 330; Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 61; and

the documentary evidence most often—indeed, almost invariably—cited by biographers and historians to demonstrate that de Gaulle’s opposition to British membership was grounded in deeply held and distinctive geopolitical ideas about France’s role in the postwar world.

Yet de Gaulle, as noted above, employed such metaphors to refer both to economic conflicts surrounding GATT and agriculture and to geopolitical conflicts concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and nuclear weapons. To discern de Gaulle’s true meaning, we need to know more about the context from which such metaphors are drawn. When we explore the documentary context, we find that when specifically addressing the question of British membership, de Gaulle refers to economic considerations more often, in more detail, and with greater emphasis than he does to geopolitical considerations. Explicit statements of a primarily geopolitical justification for vetoing Britain are rarely—arguably never—found. De Gaulle’s own statements leave little doubt that commercial concerns were both predominant and sufficient to motivate repeated French vetoes. A review of the evidence shows this clearly.

Let us begin with de Gaulle’s most quoted explication of his opposition to British membership, namely the comments he made at his celebrated press conference of 14 January 1963, where he announced the veto. Speaking even more slowly than usual, the General devoted nearly 1,500 words to what he termed a clear explanation of the veto. These remarks were very carefully considered, for de Gaulle had spent the past three weeks “doing *nothing* except preparing” them, and he had corrected and amended them repeatedly.¹⁷ Closer contextual analysis is instructive, for it demonstrates that small snippets from this speech—in particular the references to “the colossal Atlantic area under American dominance” and the British preoccupation with global issues and its Commonwealth, rather than Europe—are almost invariably cited out of context by those seeking to demonstrate the central importance in de Gaulle’s statecraft of a geopolitical vision incompatible with that of the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁸

Yet in fact de Gaulle’s announcement of the British veto at the January 1963 press conference was nothing short of a detailed lecture on political economy, belying his reputation as a man who knew and cared little about

Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik*, 1963 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994), Doc. 94 (hereinafter referred to as *AAP*, 1963, with appropriate document number). On the notion of a *Europe européenne*, see de la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique.”

17. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 350–351. Emphasis in the original. All questions were planted and the answers meticulously prepared in advance. De Gaulle, not wanting to be seen wearing glasses in public, memorized the answers.

18. For a verbatim text, see Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 283–186.

economics. He offered a cogent description of the differences in economic structure between Britain and the Continent, focusing specifically on the contradiction between long-standing British trading patterns and future commitments under the Treaty of Rome in the “essential” area of agriculture. British membership, he noted, posed a unique challenge to the EEC primarily because the Continent was different in economic structure from the “insular, maritime . . . essentially industrial and commercial and hardly agricultural” Britain.¹⁹ The desire of Britain and the United States to promote European trade liberalization without a preferential arrangement for agriculture, he argued, “would completely alter the whole set of arrangements, understandings, compensations, and rules that have already been drawn up among the Six. . . . The cohesion of its members . . . would not last for long.” Fundamentally, he said, these problems arose because of “peculiarities” of various countries in their “economic relations . . . above all with the United States.” Further references to the United States (“the colossal Atlantic area under American dominance”) did not pertain to NATO and politico-military matters, but exclusively to overwhelming U.S. economic influence. Later in the press conference, when asked about the MLF, de Gaulle drew no link to the EEC.²⁰ During the entire press conference of 14 January 1962, de Gaulle never explicitly mentioned security issues, geopolitical disagreements with the Anglo-Saxons, the Fouchet Plan, Franco-West German relations, European political cooperation, the MLF or nuclear weapons, American geostrategy, or any other non-economic concerns.²¹

De Gaulle’s statements at confidential meetings from 1961 to 1965 corroborate the commercial focus of his press conference. He confided to his closest collaborators that “the question of Britain in the Common Market sufficed in itself” to motivate a French veto.²² The fundamental threat, he noted at an April 1962 Cabinet session, stemmed primarily from the scenario of an Anglo-German-American coalition against the CAP:

19. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 283–287. Some years later de Gaulle did once briefly allude to Nassau in discussing the veto. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

21. De Gaulle’s press conference of 27 November 1967, where he announced his veto of a second (potential) British membership bid is similar. De Gaulle focused on commercial concerns, noting the role of sterling and the possibility that British membership would destroy policies already in place—a reference that could be only to the CAP, rather than to foreign policy cooperation. The importance of economic and financial concerns was confirmed by the official EEC communique of 19 December 1967. Even Françoise de la Serre admits that economic and monetary arguments were primary in de Gaulle’s discourse. See de la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique,” p. 199.

22. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 336: “Le lien [entre le veto et le Sommet de Nassau] est implicite.”

We have an industrial common market. The CAP will not be put into place unless we impose it. . . . Britain has [always] been hostile [and] threatened us with a tariff war. . . . [Then] they asked for membership. Why? To play the game? Or to prevent the EEC from working? It is not clear. They wanted to admit the entire Commonwealth. That changes everything. The British will have difficulty adopting the continental policy. British policy is not the same as the elemental policies of the Continent. . . . The industrial common market has succeeded. It induced us to modernize. Perhaps it will be the same for agriculture. . . . But insofar as it succeeds, the rest of the West wants to join. First Great Britain, then the United States, which is already demanding to form an Atlantic economic community. This would be free trade for the Western world; it would no longer be a European Common Market. . . . The Germans are . . . favorable to this general free trade more than a customs union of the Six.²³

This fear was quite justified. The argument that membership would permit Britain to block policies inimical to its interests, notably the CAP, played an important role in debates over the decision to apply.²⁴ As one British minister put it to his colleagues at a December 1962 cabinet meeting:

The rest of the Six feared that if we acceded without firm conditions binding us to accept the [CAP] in its present form, the Germans and we would combine—for our separate reasons—to render it inoperable.²⁵

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110. Note that the reference to the U.S. desire to subsume Europe in a transatlantic structure applies not to NATO but to an “Atlantic *economic* community” and arose in the context of a discussion on French agriculture.

24. The British wanted to block the EEC or at least limit its financial excesses. Eric Roll, a top Ministry of Agriculture official at the time and subsequently the deputy leader of the British negotiating delegation, recalls the British decision to enter in 1961: “Agriculture was of course alongside the Commonwealth, probably the most important single issue. . . . I remember my own conclusion, which I presented to the ministers. . . . It was *impossible* to have a common agricultural policy . . . which would be totally satisfactory to the Exchequer, to the consumer, to the Commonwealth, and to the British farmer. . . . My recommendation was the quicker we got in, the more chance we would have to get as much reconciliation of these factors as possible. I mention that, simply because it was rather indicative of a number of things that were happening at the time in regard to what was happening on the other side of the Channel. In other words, people were beginning to see that this was going to happen. . . . [Since] we can’t *afford* to be out of it, isn’t there a case for saying we want to be in on the *formulation* of this, so that we can be sure that it contains fewer embarrassments than it otherwise would.” Michael Charlton, *The Price of Victory* (London: BBC, 1983), pp. 252–253. See also the similar remarks of Peter Thorneycroft, head of the Board of Trade, and Sir Frank Figgures, Undersecretary of the Treasury, in *ibid.*, pp. 202, 215. Also, Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, p. 130.

25. CMN (62), 27th meeting, 5.12.1962, CAB 134–1512, cited in N. Piers Ludlow, “British Agriculture and the Brussels Negotiations: A Matter of Trust,” in Wilkes, ed., *Britain’s Failure*, p. 116.

At an August 1962 Cabinet session on the British question, de Gaulle attributed French opposition to the fear that Britain would undermine the transition to the CAP:

In these negotiations we remain the principal country interested in agriculture, which we must modernize by creating outlets. This is a national problem of the first order. . . . The Common Market must help us. If Britain is not prepared for this, the Common Market has much less interest for us. We cannot back down. A transition until 1970 could be conceded, but only on the condition that the Common Market is completed, notably including agriculture; there can be no breaks. British policy aims to punch a hole through which many things could pass.²⁶

In private, as at the 14 January press conference, de Gaulle offered a sophisticated political economic analysis of whether Britain could actually reverse its traditional patterns of agricultural trade and consumption. Noting that Britain made the transition out of agriculture a century earlier, he observed:

Macmillan understands the great historical importance of the British choice. . . . The England of Kipling is dead. . . . British businessmen are preparing for the Common Market. [Macmillan] is not worried about British farmers, which constitute only four percent of the British population, while they were 20–25 percent in his youth. Our basic problem is similar, except that the British have moved more swiftly than we have. The problem behind them is before us. The modernization of agriculture is, besides Algeria, our greatest problem. If we don't solve it, we will have another Algeria on our own soil. Our industry can withstand international competition, but if agriculture stays out of the Common Market, the taxes on industry will be unbearable. It has been so difficult to establish this agricultural regime with our partners, and so many difficulties remain, that I cannot see how we could now develop a different one. Anyway, the entry of Britain would overturn everything, implying a completely different Common Market.²⁷

26. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 303–304.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 301–302. The problem, de Gaulle stated at another meeting just before, was that "Britain wants not only to join but to revise the Treaty . . . It is not a simple admission." *Ibid.*, p. 298. At the Cabinet meeting on 17 December 1962, where the final decision to veto the British application was taken, the General lectured his Cabinet at length on agriculture, emphasizing that the one question the British could not answer was why a customs union with the EFTA countries would not simply become an industrial free trade zone. In introducing the issue at the 9 January 1963 Cabinet meeting, he apparently discussed only the agricultural implications. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 349, also pp. 332–333.

According to de Gaulle, Britain would enter the EEC only by making exceptions for itself in agriculture and seeking to impose its own free-market view on the CAP. Hence, although an industrial free trade area between Britain and the EEC might be possible, “letting Britain into the EEC would be something quite different.” De Gaulle then concluded his extended observations on agricultural modernization with the distinct suggestion that geopolitics was of less importance than economics in French thinking: “We don’t wish ill for Macmillan, who is a sincere ally of France. But we cannot sacrifice a fundamental French interest for this sympathy.”²⁸

At a Cabinet session on 19 December 1962, where de Gaulle informed the government of his decision to veto, he again observed that agricultural issues would prevent him from working with Macmillan to achieve common political interests:

If Great Britain and . . . the Commonwealth enter, it would be as if the Common Market had . . . dissolved within a large free trade area. . . . Always the same question is posed, but the British don’t answer. Instead they say, “It’s the French who don’t want it.” . . . To please the British, we should call into question the Common Market and the negotiation of agricultural regulations that benefit us? All of this would be difficult to accept. . . . Britain continues to supply itself cheaply in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, etc. The Germans are dying to do the same in Argentina. The others would follow. What will we do with European, and particularly French, surpluses? If we have to spend 500 billion [francs] a year on agricultural subsidies, what will happen if the Common Market can no longer assist us? These eminently practical questions should not be resolved on the basis of sentiments. [Macmillan] is melancholy and so am I. We would prefer Macmillan’s Britain to that of Labour, and we would like to help him stay in office. But what can I do? Except sing to him the Edith Piaf song: “*Ne pleurez pas, Milord!*”²⁹

De Gaulle concluded by observing that Macmillan offered intensified bilateral nuclear cooperation, but France could not accept it because of the independent *force de frappe*—a statement entirely consistent with the view that nuclear weapons were brought into the negotiations by Macmillan as a tactical quid pro

28. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 303–304. This was a realistic fear, given U.S. negotiating goals in the Kennedy Round. See Eckart Conze, *Die gaullistische Herausforderung: Die deutsche-französische Beziehungen in der amerikanischen Europapolitik, 1958–1963* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995), pp. 227–238, especially pp. 233–235.

29. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 333.

quo but were never the central issue at stake.³⁰ Again he made no mention of broader geopolitical aims. At the same meeting, de Gaulle was even more precise about the commercial threat, emphasizing that Britain's unwillingness to accept the emerging CAP was what spurred France's opposition:

I will get rid of this matter of British membership in the Common Market. . . . It's not because we don't want them! It is because they are not yet ready to accept the obligations of the Treaty. . . . Great Britain dreams of breaking up the Common Market. . . . No chance! We battled first for the Common Market. It will not exist the moment we no longer oblige our partners to include agriculture, which is not yet anything more than phrases. . . . Once the Common Market is constructed in an irreversible manner, then we shall see.³¹

Geopolitical issues like the MLF and Bahama Accords, de Gaulle added, were an entirely separate subject.³²

Hours before the 14 January 1963 press conference, as well as at a Cabinet meeting nine days later, de Gaulle again justified the veto before his closest advisers. He concluded by remarking that the British might well be invited to join once the CAP was irreversibly established:

Before any association with England and any tariff negotiations with the United States, the essential thing is to first put the Common Market in place. Once this is done, we will see about reaching accords with others. . . . There will be no association with the Common Market, nor modifications of its functioning, without first establishing the agricultural system.³³

Full adaptation to the CAP, in de Gaulle's view, was the necessary precondition for EEC membership. "Britain will enter," he affirmed, "when the Commonwealth has been dismantled."³⁴ At the 23 January Cabinet meeting, de Gaulle touched on geopolitical and domestic political arguments advanced by Adenauer, and he then unambiguously reemphasized the primacy of agriculture:

30. This is quite consistent with the interpretation advanced in this paper. Macmillan and de Gaulle both saw bilateral nuclear cooperation as a quid pro quo to induce de Gaulle to pursue a policy that he, for other reasons, was disinclined to follow. In other words, bilateral nuclear cooperation was a tactical move, not the central issue in the negotiations.

31. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 334–335, also pp. 354–355.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 335–336, also p. 350.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 377. In repeated references to the Commonwealth, de Gaulle rarely mentions its political content, focusing his criticism instead on the economic implications of the system of "Imperial Preference." *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 304, 333, 358.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

But let's not forget the essential thing. The essential thing is that once they enter, the British and their group of satellites would want to reopen issues already resolved among the Six, but this time with a majority that would not want to construct a Europe in the spirit with which one has begun to do it among the Six.³⁵

Similarly, at a Cabinet meeting on 30 January 1963 de Gaulle stated:

If Britain had asked to accept the Treaty of Rome and all its rules, including the CAP, we would have welcomed them with open arms...For us, the essential thing is to maintain the Common Market; for the English, the essential thing is to twist its rules.³⁶

Throughout, de Gaulle made no explicit link to geopolitical implications. Three years later, on the brink of the “empty chair” crisis, he recalled that “if the British had entered the Common Market, there would have been an immediate treaty revision—at least the five other partners would have been willing.”³⁷

Foreign diplomatic analyses of de Gaulle's statements further confirm the primacy of commercial interests in his thinking. Consider, for example, the West German records of de Gaulle's statements during the critical seven-month period from December 1962 through June 1963. In a discussion with West German leaders, de Gaulle stressed that an “industrial trade arrangement with England could easily be reached,” but not within the EEC, because “agriculture is a French vital interest and for France to maintain its agriculture with England as a member, England would have to stop being England”—in which context he noted the importance of GATT.³⁸ In his first face-to-face discussion with Adenauer following the veto, de Gaulle stressed that the “critical point” was the lack of British commitment to a “real Common Market,” meaning one with a “common external tariff” and “common rules . . . particularly in agriculture.” Without these, an EEC based on “economic interests” would collapse. He added that “the Six had not completed the Common Market,” and there was “much still to decide, particularly in agriculture” before others could be admitted. At no point did he explicitly link the EEC to European or Franco-West German political cooperation, let alone invoke these goals as “vital interests” behind the EEC.³⁹ In discussions with West

35. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 372.

37. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 294.

38. Hermann Kusterer, *Der Kanzler und der General* (Stuttgart: Heske, 1995), pp. 318, 350–352; and *AAP*, 1963, Doc. 39.

39. *AAP*, 1963, Doc. 43. For Couve de Murville's similar view, see Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 303.

German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder, de Gaulle termed the CAP “a matter of life and death” for France. Without it, “France would be pressured by its agricultural sector and would then have no more interest in the Common Market.” This in turn implied the exclusion of Britain.⁴⁰ In December 1962, a source “pretty certain” of de Gaulle’s intentions noted that the General’s primary concern was that British entry might destroy the existing EEC by integrating the Commonwealth—a fear that could only reflect commercial concerns.⁴¹ Commenting on de Gaulle’s motivations, the British am-

40. *AAP*, 1963, Doc. 39. Also *Ibid.*, Doc. 32, which records De Gaulle confiding privately (“not by accident,” the interlocutor notes) that Britain would probably enter in some years, after the EEC became more firmly established. He clarifies that in three years—that is, 1966, the year in which CAP financing arrangements were scheduled to be complete, though they would not in fact be completed until 1970—Britain would have the opportunity either to accept all of the Rome Treaty or definitively refuse to do so.

41. *Ibid.*, Doc. 21. Other published West German documents generally support this view, though scattered references support the importance of geopolitical vision: The West German summary of de Gaulle’s 14 January 1963 press conference remarks on Britain, like the original, is concerned primarily with economic matters, without any explicit link to the United States or to geopolitical issues. Yet, four days after the negotiations, State Secretary Lahr speculated that while de Gaulle sought to dominate the EEC in order to pursue a “17th century mercantilist” policy vis-à-vis the United States, the tedious discussions on economic issues had in the end been about whether France was willing to share a leadership role in Europe. It is unclear on what basis he reached this judgment. *Ibid.*, Doc. 34. When Couve was asked bluntly by Spaak at the first meeting of ministers after the press conference whether the French veto was economically or geopolitically motivated, he recommended that the Commission summarize the state of the negotiations, focusing not on the specifics of the negotiations, but on “the whole problem” still left to negotiate and “keeping in mind that the development of the EEC is not yet complete.” *Ibid.*, Doc. 60. Ambassador Blankenhorn in Paris noted the inability and unwillingness of Britain to accommodate the economic demands of EEC membership, particularly in agriculture, yet he claimed that de Gaulle was motivated by British behavior at Nassau—an assumption we now know to be incorrect—and by a desire to establish a “continental-European power bloc.” Yet both of the quotations from de Gaulle cited by Blankenhorn as evidence for the importance of geopolitical concerns, including one from the press conference (the “Trojan horse” remark), in fact deal explicitly with trade rather than geopolitics—an example of the success of de Gaulle’s “deliberate deception.” *Ibid.*, Doc. 94. The West German ambassador in Brussels speculated that de Gaulle would not reverse his position quickly, because excluding Britain is part of his “central political conception.” *Ibid.*, Doc. 78. The French ambassador to West Germany (de Margerie) told Adenauer that he sensed that de Gaulle’s desire to kill the negotiations with a public announcement, rather than waiting for their “natural death,” reflected his anger about Nassau—but he concedes that no one can know. Adenauer later repeated this view, but did not voice an opinion on the underlying reasons for French opposition. *Ibid.*, Doc. 73, also Doc. 170. In response to a question from Adenauer about whether Nassau “embarrassed” de Gaulle, the General stated that he was somewhat cool to Macmillan at the very end of earlier Rambouillet talks on the British membership bid, because Macmillan did not tell him about his plans at Nassau. This recollection is not, however, linked to the veto itself. *Ibid.*, Doc. 43. De Gaulle and Adenauer noted that the British did not think in a “European” way on security issues, but they did not link this explicitly to the EEC. *Ibid.*, Docs. 37, 39. West German Foreign Minister Schröder was uncertain whether the claim that the EEC should have a “European personality” was meant in an economic or geopolitical way. *Ibid.*, Doc. 85, also Kusterer, *Kanzler*, p. 317. Hermann Kusterer, Adenauer’s translator (but himself pro-Gaullist and a self-styled pro-Gaullist political “romantic”) records that de Gaulle sought to employ the Franco-West German Treaty to rekindle interest in political union, but offers no evidence. Kusterer, *Kanzler*, pp. 323ff. The retrospective opinions of British officials and politi-

bassador observed: “The French felt that a new member should not come into an unfinished club.”⁴²

Further diplomatic evidence of de Gaulle’s overriding concern about British policy on the CAP comes from verbatim transcripts of bilateral summits between de Gaulle and Macmillan in 1962. These transcripts reveal a substantial *convergence* of British and French geopolitical and ideological interests in many areas, particularly after the evident failure of the Fouchet Plan.⁴³ In each of these discussions, de Gaulle pressed Macmillan on agriculture, while the British leader resisted. Consistent with British strategy, which sought to offset de Gaulle’s fundamental objections (Macmillan apparently was not sure whether they were economic or geopolitical) with geopolitical concessions (possibly even on nuclear weapons), Macmillan raised security issues. The two leaders consistently found they had more in common on geopolitical matters than on commercial questions. They agreed in their opposition to supranational institutions, on British support for modest steps toward political cooperation, and on the failure of the Fouchet Plan.⁴⁴

At the Château de Champs summit of June 1962, de Gaulle began the meeting by emphasizing the French imperative to export agricultural goods and by insistently raising the issue of Commonwealth commodity imports, which he termed “the most fundamental” issue. Macmillan, appearing not to understand the centrality of agriculture to de Gaulle’s position and surely hoping that British concessions on defense cooperation would overcome de Gaulle’s objections, insisted on transitional arrangements in agriculture and hinted several times that Britain would refuse to pay more than its “fair share” for the CAP. He rejected de Gaulle’s suggestion that Commonwealth imports be limited only to tropical products like cocoa and coffee and reiterated the centrality of beef and wheat exports for the British Commonwealth. Consis-

cians, who had the least reason to know de Gaulle’s true views, were split. Some British officials concluded that it was in the end the issue of financial regulation of agriculture—not Commonwealth preferences per se—that was the “sticking point” or “Achilles heel.” Others said that France sought to block formation of an Anglo-West German coalition. Macmillan seems to have accepted the primacy of agriculture in retrospect. Horne, *Harold Macmillan*, Vol. 2, p. 428; Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, p. 197, also pp. 201–202; and Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, pp. 299–305. When de Gaulle vetoed Harold Wilson’s tentative move toward a membership bid in 1967, Wilson believed that this was because Pompidou had raised economic objections. Philip Ziegler, *Wilson: The Authorized Biography* (London: Harper/Collins, 1995), p. 336.

42. Dixon, *Double Diploma*, p. 304.

43. This is conceded by Vaisse, *La grandeur*, pp. 193–194, 206–208, yet he inexplicably disregards it and other similar evidence in drawing his conclusion that de Gaulle’s policy was overwhelmingly motivated by geopolitical vision. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

44. De Gaulle himself portrayed the meetings in this way: agreement on geopolitics but obstacles to economic cooperation. Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d’espoir*, Vol. I (Paris: Plon, 1970), pp. 229–232.

tent with Britain's strategy of seeking a geopolitical quid pro quo, Macmillan tried to shift the conversation away from "less important" economic issues, only to have the General shift it back.⁴⁵

When de Gaulle permitted the discussion to move on to geopolitics, the two leaders found themselves in closer agreement. De Gaulle asserted that his predecessors created the EEC for political ends, but that the supranational institutions should be replaced by intergovernmental cooperation among the larger powers of Europe—a position close to Macmillan's. (On the issue of supranational institutions, the Peyrefitte Memorandum had acknowledged the "paradoxical" fact—that is, a fact troubling for French diplomacy—that the French European ideal resembled that of Britain like a "sister."⁴⁶) De Gaulle added that for security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union it would probably be better to have the British in the EEC and conceded that "in the last resort" France had more confidence in Britain than in West Germany. When the General asked Macmillan whether Britain was ready to adopt a European attitude on these issues, Macmillan assured him that Britain was prepared to strengthen the European end of the NATO alliance—a position hardly different, after all, from that of West Germany, though of course not that of de Gaulle. Both agreed that progress toward deeper political cooperation in Europe was unlikely, and that in economic areas the major obstacle to British membership was its "many ties outside Europe."⁴⁷ Macmillan nonetheless declared his willingness to sign the Fouchet Plan—a willingness he reiterated six months later.⁴⁸ Macmillan emerged optimistic, believing that Anglo-

45. Record of Conversations at the Château de Champs, 2–3 June 1962, in Public Record Office (PRO), London, PREM 11/3775, especially 7–9, and Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 1962, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1998), Vol. 1, pp. 554–571, Vol. 2, pp. 535–553 (hereinafter referred to as *DDF*, with appropriate volume number).

46. The phrase "*une soeur*" is cited in Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 495. The similarity of British and French attitudes toward the EEC was noted at the time by outside observers. Josef Luns called for the participation of Britain in the Fouchet Plan, remarking: "If we are going to make Europe in the English manner, we might as well do it with England." Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 323n. A seasoned and sophisticated observer of French foreign policy, Alfred Grosser remarked later that if de Gaulle had genuinely sought to emasculate supranational institutions, he would have done better to choose London than Bonn as his ally. Alfred Grosser, *La Politique Extérieure de la Ve République* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965) p. 140. De la Serre, by contrast, interprets the transcript of this meeting as demonstrating that de Gaulle took the initiative in raising security issues, but does not explain how she reached this conclusion. See de la Serre, "De Gaulle et la candidature britannique," pp. 193–194.

47. Record of 3 June 1962 meeting, PRO, PREM 11/3775, pp. 11–14, especially p. 13, pp. 14ff, 17–18; de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir*, Vol. I, pp. 230–232; and Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 3, pp. 331. On the convergence of French and British policies toward the USSR and de Gaulle's awareness of the contrast to their conflict over Europe, see de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir*, Vol. I, pp. 229–230.

48. This is the way de Gaulle appeared to interpret it. See Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 334–335; Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 348.

French agreement on three major points—that Britain would renounce preferential trading rights with the Commonwealth, that a common agricultural policy was essential for France, and that France and Britain must cooperate on nuclear weapons to form the “backbone of a European defense”—would secure British membership.⁴⁹ De Gaulle, by contrast, concluded that Great Britain “is on the way to Europe but has not yet arrived.”⁵⁰

The Anglo-French summit at Rambouillet in mid-December 1962 demonstrated the primacy of commercial concerns even more decisively than the summit at Champs did. By the end of 1962, the Fouchet Plan was dead, yet de Gaulle’s opposition to British membership only hardened. Whereas at the former summit de Gaulle still occasionally spoke of the Fouchet Plan and foreign policy cooperation as ends in themselves (alongside more prominent economic interests), six months later he had given up on them entirely. He admitted to Macmillan: “I tried—without success—to give Europe a political structure.”⁵¹ In explaining his continuing opposition to British membership, he stressed instead the difficulty of implementing the CAP in a Common Market that included Britain:

Detailed arrangements among the Six were required to apply the Treaty of Rome, but the adhesion of Great Britain would require a completely different application. This is not impossible, but we would have to build a different construction, unless Britain was to enter the Community as it is. . . . This would surely end by establishing a new common market, one entirely different from that which exists today.⁵²

Macmillan immediately noted the shift in position and recognized the potentially fatal threat to his underlying strategy of using British concessions on foreign policy cooperation to overcome French economic and political objections:

49. Record of 3 June 1962 meeting, PRO, PREM 11/3775, p. 11–14, especially p. 13; and pp. 14ff, 17–18.

50. Record of conversations at the Château de Champs, 2–3 June 1962, PRO, PREM 11/3775, p. 14.

51. *DDF*, Vol. 2, p. 544. De Gaulle repeats himself on p. 545 and elsewhere. The West Germans, de Gaulle also observes, invoked relations with the Americans; the Belgians and Dutch invoked the British.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 545–546. Such statements on the potential evolution of the Common Market have been widely interpreted (e.g., de la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique,” p. 196) as references to failed foreign policy cooperation under the Fouchet Plan—that is, with Britain, political cooperation would be impossible. Such an interpretation is untenable in context. There is no doubt about the central role of agriculture and the economic, not geopolitical, nature of the future policies to which de Gaulle was referring here. To describe the consequences of British accession, he employed a phrase that, as we have seen, appears repeatedly in Peyrefitte’s detailed record of confidential discussions as an explicit reference to agriculture. British membership

I am stupefied and profoundly injured by your statement. Six months ago at Champs you expressed doubts about Great Britain's European vocation and underscored that the Treaty of Rome aimed indirectly at the creation of political union. . . . [Now you] declare at once that the Fouchet Plan is dead and that Britain cannot enter the Common Market. For me this is a very grave disappointment; all our efforts were in vain.⁵³

De Gaulle did not deny it:

I myself haven't renounced the expectation of someday seeing European political union. But I must admit that, until today, nothing real has been achieved. . . . As for the Fouchet Plan, it can't be realized now. . . . Maybe [the Six] will decide someday [but] the existence of an economic agreement hasn't changed a thing.⁵⁴

It was "not possible for Britain to enter tomorrow," de Gaulle concluded.⁵⁵

Why? To judge from the transcript, de Gaulle's primary concern was that Britain would revise or block further development of the CAP and dissolve the existing Common Market into an Atlantic trading area—a suspicion fueled by Macmillan's continued insistence, as at Champs, that (consistent with the GATT) CAP prices not be raised so high that they would divert imports. More than once de Gaulle singled out this claim for rebuttal.⁵⁶ Only after EEC policies were definitively established, de Gaulle averred, could Britain and the Scandinavian countries enter.⁵⁷ Elsewhere in the Rambouillet discussions, de Gaulle did mention British and American nuclear forces, as well as NATO, but nowhere—in striking contrast to repeated references at Champs—did he link any of these considerations to his veto of British membership.

"would in the end give rise to a different Common Market." Pompidou, as discussed below, used a similar phrase in the same negotiations to refer to the CAP. At times de la Serre overcomes the lack of documentary evidence through sheer speculation. After one phrase in which de Gaulle explicitly argued that British accession would undermine French interests, de la Serre adds: "It goes without saying that opposition to the MLF was inspired by the same purposes and principles." De la Serre, "De Gaulle et la candidature britannique," p. 197. The futility of British negotiations from the start is supported by much of the newest archival scholarship. See, for example, Lee, "Germany and the First Enlargement Negotiations," p. 17.

53. *DDF*, Vol. 2, p. 546. De Gaulle's claim was "a most serious statement," Macmillan further noted, because it implied (correctly) that de Gaulle had harbored fundamental objections to British membership from the start and had therefore been negotiating in bad faith. Record of Meeting at Rambouillet, December 1962, PRO, PREM 11/4230. See also Newhouse, *De Gaulle*, p. 209.

54. *DDF*, Vol. 2, p. 546.

55. PRO, PREM 11/4230.

56. *DDF*, Vol. 1, p. 556; and Vol. 2, 547, 550–551. For de Gaulle's rebuttals see *DDF*, Vol. 1, pp. 551; and Vol. 2, p. 551.

57. PRO, PREM 11/4230.

Thus Macmillan and de Gaulle found themselves playing out an ironic reversal of roles. The British prime minister repeatedly and enthusiastically hailed political cooperation, reaffirming Britain's willingness to participate in the Fouchet Plan. (The two also voiced their shared opposition to supranational institutions.) Yet, aside from one general query, de Gaulle displayed little interest in exploring such ideas. Instead he redirected each of Macmillan's "optimistic" calls for European political cooperation back toward commercial, above all agricultural, concerns. After Macmillan waxed at length about the potential for political cooperation, de Gaulle responded laconically: "I believe Britain has become more European than she was. Yet I can tell that she is not yet willing to accept the Common Market as it is." When Macmillan countered by explicitly requesting that the Fouchet Plan be revived, de Gaulle simply stated: "The agricultural problem for France is fundamental."⁵⁸ In a confidential post-mortem (held before anything was known about the Nassau Agreement) de Gaulle summarized his position: Macmillan, he acknowledged, was willing to move in France's direction on foreign policy—"Macmillan...is willing to sign the Fouchet Plan with his eyes closed"—but France could accept British membership only after the Common Market had been irreversibly established.⁵⁹

Contemporaneous statements by de Gaulle's ministers similarly reveal the overriding importance of commercial concerns.⁶⁰ No statements of

58. *DDF*, Vol. 2, 546–547. De Gaulle summarized his position: "It was difficult to elaborate the Treaty of Rome and the resulting regulations are complex. It is thus necessary not to call this into question . . . France is notably preoccupied with agricultural trade."

59. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 334–335. De la Serre speculates that de Gaulle did not believe Macmillan, but offers no evidence. De la Serre, "De Gaulle et la candidature britannique," p. 197. De Gaulle may have later removed references to optimistic dialogue at the Rambouillet summit, apparently in an effort to disguise his motives. On debates about the transcripts of that meeting, see Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, pp. 166–167, 190–193.

60. This article does not rely on ex post speculation, even by participants. It is worth noting, however, that some ministers subsequently conjectured that de Gaulle's overall world view privileged geopolitics, but most such references tend to be vague, sometimes even self-avowedly romantic conjectures. This is necessarily true, since control over foreign policy was very tightly held under de Gaulle and most associates were in no position to judge de Gaulle's true views. Newhouse, *De Gaulle*, pp. 107–108, 176. Hence such speculations should not divert us from the assessment of detailed factual reconstruction of French decision-making. Sketchy or speculative are the following: Edgar Pisani, in *Le général indivis* (Paris: A. Michel, 1974), pp. 77–82, 89–90, 102–105, and generally pp. 85–113, presents a conjectural interpretation of the "profound realities" of de Gaulle's thought, stressing de Gaulle's geopolitical vision of Europe and his commitment to Franco-German relations. Pisani insists that his analysis is not based on notes, records, or facts, but on his own spiritual and emotional sympathy with his "great patron's" public and private utterances. It is clear, however, that Pisani was not in the inner circle of deliberations and not fully informed of the impending veto of Britain. His uncritical acceptance of the importance of Nassau is, as we shall see below, clearly erroneous. (Indeed, Peyrefitte—undoubtedly far closer to de Gaulle—occasionally ridicules Pisani in his memoirs.) As we shall see in more detail below, the

French decision making at the time link the British veto to geopolitics; most explicitly stress commercial concerns. The following examples are representative. As early as October 1960, Robert Marjolin, the relatively Atlanticist Frenchman serving as an EEC Commissioner, told a British official that British membership was not possible because West Germany and others would also demand agricultural concessions, thereby undermining the EEC and inducing French withdrawal.⁶¹ In January 1963 the public statements of the prime minister and foreign minister stressed agriculture. Georges Pompidou told the British during the Rambouillet conference of December 1962 that “the whole point was that the French did not want to renegotiate the entire EEC agricultural policy in eight years.”⁶² When asked at the time to account for the French veto, Couve de Murville responded:

The answer is simple. The entire history of international cooperation in agricultural matters consists of promises [that] put off future transformations. . . . The keystone [is] the financial provision. . . . It is evident that we could not have let a new member enter . . . without having settled in the most precise manner this essential matter.⁶³

few concrete facts about the negotiations reported by Pisani tend not to support his speculative attribution of geopolitical motivations, but a commercial explanation. Michel Debré, *Entretiens avec le général de Gaulle, 1961–1969* (Paris: A. Michel, 1993), pp. 69–70, does not take a firm position on de Gaulle’s motivations. Alain Prate provides much evidence of economic interest, but speculates without evidence that de Gaulle was really motivated by geopolitics. Alain Prate, *Le batailles économiques du Général de Gaulle* (Paris: Plon 1978), p. 64. Even more dubious are the speculations of Hermann Kusterer, Adenauer’s translator and a self-conscious Gaullist “romantic.” Kusterer, *Kanzler*. For similarly loose speculation, immediately refuted by the historians present, see the remarks of René Bloch in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, pp. 224–225. For an assessment not inconsistent with my own, see (in addition to the direct testimony cited in the text of this article) Jean-Marc Boegner, “Les principes de la politique européenne du général de Gaulle,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 66–71, and his remarks in *Ibid.*, pp. 227–228.

61. Alec Cairncross, *The Diaries of Robert Hall* (London: Unwin and Hyman, 1991), p. 249.

62. Newhouse, *De Gaulle*, p. 210. Newhouse’s dismissal of Pompidou’s remark to the British as “somewhat irrelevant” is typical of the offhand way in which geopolitical interpretations dismiss the preponderance of evidence supporting a commercial interpretation. It is particularly curious in this context, since Newhouse has just noted that de Gaulle had just “come to the point” by raising agricultural issues.

63. Silj, “Europe’s Political Puzzle,” pp. 89–90 (original citation in English). In the final session of the negotiations, on 29 January, Couve added: “It’s being said here that we, the French, are the ones who broke off the negotiations, and thus must take responsibility for action which would have grave consequences. In fact, we merely noted that the negotiations had been making no progress since October, and simply said that it was better to face up to the facts. The facts are that Britain, at present, is not in a state to accept the discipline of the Rome Treaty, notably of carrying out the Community’s common agricultural policy.” Nora Beloff, *The General Says No: Britain’s Exclusion from Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 14 (original citation in English). This remained Couve de Murville’s view thereafter. See Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, p. 184; Charlton, *Price of Victory*, p. 226. See also Horne, *Harold Macmillan*, Vol. 2, pp. 429–432, 444–447; *AAP*, 1963, Docs. 17, 30; and Lamb, *Macmillan Years*, pp. 168–170.

De Gaulle's agricultural minister, Edgar Pisani, quotes the General as saying: "France is not opposed to British entry into the EEC, but it refuses to permit such entry to call into question the CAP. When Britain accepts all the rules, everything will be fine."⁶⁴ In one diplomatic meeting, Pisani is reported to have "compared the probable fate of the agricultural policy in an enlarged Community to that of an artichoke being eaten one leaf at a time."⁶⁵ Debré's assessment, an after-the-fact recollection, is more ambiguous. However, consistent with the commercial interpretation, he notes that France wanted Britain to join for reasons of "principle," since it would be a staunchly anti-federalist ally, but "national interests" did not permit British membership at the time.⁶⁶

When the government of Harold Wilson raised the issue of British membership again in 1967, the initial concern of the French was that Wilson, though ostensibly committed to a measure of European technological and political independence, insisted that the CAP would not apply to Britain as it did to others.⁶⁷ After reviewing economic arguments against British membership—threats to the CAP and the instability of the pound—de Gaulle concluded:

I have a mixed impression. Undoubtedly the British are showing a new, sympathetic disposition. Yet, as soon as one turns to the subject, as soon as one speaks of agriculture [and] Sterling, one realizes that the British, if they

64. Pisani, *Le général indivis*, p. 102, also pp. 99–102. Pisani's advice at the time, as agriculture minister, was that even if the British accepted the CAP, their anti-agricultural preferences would call into question implementation of the 1962 agricultural agreement. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 157. Pompidou is cited by Bodenheimer, who adds a conjecture, unsupported by evidence, that de Gaulle was motivated by geopolitical vision. See Susanne J. Bodenheimer, *Political Union: A Microcosm of European Politics* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1967), p. 127; see also Silj, "Europe's Political Puzzle," pp. 90ff; Gladwin Jebb, *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwin*, (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1972), pp. 292ff; Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 353; and Marjolin, *Le travail d'une vie*, pp. 315, 335, 353, cf. 333–334. De Gaulle's prime minister and successor as president, Georges Pompidou, maintained later that the veto forestalled an Anglo-West German alliance to undermine CAP financing. Overall, there is little reason that these officials should cover up by offering an economic interpretation, since geopolitical motivations were viewed as more legitimate at the time. Couve de Murville in particular would have every incentive to exaggerate the geopolitical elements, since a decisive role for the Nassau agreement would absolve him of widespread charges of diplomatic duplicity. See, for example, Paul-Henri Spaak, *Combats inachevés*, 2 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1969), Vol. 2, p. 401. Prate, *Batailles économiques*, pp. 62–64, speculates that political factors were "undoubtedly primary" in de Gaulle's veto of Britain, citing the Nassau agreement—a claim we know to be incorrect—and adds that economics, particularly agriculture, had a "great weight." This judgment is unsupported by any evidence, and Prate did not participate in the decision to veto.

65. Ludlow, "British Agriculture," p. 116.

66. Michel Debré, *Trois républiques pour une France: Mémoires*, 5 vols. (Paris: A. Michel, 1984–1994), Vol. 4, pp. 428–429. Also Jean-Marc Boegner, cited in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, pp. 227–228. Recall from the analysis above that Debré identified those interests as economic. See Debré, *Trois républiques*, Vol. 4, pp. 432ff.

67. Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Fayard, 2000), pp. 266ff.

force the door of the Common Market, will upset the deal. They will become, for a thousand reasons, the dominant element, and turn it their way.⁶⁸

De Gaulle rejected this British “dominance”—understood not as politico-military preeminence, but as the critical veto player in European bargaining over commercial issues. Britain threatened French commercial interests not just in Europe, but globally. In this regard, de Gaulle spoke of American “hegemony” as a purely commercial phenomenon, parallel to American military hegemony, but in no explicit sense linked or reducible to it.

If the British enter, complications will arise! . . . We reject a slide toward a free trade zone, which would inevitably transform the GATT into an Atlantic zone. We don't want an Atlantic zone! . . . The Common Market, it's a common external tariff. The Americans want to subsume it into a vast zone where it can effortlessly exercise economic hegemony, just as it exercises politico-military hegemony through NATO.⁶⁹

These citations are representative. A few half-sentences aside, Peyrefitte's record of French Cabinet discussions on the second British bid for membership reveals only scattered references to geopolitical or ideological considerations, each clearly secondary to the discussion of economics.⁷⁰

Even de Gaulle's memoirs, written years later with what Stanley Hoffmann terms a deliberately “theatrical” intent, focus on the realization of French commercial objectives, notably in agriculture. To be sure, when discussing NATO and nuclear weapons, de Gaulle's memoirs dwell on geopolitical and ideological disagreements with the British and sometimes refer to the problems of divergent national characters. De Gaulle mentions in passing the threat of an “Atlantic system.” Yet none of this is linked to the EEC. By contrast, de Gaulle's direct, detailed discussion of French opposition to

68. *Ibid.*, p. 267. At the very least, this discussion, which evidently took place before de Gaulle asked for general comments, clearly demonstrates that economic concerns were *sufficient* to motivate a second veto.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 264. DeGaulle's 16 May 1967 press conference, like that of 14 January 1963, focused exclusively on economic motivations. For the text see www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1967-degaulle-non-uk.html.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–274. In 13 pages of discussion, there are only two exceptions. First, a brief discussion of “political” interests by de Gaulle (p. 270), which typically speaks of “political will” without any concrete reference to foreign policy cooperation. The passage is certainly vague compared to de Gaulle's discussion, immediately preceding, of “concrete and insurmountable” economic problems. Second, Edgar Faure (p. 268) briefly mentions Britain's dependence on the United States, but this is immediately balanced by the geopolitical *advantages* of British membership on the issue of supranational institutions and the possibility that Britain will be wooed away from the United States, plus a much longer and more detailed discussion of French agricultural interests. All this, it should be added, is quite clearly separate from the discussion (pp. 271ff) of how to sell the decision publicly by invoking the ideal of “Europe.”

British EEC membership immediately follows his analysis of French attitudes toward the CAP and focuses almost exclusively and quite unambiguously on French commercial interests.⁷¹ Economic issues, according to de Gaulle, were central, for “without the common tariff and agricultural preference, there could be no valid European Community.”⁷² As elsewhere, the memoirs refer consistently to economic union as the current reality but political union as only a distant possibility; thus the issue was “British entry into the economic and—should it materialize—the political community.”⁷³ Signs of confidence that political union was likely to emerge, let alone a correspondingly detailed and concrete discussion of the potential geopolitical implications of the EEC, are absent from de Gaulle’s memoirs, as they are from records of his cabinet meetings and diplomatic interactions.

In scattered passages of these sessions, de Gaulle mentions geopolitical differences with Britain in the context of the EEC, yet these do not add up to a convincing case for geopolitical influence. Geopolitical interests—if they are mentioned at all—are invariably treated more vaguely and ambiguously than economic concerns, and very rarely is any link drawn to European integration.⁷⁴ As in his memoirs, De Gaulle invariably treats economic interest as a *sufficient* justification for French veto of Britain, and depicts political union as a secondary aspiration. Not a single passage, quoted in context, clearly supports the view that de Gaulle’s concerns about British membership were primarily geopolitical, or that geopolitics was necessary to motivate the veto. In discussions of the EU, geopolitics is at most secondary, and generally absent.⁷⁵ Typical is de Gaulle’s remark of 9 January 1963: “As regards British entry . . . it is impossible for reasons specific to the Common Market. And, if there remains any doubt, it should have been assuaged by [what] the British accepted at Nassau.”⁷⁶

71. For passing references to “Atlantic system,” see de Gaulle, *Mémoires d’espoir*, Vol. I, pp. 181–182, whereas for a detailed, unambiguous discussion of commerce, see pp. 198–200. There is no comparable discussion of Britain and political cooperation.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 198, also 198–199, 230–231, cf. 232.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

74. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 366–367.

75. See *Ibid.*, pp. 302, 332–347, 377; and *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 224–225. See also Silj, “Europe’s Political Puzzle,” pp. 87–88; and Grosser, *Politique Extérieure*, pp. 102–104. De Gaulle was quite aware that a veto would anger other governments, but this was of less concern to him than containing British opposition to the CAP. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 219–221, also *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 110, 150, 372. Of special interest is *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 348, 429. In the latter passage, de Gaulle states “It is because the English were not willing to enter a political union that, ultimately, they could not enter the economic union.” Yet de Gaulle refers here not to foreign and defense policy cooperation, let alone federalism, but to “the political will [*volonté politique*]” required for “economic unification [*unification économique*].”

76. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 350. This is taken from De Gaulle’s final Cabinet statement of French policy, where he also argues, “We have arrived at the moment when we need to admit

Only four statements by de Gaulle even begin to suggest a significant geopolitical interest in motivating the British veto. Each is vague, ambiguous, and isolated, and together they do not come close to outweighing the mass of evidence presented above. In the interest of balance, however let us consider each in detail.

The first piece of evidence, de Gaulle's strongest recorded statement of French geopolitical interest in rejecting British EC membership, simultaneously denies the primacy of geopolitics. When de Gaulle was asked privately by Peyrefitte in December 1962 whether he planned to stress geopolitics in his press conference, he replied:

Of course not. The question of Britain in the Common Market alone suffices. But there is an implicit link. We will reject the system proposed by the Americans, because we do not want to depend on them. If the British feel differently, it is a sign that they do not yet have a European vocation. . . . There is no question of giving the Americans our atomic bombs and Mirage IVs.⁷⁷

Whatever the implicit link to geopolitics, de Gaulle leaves little doubt here that commercial interests are sufficient to motivate a veto.

De Gaulle's second remark was uttered in passing during a confidential discussion in mid-1963. He observed:

The EEC is not an end in itself. It must transform itself into a political community. . . . It is because the British were not willing to enter a political community that they were not allowed into the economic community. Political will is the spirit behind economic unification. . . . But it will be perhaps 50 years before there is a real political community.⁷⁸

Here it remains unclear whether the term "political community" refers to diplomatic and defense cooperation or simply to the political will to make concessions. In this context de Gaulle often used the phrase in the latter sense, which lends support to a commercial interpretation. In any case, the reference to the need to wait a half century for political union suggests he was speculating about the future, not discussing the present—since, as we have seen, de Gaulle expected Britain to enter the EEC within a decade, a goal he

that one cannot square the circle. If the British impose their conditions, the Common Market disappears and we need a different treaty. If the British accept the treaty like the others, the House of Commons would block it. The Five have never liked our agriculture. To prevent the Common Market from including agriculture (as we saw last January) they seek to annoy us with these agricultural regulations that they are obliged to create but haven't created yet." *Ibid.*, p. 350, also pp. 333–334.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 429–430.

moved to promote after 1968. This is consistent with the view, supported by much evidence above, that European economic cooperation was an immediate reality, whereas political cooperation was a future aspiration.

In a third remark, uttered in early 1963, de Gaulle observed the following of British membership:

Europe would dissolve like sugar in coffee! The Anglo-Saxons want a Europe . . . without frontiers. A British Europe. . . . In reality this is a Europe of the Americans. A Europe of multinationals. A Europe that, in its economy, and even more in defense and politics, would be placed under inexorable American hegemony.⁷⁹

This quotation offers at most ambiguous support for a geopolitical—or here mercantilist—interpretation. It suggests that autonomous economic prosperity is required for geopolitical reasons. Yet it also suggests that de Gaulle’s real fear is of American multinationals, not American missiles. Although the geopolitical interpretation is intriguing, there exists little other documentary evidence to support a consistent mercantilist interpretation of de Gaulle’s motivations—an issue I treat in more detail in the conclusion of this article.

Finally, a fourth remark invokes the metaphor of an American Trojan horse. As we have seen, de Gaulle’s sporadic references to Britain’s alignment with a threatening “Anglo-American giant,” to “American colonization,” and to “American hegemony” are often treated as *prima facie* evidence of ideological or geopolitical motivation. Read in context, however, most such references that are linked directly to the EEC are explicitly tied to GATT and trade policy, not politico-military issues.⁸⁰ (Metaphors of the latter kind tend to arise only, and appropriately, in de Gaulle’s discussions of NATO and the MLF.) There is, however, one exception—a remark made in confidence to Peyrefitte prior to the January 1963 press conference:

I have taken the decision to shut the door of the Common Market to the English both because they are not ready to enter economically and because they are not ready politically. I felt that Macmillan would let himself get tied up at Nassau. . . . If Britain enters the Common Market, she would be nothing more than a Trojan horse of the Americans. That is to say that Europe renounces its independence.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 354–355; and *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 25. For an ambiguous passage, see *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 32–34.

⁸¹ Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 348. When asked by Peyrefitte whether this was what he was going to say on 14 January, he replied “Not like that!” This is the only passage I have uncovered suggesting any discrepancy between de Gaulle’s private and public statements.

This metaphorical statement, almost alone in the written record of de Gaulle's utterances, implies a direct link between geopolitical ideology and the veto, but it still grants commercial concerns at least equal status. Nothing here denies the sufficiency of commercial concerns as a motivation to veto British membership.

To my knowledge, these four remarks are the only published utterances by de Gaulle that explicitly cast doubt on the dominance of French commercial interests in his motivations for the veto of Britain. I have deliberately exaggerated the importance of this modest, ambiguous, and contradictory body of counterevidence by citing it in its entirety.⁸² Perhaps, indeed, a secondary motivation for the veto was geopolitical. Yet these isolated quotations certainly do not outweigh the thousands of words from dozens of passages in which de Gaulle affirms that commercial considerations were the dominant reason for his veto of British membership.

The timing of French policy decisions further confirms the primacy of commercial interests over geopolitics as a motivation for the veto of Britain. Four considerations are salient here.

First, the timing of the decision permits us to reject outright the long-asserted causal link between de Gaulle's veto and the Anglo-American agreement at Nassau to transfer American-made Polaris missiles to Britain for deployment on submarines. Historians now agree that the General repeatedly hinted at the veto many months in advance and announced his final decision to do so at a Cabinet meeting on 17 December 1962—a few days *before* the U.S.-British summit at Nassau and a full week before the French government had completed its analysis of it. Neither the Anglo-American conference nor de Gaulle's sense of "betrayal" by Macmillan could have played any role in the decision. The recollections of French participants support this conclusion. De Gaulle himself dismissed any link between the two events.⁸³ Even Vaïsse, otherwise convinced of the priority of geopolitics, con-

82. There is, as we have seen, considerable mention of geopolitical convergence of interest between Britain and France, particularly on the question of supranational institutions—a point underscored by the discussion of Anglo-French bilateral discussions analyzed in the text below. For acknowledgment of this within a geopolitical interpretation, see de la Serre, "De Gaulle et la candidature britannique," pp. 200–201.

83. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 335. Peyrefitte adds: "We must redress the incorrect idea . . . among historians . . . that the Nassau Accord decided de Gaulle." Also Maillard, *De Gaulle et l'Europe*, p. 184n. I have uncovered similarly little evidence to support Lacouture's conjecture that de Gaulle changed his mood in response to the proclamation of Kennedy's "grand design," the psychological state induced by de Gaulle's triumphal tour of West Germany ("which brought his superiority complex to a height"), or the Skybolt crisis. Lacouture's conjecture about the triumphal tour is another example of how geopolitical interpretations must resort to assuming irrational or intemperate behavior on de Gaulle's part in order to explain his actions. Nor is there concrete evidence of a connection with the Skybolt crisis, or even difficulties over the details of

cedes that Nassau was no more than a “pretext.”⁸⁴ For similar reasons, we may dismiss any link between the veto and misunderstandings over bilateral nuclear cooperation that may have arisen from the meeting between de Gaulle and Macmillan in December.⁸⁵

Second, commercial and domestic electoral concerns best account for the precise timing of the veto. Having broken with pro-European parties and having emerged from the parliamentary elections of November 1962 with an unexpectedly strong majority, de Gaulle could now afford the criticism brought on by an outright veto—a calculus predicted by the British ambassador and some French officials several months previously. At the same time, the negotiations themselves were moving toward agreement, despite French efforts to stall them. Had de Gaulle waited until an agreement was on the table—most likely in a few months—the diplomatic costs of a veto would surely have been even higher. As Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold first observed, and historians are increasingly coming to accept, de Gaulle vetoed not because the negotiations were about to fail, but because they were about to succeed.⁸⁶

Third, commercial concerns best account for the remarkable continuity of French policy from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic. The rise of Anglo-French friction in the late 1950s and early 1960s is often presented as evidence of de Gaulle’s particular antipathy to the Anglo-Americans—as if opposition to British membership or association was a Gaullist innovation. This conclusion is dubious at best. Despite a reversal of geopolitical vision, there was near total continuity in policy toward British involvement in the EEC between the Fourth and Fifth Republics. Once the Treaty of Rome was signed, Fourth Republic governments were just as skeptical as de Gaulle concerning cooperation with Britain, particularly in agriculture. Officials under the Fourth Republic—including Peyrefitte, then at the Quai d’Orsay—were already preparing to obstruct FTA negotiations with Britain. The parliamentary committee that considered the FTA in the closing days of the Fourth Republic had concluded, according to two observers, that the “concrete objections to a free trade area,” including declining French influence over EEC economic policy, “outweighed the less well-defined political gains” from cooperation with the

Commonwealth agriculture, which were on the verge of resolution. See also Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 331–337; and de la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique,” p. 196.

84. Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, 220.

85. On this point, Newhouse is compelling. See Newhouse, *De Gaulle*, pp. 207–211.

86. Lindberg and Scheingold, *Europe’s Would-be Polity*, p. 234. Also Olivier Bange, *The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, De Gaulle, and Adenauer in Conflict* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 111, also pp. 22–23, 234; Sir Mark Franklin, “Father of the European Common Agricultural Policy,” *Financial Times*, 4 July 1995, p. 3; and Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 3.

British.⁸⁷ In the French Assemblée Nationale, a contemporary observer could not find “two dozen deputies” who supported an FTA with Britain; interest groups were firmly opposed.⁸⁸ French representatives rejected British suggestions without making counterproposals—just as de Gaulle was later to do. Such continuity is consistent with a commercial interpretation of de Gaulle’s motives, yet anomalous from a geopolitical perspective.

Fourth, commercial concerns offer the only plausible explanation of the timing of the reversal in Gaullist policy at the end of de Gaulle’s presidency, a shift that culminated in the lifting of the French veto. In the late 1960s, with the CAP all but established and British industrial firms posing a much diminished threat to their French counterparts, Gaullist opposition to British membership receded. De Gaulle repeatedly observed around the time of the 1963 veto that Britain could be permitted to enter once the British commitment to Commonwealth trade had waned and, more important, once the CAP was irreversibly in place. “Within four or eight years,” de Gaulle predicted, after the Labour Party won the next election and was then followed by a Conservative government, the British would be ready for membership.⁸⁹ This is precisely what occurred. The transition began under de Gaulle, whose proposals for closer relations with Britain led to the “Soames Affair.” When Pompidou entered office in 1969, he swiftly moved even further to accommodate the British request for membership, apparently secure in the knowledge that he had the General’s support. He did so even though the broader foreign policy line had not changed a bit.⁹⁰ A Conservative government in Britain negotiated entry between 1970 and 1973, precisely as de Gaulle had predicted.⁹¹ The critical difference was the state of the CAP. Jean-Marc Boegner, a top French official throughout this period, recalls:

87. Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 2; and Lindberg, *Political Dynamics*, pp. 118–125. Also Jebb, *Memoirs*, pp. 292ff.

88. Lieber, *British Politics*, p. 75.

89. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 355–356. These predictions were published also in *Le monde* at the time.

90. “French foreign policy appeared to proceed precisely as before. Pompidou had no intention whatever of questioning either of its two main planks: the drive for national independence backed by the *force de frappe*, or relations between France and the two superpowers.” Berstein, *La France*, p. 131; and Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Pompidou Years, 1969–1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 24. These authors also suggest—but only on the basis of other secondary interpretations—that Pompidou had a stronger cultural conception of Europe and was concerned to balance West German economic power. A detailed analysis of this period goes beyond the scope of this article.

91. Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, pp. 607ff; and Michel Jobert, *Mémoires d’avenir* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1976), pp. 182–183. If any consideration other than the CAP influenced the General at this juncture, it was not a geopolitical issue, but conflict with West Germany in 1968–1969 over exchange rates. Throughout, Debré pressed de Gaulle for British entry (as he had for a decade) to bolster opposition to supranational institutions, but such an action was apparently possible only once the CAP was in place.

The 1972 enlargement . . . presented itself in an entirely different manner [from the 1961 bid]. Great Britain no longer demanded Commonwealth exceptions [for milk and sugar]. . . . But above all, the EEC had attained a level of maturity and solidity which permitted it to absorb Great Britain: the customs union and CAP had been achieved by 1968; many other treaty provisions were partially in place; finally, the Community's international position demonstrated its cohesion and influence, due to its accords with developing countries and participation in the GATT negotiations. . . . It is important to remember in this regard that in the 1972 treaty Britain accepted all the provisions of the Treaty of Rome and the *acquis communautaire*—that is, the decisions taken in applying the treaty before its adhesion. Such a result was unimaginable in 1963.⁹²

Such a result—British acceptance of the CAP—was “unimaginable” before 1970 not just because the British were *unwilling* to guarantee the future of the CAP in the negotiations, though that may also have been true, but because they were *unable* to do so. It was not Commonwealth imports per se, but the absence of any institutional means by which the British government could credibly commit to the establishment and financing of agricultural subsidies, as well as a corresponding EEC position in the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations, that delayed British membership until these policies were already in place and protected by a unanimous vote.⁹³ All of this implied a strong French interest in establishing a veto right over agricultural policy and external tariff negotiations—of which we shall see much evidence below when discussing the “empty chair” crisis.

Before turning to that crisis, however, we should finish our examination of British accession by considering the internal coherence of French policy. Although the French veto is loosely consistent with both de Gaulle's stated opposition to Anglo-Saxon NATO leadership and his opposition to U.S. and British efforts to undermine the Common Market, three more fine-grained aspects of French policy confirm the primacy of commercial considerations.

First, only commercial concerns can explain de Gaulle's deep-set opposition to British proposals for various schemes for a free-trade area, including those based on an agreement encompassing the seven members of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) and the six members of the EEC. If de

92. Cited in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, pp. 227–228.

93. In other words, the negotiating parties were unable to make credible commitments. On this issue more generally, see Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 1; and James Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 379–414. This was Monnet's analysis as well. See Pascaline Winand, “American ‘Europeanists,’ Monnet's Action Committee, and British Membership,” in Wilkes, ed., *Britain's Failure*, pp. 168, 186.

Gaulle was motivated by geopolitics, why did he not offer the British an EEC-EFTA agreement, then move forward with his EEC partners toward a customs union, political union, and institutional reform? Why not accept the free trade area, then move forward on political cooperation among the Six? The commercial interpretation provides a straightforward answer. De Gaulle opposed such a course for precisely the same reason he rejected British membership in the EEC: He feared that a free trade area or a successful GATT round would undermine the incentive for West Germany to accept the CAP.⁹⁴ Having vetoed British membership, de Gaulle did not assuage foreign critics by immediately calling for talks on a free trade area; instead he secured Adenauer's support for the completion of the CAP—for which, as we are about to see, de Gaulle remained ready to block EEC decision making.⁹⁵

Second, only commercial concerns explain why de Gaulle vetoed British membership even after he and his associates were convinced that the Fouchet Plan was dead. By early 1963, as the Anglo-British discussions showed, de Gaulle had accepted that British membership could not further dampen the (now negligible) prospects for European foreign policy cooperation.⁹⁶ Why, then, did de Gaulle not propose a linkage between British membership and institutional reform in an intergovernmental direction, as the Dutch were suggesting at the time and he himself was to do in 1969?⁹⁷ The most plausible explanation is that such a move, whatever its ideological and geopolitical attraction, remained too costly economically until the CAP was firmly in place.

Third, only a commercial interpretation makes sense of the single non-negotiable concession that de Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, de-

94. This is consistent with de Gaulle's constant reminders to his advisers that British entry would reduce the EEC to a free trade area. An emphasis on agricultural interests also makes sense of de Gaulle's willingness to encourage an application from Denmark, a strongly pro-NATO country committed to a politically united Europe yet a strong supporter of agricultural cooperation, and from Ireland, neutral and strongly opposed to any foreign policy cooperation yet possessing a strong agricultural sector. Jakob Thomsen, "Le général de Gaulle vu par les hommes politiques danois," in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, p. 284; and Joseph T. Carroll, "Le général de Gaulle et la demande irlandaise d'adhésion à la CEE," in *Ibid.*, p. 229–230. Consistent with French commercial interests, De Gaulle was less inclined to support Greek or Austrian accession.

95. *AAP*, 1963, Docs. 43, 115, 134, 164, 217; and Volker Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben* (Munich: Olzog Verlag, 1996), pp. 522–523.

96. In a June 1962 speech, Couve de Murville reiterates the irrelevance of the Fouchet plan, hinting as well that it was never relevant: "[The question of political union] no longer concerns—did it ever, in fact concern?—knowing how the treaty which creates a Union of European States will be drawn up. It concerns knowing which European states will henceforth participate in this Union, at the same time as the Common Market." Speech to the National Assembly, 13 June 1962, cited in Bodenheimer, *Political Union*, p. 124.

97. Bodenheimer, *Political Union*, pp. 159–160.

manded in exchange for finally lifting the French veto in 1969–1970: a permanent financing arrangement for the CAP. With the CAP in place, as internal documents in both countries had predicted, Britain and France became natural allies against the extension of supranational institutions. Indeed, the two countries were soon to work together to establish a mechanism for European Political Cooperation, something that had been foreseen in 1963. An arrangement for CAP financing was precisely the quid pro quo that de Gaulle predicted would be necessary just before announcing his 1963 veto. The EEC Commission’s investigation at the time concluded that if de Gaulle had taken up the negotiations again in the mid-1960s, his minimal non-negotiable condition would be that Britain complete the transition to the CAP *before* joining. The West German official in charge at the time added that British entry might be negotiated after the completion of the CAP financing arrangements, which was then scheduled for 1966.⁹⁸ All of this flatly contradicts a geopolitical interpretation.⁹⁹

In sum, a geopolitical interpretation makes little sense of French hostility toward British membership or association. We can dismiss purely ideological concerns outright, since Britain would have been the strongest possible ally against supranational institutions. Although de Gaulle did continue to have significant geopolitical disagreements with Britain, these differences explain almost nothing about the veto of EEC membership. The evidence suggests that commercial interests played a predominant and certainly sufficient role. For Macmillan, the first veto of British membership was a tragedy, one that led him to lament that “all our policies . . . are in ruins.”¹⁰⁰ Yet Macmillan’s tragic flaw lay not, as Françoise de la Serre has it, in his “underestimat[ion] of the importance de Gaulle placed on the political-military content of Europe.”¹⁰¹ It lay instead in Macmillan’s underestimation of the importance de Gaulle placed on the price of wheat.¹⁰²

98. *AAP*, 1963, Doc. 77. For additional acknowledgment of the need for agricultural regulation before British membership and de Gaulle’s belief that the British could enter thereafter, see Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 334–335, 355–356.

99. For a more detailed argument, see Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 4.

100. Young, *This Blessed Plot*, p. 144. Young cites Ted Heath as saying that “he wouldn’t do anything, wouldn’t concentrate on anything. This was the end of the world.”

101. De la Serre, “De Gaulle et la candidature britannique,” p. 194.

102. Many have argued that the British would have done well to make all necessary concessions before the French elections of 1962, forcing de Gaulle to contemplate a veto on less favorable terms. See Beloff, *The General Says No*. We have seen that the French tried hard to prevent this. From the economic point of view, the enduring commercial stakes suggest that de Gaulle had every incentive to veto Britain anyway.

Institutional Reform and the “Empty Chair” Crisis: “A Million-and-a-Half Rural Votes”

We reach now the fourth and final strand of de Gaulle’s overall policy toward the EEC, his frontal assault on supranational institutions during the “empty chair” crisis of 1965–1966. The crisis began in 1965 when Commission President Walter Hallstein sought to exploit what he believed to be a transient moment of French diplomatic vulnerability. At the time, the issue of permanent financing arrangements for the CAP was before the six EEC governments. France regarded secure financing for the CAP as a vital interest and sought to establish a system that would not require annual renegotiations. At the same time, de Gaulle opposed adherence to the schedule set forth in the Treaty of Rome, which dictated that the EEC greatly expand the use of qualified majority voting (QMV) in matters pertaining to transport, agriculture, and foreign trade. Hallstein seized this delicate moment to propose an expansion of Commission and parliamentary powers, which was clearly anathema to de Gaulle. With the first direct presidential elections under the revised constitution of the Fifth Republic scheduled for December 1965, Hallstein believed that de Gaulle, pressured by the five other EEC member governments, would be forced to compromise in order to placate the domestic French farm vote.

Hallstein underestimated the General’s determination and overestimated the support of the five other member governments. Despite unprecedented secrecy, the General immediately grasped Hallstein’s intention. The Commission, he observed at a cabinet meeting on 14 April 1965, was “a spider seeking to trap France in its net.” De Gaulle immediately turned the tables and raised the stakes. On 30 June, when the CAP negotiations reached the deadline for agreement, the French government (as chair) did not resort to the earlier practice of allowing more time to search for a compromise solution, a procedure termed “stopping the clock.” Instead de Gaulle ordered the French permanent representative in Brussels to return to Paris. The General then announced a boycott of meetings concerned with new EEC policies—the policy of the “empty chair.” Commission compromises were rejected; discussion of new EEC policies was halted.¹⁰³

103. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 281–282, 292, also generally pp. 220, 286–296; and *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–68. Concrete planning proceeded steadily through the first half of 1965. Miriam Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties: From the Veto to the Crisis* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), pp. 104–115; and Altiero Spinelli, *The Eurocrats: Conflict and Crisis in the European Community* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), pp. 210–211. For an overview of these plans, see John Newhouse, *Collision in Brussels: The Common Market Crisis of 30 June 1965* (New York: Norton, 1967).

De Gaulle's demands were ambitious. The French government called for the Commission to change its name, refrain from running an information service, abandon accredited diplomatic missions, send no representatives to international organizations, cease criticizing EEC members' policies in public, submit proposals to the Council before publicizing them, end mobilization of domestic groups, and draft vaguer directives. France sought explicit recognition of the right of member states to veto QMV when "vital interests" were at stake, with each state left to judge what its own vital interests were—a goal, as we have seen, in de Gaulle's mind since at least 1960. Underlying this was a deeper objective. Since 1960, de Gaulle had taken almost every opportunity to proclaim the goal of a European confederation in place of the current EEC. He continued to do so until he left office in 1969.

An explanation of de Gaulle's objectives must account not simply for the origins but for the outcome of the "empty chair" crisis. It ended six months later, in January 1966, with the "Luxembourg Compromise," an extralegal agreement between France and its five partners acknowledging the French position that if a government deemed a piece of EEC legislation as threatening to its "vital interest," it could prevent a decision from being taken. The Luxembourg Compromise is widely perceived as a major victory for de Gaulle and a turning point in EEC history—a moment when the supranational style of decision making pursued up to 1966 and desired by France's partners was supplanted with unanimity voting, thereby stunting European integration. De Gaulle himself boasted about the outcome: "The CAP is in place. Hallstein and his Commission have disappeared. Supranationalism is gone. France remains sovereign."¹⁰⁴

It is customary to assert that de Gaulle's willingness to risk electoral embarrassment and diplomatic isolation demonstrates the central importance of geopolitical ideals—notably ideological opposition to supranational institutions—in his foreign policy. Some observers go further, arguing that de Gaulle provoked the crisis in retaliation for the collapse of the Fouchet Plan, U.S. proposals for an MLF, and the Erhard government's pro-Atlanticist policy. Camps writes: "The French decision in 1965 to seek to loosen the structure of the Community . . . was, from a Gaullist standpoint, the logical consequence of the French failure to shake the Germans on the defense issue during the summer and autumn of 1964."¹⁰⁵ Newhouse concurs: "The effect of the MLF affair was to erase what hope remained of setting in motion a diplomacy based mainly on Franco-German accord. . . . The timing and the

104. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 620.

105. Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, p. 16.

nature, and the resolution of the crisis were in larger part traceable to a hardening of Gaullist diplomacy vis-à-vis his partners and allies, particularly Germany.”¹⁰⁶ With the EEC no longer moving toward foreign policy cooperation, it is argued, de Gaulle no longer cared much and could act without restraint. Conventional analysts therefore find it unsurprising that de Gaulle, willing to risk anything, appears to have triumphed.¹⁰⁷

Yet the preponderance of available evidence supports a very different account, one in which commercial concerns explain much about the origins of the crisis and nearly everything about its outcome. De Gaulle pursued reform of supranational institutions not simply, perhaps not even primarily, for ideological reasons. He did so because he was concerned that French agricultural gains might be threatened by majority voting, either directly or through GATT negotiations. He ultimately settled the affair, moreover, under direct electoral pressure from farmers, which led not only to a reversal of his policies toward the EEC, but a fundamental alteration of his farm policy and even his distinctive style of presidential governance. Preferential advantages for French farmers remained the *sine qua non* of continued French participation in Europe.

Let us begin with de Gaulle’s public and confidential discourse. First we should consider the negative evidence. As we saw in the case of the Fouchet Plan, one cannot deny that de Gaulle’s effort to replace supranational institutions with intergovernmental organs was motivated *in part* by his distinctive geopolitical ideas—in particular his belief in the enduring value of the nation-state as opposed to supranational institutions. De Gaulle’s statements regarding Commission prerogatives had a symbolic and rhetorical quality, a quality that reveals the import of his underlying nationalist beliefs. He contemptuously dismissed the vision of Hallstein “surrounded by the trappings of sovereignty,” and he consistently criticized the very idea of governance above the nation-state.¹⁰⁸ The “pretensions” of Commissioners were “*stupide*,” “*absurde*,” “*dérisoire*,” and “*dangereux*.”¹⁰⁹ He lashed out even at Marjolin and other Commissioners who had consistently sided with the French government.¹¹⁰ De Gaulle chose inflammatory rhetoric, proclaiming that France sought to “profit from the crisis” in order to get “rid of false conceptions . . . that expose us to the dictates of others” and “replace the Com-

106. Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 24.

107. Berstein, *La France*, pp. 249–250.

108. De Gaulle, *Mémoires d’espoir*, Vol. I, pp. 195–196.

109. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 167.

110. *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 296–297. Hallstein and Marjolin opined in the midst of the crisis that they had seen nothing like de Gaulle since Hitler.

mission with something fundamentally different.”¹¹¹ Peyrefitte said at one point that “the defense of the France’s national interest comes before electoral interests” and observes that de Gaulle’s rhetoric revealed “an instinctive recoiling from supranational mechanisms.”¹¹² In sum, there is reason to believe that de Gaulle felt, in Hoffmann’s words, a vague “determination to prevent . . . a leap into that supranational nirvana where his chances of directly influencing shared European policies might vanish.”¹¹³ Conventional accounts of the crisis rightly point to the existence of this sort of evidence.

An internal French assessment at the time lends further support to the geopolitical interpretation. An analysis of the transition to QMV, prepared in January 1965 at de Gaulle’s request, concluded that the new procedure was unlikely to undermine any vital French interest.¹¹⁴ At first glance, this conclusion seems quite plausible. The moribund transport policy posed no threat. Although QMV in the CAP and GATT might threaten French gains in agriculture—a point to which we shall return in a moment—it would also place greater pressure on a consistently recalcitrant West Germany to accept more moderate farm prices. The overall impact of unanimity voting was strictly limited because the Treaty of Rome prescribed it for decisions about nearly all innovations. New policy areas, harmonization of domestic regulations, fiscal and social policy, new sources of Community funding, association agreements, accession of new members, and Treaty amendments all required unanimity.

A final point that appears to support a geopolitical explanation is the timing of the French withdrawal. It is clear that the withdrawal was neither a negotiating tactic designed solely as an effort to secure agreement on CAP nor a direct effort to defeat the Commission’s proposals. These two objectives had largely been achieved before the boycott began. On the eve of the crisis the members of de Gaulle’s Cabinet were convinced that French proposals on agriculture were close to being accepted. On 1 July 1965, the first day of the boycott, de Gaulle observed that the Commission was *already* a “big loser,” having seen the rejection of its “absurd” institutional proposals by

111. For an overview of his similar June 29 press conference, see Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 32.

112. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2 pp. 594, 281.

113. Stanley Hoffmann, “De Gaulle’s Foreign Policy: The Stage and the Play, the Power and the Glory,” in Stanley Hoffmann, ed., *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), pp. 283–331, p. 303. Also Stanley Hoffmann, “Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation State and the Case of Western Europe,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 95, No. 3 (Summer 1966), pp. 390–391. Bodenheimer is cited as seeing the Fouchet Plan as “a pre-emptive strike against an ambitious Commission seeking greater powers” in Charles Pentland, “Political Theories of European Integration: Between Science and Ideology,” in D. Las and P. Soldatos, eds., *The European Communities in Action* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1981), p. 560.

114. Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 67; and N. Piers Ludlow, “The Eclipse of the Extremes: Demythologizing the Luxembourg Compromise,” Paper delivered at the Conference of the European Liason Committee of Historians, Essen, 1999, pp. 2–4.

almost all governments (not least the West Germans, whose actions did not match their federalist rhetoric) and its banishment from key discussions. De Gaulle had already rejected a compromise that would have implemented the CAP proposals with no mention of the Commission proposals.¹¹⁵ To be sure, there was more negotiating to be done to narrow the distance between West German and French proposals on the financial transition to the CAP, but there is no reason to believe that these differences were insurmountable.¹¹⁶

Thus, it is safe to conclude that the crisis erupted because de Gaulle deliberately provoked it to bring about fundamental reform of the EEC—a step foreseen in 1960—as well as to force agreement on agriculture. His public and confidential statements at the time made clear that his aim was to revise the treaty.¹¹⁷ His most explicit statement on the subject, at the press conference of 9 September 1965, is straightforward enough:

115. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 289, also pp. 288–295, 594. For de Gaulle's succinct overview of his aims, see *Ibid.*, p. 296. See also Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 116–122.

116. A very recent analysis deserves mention. N. Piers Ludlow stresses the centrality of French commercial interests even more strongly than I do. Though somewhat speculative, his analysis is supported by an intriguing array of documentary evidence. Ludlow argues that the disagreement underlying the crisis “was not primarily about institutional matters,” but resulted from the impasse between France, on the one hand, and West Germany and the Netherlands, on the other, concerning financial regulation of agriculture. The French wanted a five-year deal, the West Germans and Dutch a one- to two-year deal. The crisis also reflected “growing frustration” among the five other governments at France's success in negotiating the CAP. Ludlow demonstrates convincingly that West German leaders, in part influenced by West German business, bargained hard on a financial deal to achieve GATT negotiations and further institutional deepening—a tactic consistent with Foreign Minister Schröder's established policy of “synchronization.” Ludlow also demonstrates that top French decision makers sought to lock in the financial arrangement as soon as possible, while avoiding any wholesale reform of the CAP, and he feels, the boycott may have bolstered French bargaining power toward attaining that goal. Though not inconsistent with my reading of the Fouchet Plan (through Peyrefitte) as a deliberate deception, Ludlow's analysis goes well beyond it. He writes, “It might be argued that one of the main purposes of the General's denunciations of supranationalist ‘Volapük’ or ‘Esperanto,’ of his rallies against the ‘the stateless bureaucrats’ in Brussels, or of his styling of those who believed in integration as ‘Jean-foutre’ was precisely to disguise the degree to which France was in fact committed to the survival and future development of the European Community.” In this, Ludlow treats de Gaulle's geopolitical ideas even more cynically than I am prepared to, absent new evidence of deliberate manipulation. Were Ludlow to deepen the analysis, he would surely encounter considerable difficulty explaining why de Gaulle focused on institutional reform and so precipitately moved to withdraw, when previous CAP negotiating sessions had “stopped the clock.” See N. Piers Ludlow, “Challenging French Leadership in Europe: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the Outbreak of the Empty Chair Crisis of 1965–1966,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 1999), pp. 231–248. Surely the evidence we have of de Gaulle's own confidential deliberations, as well as the statements of his associates at the time, treat the issue as one also, indeed primarily, concerning institutions. See Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 292ff; and Jean-Marc Boegner and Maurice Couve de Murville in Institut Charles de Gaulle, ed., *De Gaulle en son siècle*, Vol. 5, pp. 106, 110. Still, this analysis by Ludlow—an accomplished historian previously committed to a geopolitical interpretation of Gaullist policy in the early 1960s—does demonstrate the strength of the emerging archival evidence in favor of commercial concerns. For Ludlow's earlier, more conventionally geopolitical interpretation, see N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First British Application to the EEC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

117. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 293–295.

What happened in Brussels . . . casts light not only on the persistent unwillingness of our partners as regards the entry of agriculture into the Common Market, but also on certain errors and compromises of principle that beset the treaties governing economic union among the Six. This is why the crisis was sooner or later inevitable.¹¹⁸

To achieve this basic goal, which antedated the “prudently audacious” Peyrefitte Memorandum of 1960, de Gaulle seized advantageous political terrain. With the CAP nearly in place, the British veto behind him, and a weak government in West Germany, he provoked a diplomatic showdown over basic institutional prerogatives in the EEC.

Although this evidence is strong enough to demonstrate an important element of ideological motivation behind de Gaulle’s policy, the president’s own confidential and public explanations of the “empty chair” crisis tend, on balance, to confirm the importance of concrete commercial considerations. De Gaulle weighted French interests differently from the way they were weighted by the officials cited above. Confidential discussions and public speeches reveal a man obsessed with the possibility that QMV might be exploited to undermine the carefully negotiated arrangements for net EEC financial transfers to French farmers. Referring back to the Fouchet Plan, de Gaulle told Peyrefitte to emphasize that France sought to organize cooperation to ensure that “important economic decisions would not be taken without the obligatory consent of France.”¹¹⁹ He repeatedly stressed the need to retain control over three types of votes: those on CAP financing, on GATT negotiations, and on any possible FTA. His reasoning was simple: Even with progress through 1964, the CAP was not yet safe from reversal through the combined efforts of West Germany, Britain, Denmark, and the United States, working through the GATT. The result might, de Gaulle feared, permit the “Americans to inundate the European market with their agricultural commodities.”¹²⁰ Although he admitted to a close associate in July 1965 that the boycott might endanger the CAP financial settlement, which was then nearing agreement, he sensed that it might equally heighten French pressure for a favorable resolution. He predicted that within a year, if QMV remained in place, Erhard and other West German politicians were sure to “call everything into question” by calling for a majority vote on the CAP and France

118. Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 352.

119. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 294–295.

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 263, also 255, 264–265, 294; Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 361; and Leon N. Lindberg, “Integration as a Source of Stress in the European Community,” in Joseph S. Nye, ed., *International Regionalism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 238–239.

“would be unable to say anything in response.”¹²¹ For these reasons, a CAP financing agreement would be of little worth without decision-making reform.

French opposition to unrestricted QMV followed directly from these considerations. At the end of an extended discourse on agriculture to Peyrefitte on 28 July 1965, part of which was cited above, de Gaulle concluded:

When we constructed an economic community . . . we obtained certain compensations, in particular permitting us to offload some of the weight of our agriculture. . . . This is why we will not permit decisions concerning us to be taken by others, and our destiny to be fixed by foreigners. We will not permit decisions to be imposed that are contrary to our primordial interests.¹²²

These “primordial” agricultural interests were reason enough for France to assert a veto right. Not by chance, then, did the Kennedy Round conclude a year later with an unambiguous victory for France in agriculture, the only major area in which strong U.S. pressure for global liberalization was flatly rebuffed.¹²³ “How shall we collect, control, and manage agricultural import levies?” de Gaulle asked during a discussion in April 1965. “This is *the* fundamental question.”¹²⁴ Annoyed by the active opposition of farmers, whom he believed misunderstood his underlying objective, de Gaulle noted in May that “the best way for us to help them is to defend agriculture in Brussels and in the Kennedy Round. That is the favor we are doing for them.”¹²⁵ In September he added: “The organization of the market, exports, that’s the essential thing.”¹²⁶

121. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 294, and pp. 294–305; and Ludlow, “Challenging French Leadership in Europe,” pp. 231–248.

122. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 372–373. For another reference by de Gaulle to “primordial” French interests in agriculture, see *Ibid.*, p. 299, and generally pp. 298–300. The more ambiguous phrase (the second) might easily be taken in isolation as evidence of the primacy of geopolitical ideas in de Gaulle’s statecraft, but the first, in nearly identical wording, makes clear that de Gaulle was referring to agricultural interests. De Gaulle advanced essentially the same argument in his press conference of 9 September 1965.

123. Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, pp. 559–560. At one point, de Gaulle emphasized the need to avoid QMV in agriculture and nuclear energy within the Rome Treaty. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 299. This could only be a reference to the European Atomic Energy Agency (EURATOM) rather than future foreign policy cooperation or NATO. Yet this concern had no immediate policy relevance, since EURATOM was at this point a moribund institution. De Gaulle maintained his close vigilance over the management of the CAP. For an episode in 1967, see Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 3, pp. 261–262.

124. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 281 (emphasis in the original), also pp. 594, 620. During the crisis, de Gaulle and Peyrefitte were “disappointed” and “displeased” by West German behavior. When Peyrefitte visited West Germany, his interlocutors discussed reunification, frontiers, and nuclear weapons, but ignored the issue of greatest interest to Bonn, namely the Common Market, “as if they were no longer concerned with it.” *Ibid.*, p. 305.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 373.

In public statements by de Gaulle and his representatives during this period, commercial concerns figure far more prominently than geopolitical considerations.¹²⁷ At a press conference on 9 September 1965, which featured de Gaulle's major public statement on the issue, the General, as on other occasions, advanced self-contained economic justifications. Geopolitical concerns were secondary when mentioned at all. With the introduction of majority voting, the president argued, "France would be vulnerable to having its hand forced in any economic matter. Thus both social and even political matters, and in particular what we have gained in the agricultural area, could be placed in jeopardy at any moment."¹²⁸ To be sure, de Gaulle went on to discuss France's desire for geopolitical independence from the superpowers, but this concern was consistently phrased as an aspiration—just as it was in his justifications for the EEC generally and for the British veto—not a necessity. "We have formed," he concluded, "an economic community, from which we would like to hope that someday will emerge, as we have proposed, political cooperation."¹²⁹ Little documentary evidence directly links the boycott to geopolitical ideology, and none whatsoever supports the widespread conjecture that the boycott stemmed from de Gaulle's anger over Erhard's pro-American stance or Kennedy's proposals for the MLF.¹³⁰ Overall, these passages suggest that commercial interest was a sufficient, if not necessarily predominant, justification for de Gaulle to provoke the crisis.

The continuity and timing of French policy decisions further demonstrate the predominance of commercial concerns. Three points are decisive here.

First, we observe policy continuity from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic, despite strikingly divergent geopolitical ideologies. Socialist-led governments under the Fourth Republic had sought to place stronger veto rights in the Treaty of Rome. In December 1957, just after ratification and before de Gaulle

127. Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 359, 361, 363–367. Within the many pages devoted to economic analysis of French interests by de Gaulle and his close associates during the last six months of 1965, only one sentence (found on p. 366) raises so much as a shred of ambiguity about the primacy and sufficiency of economic interests in motivating France's commitment to the EEC. After several dense pages of economic analysis during a discussion in December, de Gaulle concludes: "The Common Market is essential because if one can organize and therefore establish real economic solidarity among European countries, one will do much for fundamental rapprochement and a common life." Thereafter de Gaulle devotes one short paragraph to European defense without mentioning the EEC. Otherwise, geopolitical interests are nearly absent from records of de Gaulle's internal deliberations during this period.

128. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

130. Statements must be read in context. Typical of what could easily be taken out of context is one passing comment, which comes after pages largely devoted to the potential consequences of majority voting for agriculture: "Giving up France's independence would be incompatible with its *grandeur* and this is not de Gaulle's vocation." Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 299.

entered office, a Quai d'Orsay study had already highlighted two means of maintaining de facto unanimity voting after the transition to QMV foreseen for 1966. One was a perpetual veto of the transition to the third stage; the other was retention of the national veto on essential questions as a precondition for approving the transition. De Gaulle reviewed these studies, considered both options, and eventually opted for the latter. (The first would have been more difficult to pursue after having already moved to the second stage in exchange for an initial framework agreement on the CAP, but de Gaulle nonetheless kept the option as a fallback.)¹³¹ Geopolitical explanations of de Gaulle's policies can make little sense of either the continuity of policy between the Fourth and Fifth Republics, or the foresightedness and stability of de Gaulle's policies in the face of changing geopolitical circumstances.

Second, there is remarkable continuity in both French support for agricultural integration and French opposition to supranational institutions during de Gaulle's presidency, despite radical swings in the geopolitical situation. No major geopolitical event in this period—the Berlin crisis, the French proposal and abandonment of the Fouchet Plan, the American proposal and abandonment of the MLF, the U.S.-British Nassau Agreement of 1962 (explored in more detail below), the emasculation of the Franco-West German Treaty, the succession from Adenauer to Erhard in West Germany, the imposition of a pro-NATO preamble in the Franco-West German Treaty of 1963, and the blunt refusal of the Erhard government in West Germany to discuss any but the most mundane issues connected with political union—diverted de Gaulle's France from its commercial objectives. French support for the EEC and CAP remained consistent throughout this period, and the inevitability of the crisis was already acknowledged explicitly in the Peyrefitte Memorandum of 1960 as well as in de Gaulle's contemporaneous Cabinet statements.¹³² The consistency and foresight with which these twin policies were pursued, like de Gaulle's similarly motivated conduct of the Fouchet Plan negotiations, are nearly impossible to explain from a geopolitical perspective.¹³³

131. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–70; and *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 255.

132. Also de Gaulle's instructions in *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 295.

133. Couve de Murville did make the following ambiguous statement in his 20 October 1965 address to the National Assembly: "Political Europe is still pending. Only time . . . will make it possible to determine whether it is a matter of mere delay. In the meantime, and doubtless to a large extent because the political aspect did not follow, economic Europe is now experiencing a crisis. I repeat, because the political aspect did not follow." (Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 138–139.) He speaks later of the failure to establish "regular political cooperation" under the Fouchet Plan. Yet the rest of the speech makes clear that he is not speaking specifically about foreign policy cooperation—a subject that remained all but unmentioned during the crisis—but about the structure of the EEC, which, as we have seen, is the way de Gaulle used the adjective "political." This us-

Third, the dynamics of CAP negotiations and domestic partisan calculations best explain the timing of the crisis. In keeping with the early accounts by Camps and Newhouse, most analyses of the timing of de Gaulle's decision to provoke the "empty chair" crisis construe it as an expression of anger, disappointment, or retaliation for the manifest failure of French proposals for European political cooperation or for West German participation in the MLF.¹³⁴ There is, however, no independent evidence for these claims. Short-term economic and partisan concerns better explain the timing of the crisis. Obviously the timetable for the transition was important, but that could have been delayed if necessary. To explain why de Gaulle forced a larger crisis, we need to look to economic negotiations. With the CAP nearly in place and commercial concessions already in hand, de Gaulle was freer to pursue his second priority—the destruction of supranational institutions.¹³⁵ Pressure on France to permit GATT negotiations to move forward had been growing for years, but de Gaulle was unwilling to take this step without a guarantee that France would not be outvoted in the Council. It was hardly by chance that de Gaulle permitted GATT negotiations to advance and that he encouraged freer trade with EFTA during the second half of the decade—after the agricultural issue was all but settled.¹³⁶ De Gaulle knew that the government in Bonn was relatively weak and that Erhard was desperately seeking to bolster his domes-

age is consistent with a commercial interpretation. Couve de Murville observes that "what has shown itself to be at issue is the very functioning of the Brussels institutions. . . . A political agreement is necessary before discussions can be resumed on concrete, technical problems." (Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, p. 88, quotation cited in English.) This statement must be read as either a reference to the earlier failure to move toward an intergovernmental framework or a continued "deliberate deception."

134. Many have noted the increase in overt Franco-West German conflict over European policies and institutions in the period from 1962 to 1966, as evidenced by de Gaulle's ultimatums during the Fouchet Plan negotiations and his repeated threats to withdraw from the EEC. The consensus view, dating from the classic analyses of Camps and Newhouse, is that this conflict, like the crisis itself, resulted from de Gaulle's anger or disappointment over geopolitical developments. For this speculation I can find no direct documentary evidence whatsoever. By contrast, as we saw in the preceding section, de Gaulle believed that conflict arose because the moment had come for difficult West German concessions on agricultural prices. Rather than arguing that acceptance of the Fouchet Plan, as a form of political cooperation, would have headed off the crisis, it would be more accurate—if essentially tautological—to conclude that only acceptance of the Fouchet Plan as an instrument for *economic* policy making would have headed off the crisis, since it would have given France the veto it sought. In a similar vein, de Gaulle's disappointment with the Elysée Treaty is often cited by geopolitical analysts like Camps as a cause of the General's willingness to threaten to break up the EEC on behalf of the CAP. Yet de Gaulle's explicit threats to withdraw unless the CAP was created dates back to before it was clear that arrangements for political cooperation in the Franco-West German Treaty of 1963 would be limited by an explicit commitment to NATO introduced into the preamble by the Bundestag. If there is to be a geopolitical explanation, finally, it would surely be that Chancellor Erhard was less well disposed toward de Gaulle than his predecessor, not that de Gaulle changed his fundamental thinking.

135. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 284–285.

136. For the first inklings, see *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 353–354.

tic position vis-à-vis the “Gaullist” wing of his party by promoting good relations with France—a situation de Gaulle sought to exploit, at least until Erhard’s surprising electoral victory in October.¹³⁷ Domestic political concerns pointed in the same direction. The collapse on 18 June 1965 of Gaston Defferre’s effort to form a multiparty center-left federation to oppose de Gaulle “seemed to mean that de Gaulle would enter the December presidential lists untroubled by serious opposition.”¹³⁸

The internal coherence of French strategy and tactics provides even clearer evidence of the predominant importance of economic interests.¹³⁹ Had de Gaulle been concerned only with realizing his nationalist geopolitical ideology by destroying supranational institutions, he would surely have contemplated a full withdrawal from the customs union. Yet it is quite evident from his diplomatic tactics that the General was unwilling to run even a modest risk of this. During the crisis de Gaulle and his diplomats never so much as hinted at the possibility of complete withdrawal and sought to reduce any possibility that the EEC would collapse.¹⁴⁰

Here we must turn from the origins to the outcome of the crisis. The critical aspect to explain is de Gaulle’s incapacity to achieve most of what he had long sought. Although treaty reform had been his goal for at least eight years, during the crisis he barely even tried to achieve it. To many this may appear a strange assessment, yet it is appropriate. The Luxembourg Compromise—an informal agreement to disagree—did perhaps somewhat dampen the recourse to QMV in agricultural policy and foreign trade, but it clearly failed to bring about a fundamental change of the EEC. De Gaulle had long wanted far more. To be sure, French proposals in January 1966, after the crisis had run its course, included demands for thorough Commission consultation

137. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 300, also pp. 301–305. For a recent treatment of the Erhard government’s weakness, see the relevant sections of Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard*.

138. Newhouse, *De Gaulle*, p. 282.

139. During the “empty chair” crisis, as in the Fouchet Plan negotiation, de Gaulle was unwilling to exchange even the slightest agricultural concession for a geopolitical gain. Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 41, speculates otherwise, but: “It soon appeared that . . . France might be prepared to relax the grain price pressure, or, better yet, postpone the matter, provided the MLF was at least slowed down.” Newhouse, however, offers no evidence for this speculation, which appears to be based solely on the following questionable assertion: “The most casual observer of de Gaulle’s preferences should have little trouble in determining which of the issues—MLF or grain price—moved him most.” Again we see the circularity typical of many geopolitical interpretations of de Gaulle’s actions—a tendency I discuss in detail in the concluding section of this article. Newhouse must explain away—he does so again by assertion, and therefore unpersuasively—the fact that de Gaulle’s position did not change in January 1965 when Erhard informed him that the MLF had been shelved. Newhouse speculates that for de Gaulle, “shelving . . . was [no longer] enough; it had to be buried.” Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 49. This claim of apparently irrational action is not unlike the geopolitical explanations of de Gaulle’s revision of the Fouchet Plan explored above.

140. Indeed, they explicitly denied any such intent. Bodenheimer, *Political Union*, p. 140.

with national governments before submitting legislation and a series of constraints on the Commission's public and diplomatic activities, as well as a national veto right. Yet in earlier internal discussions, de Gaulle's stated objectives were broader: to strip the Commission of its unique power of proposal, to eliminate QMV, to fire the current Commission members, and to impose miscellaneous constraints on Commission power. In October 1965 the French government called for a "general revision" of EEC procedures. It seems reasonable to assume that de Gaulle's ideal goal, which dated back to the Peyrefitte Memorandum of 1960 and was to remain paramount until the end of his Presidency, was to transform the EEC into an arrangement like that envisaged in the Fouchet Plan. To be sure, in internal deliberations in mid-September 1965 he voiced a willingness to accept an informal arrangement rather than a general treaty revision, but the scope of the revision he sought remained broad. Even this, it is clear, was scaled back from his underlying ambition to eliminate the Rome Treaty in favor of a more intergovernmental structure, an idea to which he would return in 1969.¹⁴¹

Yet in 1965 de Gaulle did not push these ideas. No treaty amendment was proposed; none emerged. De Gaulle instead achieved an extralegal agreement to limit the use of QMV in agriculture and trade, Hallstein's resignation, and little more. In a strictly legal sense, de Gaulle managed to impose almost no significant reform. It is perhaps only a slight exaggeration to argue that "the value of the Luxembourg agreements lay precisely in the fact that they had no juridical value, that the legal regulations remained intact, and that they did not restrict in any way [the EEC's] future evolution and functioning." The legal provisions remained in place, ready to serve the shifting political will of national governments. When the governments were prepared to move ahead with the Single Act of 1986—and, informally, even earlier—they simply acknowledged and applied, and then reinforced, existing treaty provisions for QMV. "As regards the long-term issues of the federalist-nationalist conflict," one contemporary commentator noted, "the 1965–66 crisis changed nothing."¹⁴²

141. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 292–305; and Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 140–141. We should not put too much weight on specific public statements by the French government. It was unclear then and remains unclear now precisely what de Gaulle and his associates expected. See, for example, the subtle analysis by Maurice Duverger, in *Le monde*, 28 October 1965. What is clear is that de Gaulle still favored, if possible, a general revision along the lines of the Fouchet Plan and compromised this goal in 1966. He then sought, deliberately or not, to disguise this fact. We know this not simply from de Gaulle's own statements, but from his continuing efforts until the end of his presidency, to realize his full institutional objectives with respect to Europe.

142. John Lambert, *Britain in a Federal Europe* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), p. 138. Also Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 3. Perhaps the strongest argument for the importance of unanimity is the widely cited "joint decision trap" thesis advanced by Fritz Scharpf, in which unanimity voting constrains governments to maintain suboptimal equilibria, yet even Scharpf concedes

The Luxembourg Compromise consisted almost entirely of items tacitly supported for pragmatic reasons by nearly all member governments, whatever their ideological complexion.¹⁴³ Although the five other governments had no intention of permitting de Gaulle to dismantle the EEC, skepticism of QMV was neither particularly Gaullist nor even particularly French. Just as de Gaulle was more pragmatic than his image, so the West Germans and others were more cautious than their federalist rhetoric suggested—something that de Gaulle himself repeatedly noted.¹⁴⁴ Each had strong interests in maintaining control over particular provisions of specific policies. The treaty already dictated that new policies, notably regulatory harmonization and monetary cooperation, would have to be approved unanimously. No government felt that new competences should be created by majority vote. The West Germans and Italians opposed QMV in agriculture. The Erhard government, in particular, was vulnerable to a vote to lower agricultural support prices and was skeptical of supranationalism in principle. It had already set an important precedent on 3 April 1964 by securing Council acquiescence in its unilateral declaration that subsequent changes in cereal prices could be decided only by unanimity. Had other governments sought to employ QMV to impose lower agricultural prices on West Germany in the coming decades, there is little doubt that the West Germans would have refused—as they did when invoking the Luxembourg Compromise as late as 1985.¹⁴⁵ The Dutch and others opposed QMV in transport. Even a decade later, a prominent EEC report revealed that eight of the nine members of the EEC, including France, remained satisfied with the Luxembourg Compromise.¹⁴⁶

there is little evidence that high agricultural prices—his primary example of the suboptimal impact of unanimity voting—would in fact have been any different with qualified majority voting. Indeed, one might expect majority voting to have disempowered the British government (most strikingly under Margaret Thatcher) and led to *higher* prices. Fritz Scharpf, “The Joint-Decision Trap: Lessons from German Federalism and European Integration,” *Public Administration*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer 1988), pp. 239–278. For a further critique of Scharpf, see Elmar Rieger, “Agrarpolitik: Integration durch Gemeinschaftspolitik?” in Markus Jachtenfuchs and Beate Kohler-Koch, eds., *Europäische Integration* (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1996), pp. 401–428.

143. Rolf Lahr, “Die Legende vom Luxemburger Kompromiß,” *Europa-Archiv*, Vol. 38, No. 8 (1993), pp. 223–232, especially p. 225, for the impressions of a West German participant (the ambassador), and Anne Jaumin-Ponsar, *La capacité décisionnelle du système communautaire européen* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1970), pp. 100–101. In a recent archivally-based assessment of the Compromise, Ludlow similarly finds that the Compromise itself “did little more than explicitly assert a principle which had been tacitly accepted by all . . . member states [while the] somewhat more far-reaching (although still flexible) declaration ruling out majority voting altogether where vital interests were involved was made unilaterally by the French and was not sanctioned by the Five.” French officials, Ludlow shows, knew this, and even foreign federalists like Spaak acknowledged it publicly. See Ludlow, “Eclipse of the Extremes,” pp. 2–3.

144. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 281. De Gaulle told Peyrefitte in January 1965 that “If France sets the example, the other governments will also refuse to be transformed into [federal] provinces.”

145. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

146. Marjolin, *Le travail d'une vie*, p. 349.

As compared to Gaullist ambitions, commentators agreed at the time that the Luxembourg Compromise marked, in Newhouse's words, a "tactical retreat" for de Gaulle.¹⁴⁷ In every respect except the attainment of a de facto veto over external tariff policy—the only essential element, from a commercial perspective, but falling far short of de Gaulle's ideological goals—one commentator notes, "it was a victory for German diplomacy" because it kept France within the EEC without major legal revisions in the Rome Treaty.¹⁴⁸ The crisis, according to the Belgian federalist Paul-Henri Spaak, marked the "revenge" of the five other member governments for de Gaulle's "humiliation" of Britain in 1963.¹⁴⁹ De Gaulle quietly sacrificed his more ambitious, distinctively "Gaullist" objective of a purely intergovernmental alternative to the EEC—the lodestar of his policy toward the Community since the Peyrefitte Memorandum of 1960—and settled instead for a veto over CAP financing and GATT negotiations. This was a compromise toward something very close to the tacit intergovernmental status quo. De Gaulle was well aware of this, for how else do we explain his continued proposals for fundamental institutional reform, culminating in the turn to the British in 1968–1969 that triggered the "Soames affair"?¹⁵⁰ The puzzle of the "empty chair" crisis can therefore be restated as follows: How are we to make sense of de Gaulle's decisions to provoke the crisis and then end it by accepting a compromise that fell so far short of his ultimate objective? As Miriam Camps asked soon after the crisis:

It is generally agreed that the French could have achieved at least the substance of the Luxembourg Agreement—possibly rather more—without provoking the crisis. . . . Why, then, did they turn the argument over the financial regulation into the worst crisis in the life of the Community? And why, after having deliberately intensified the crisis in September and late October, did the French accept the kind of settlement they did when they did?¹⁵¹

In answering this question, it is essential to note that, from the very beginning of the crisis, top French officials confidentially assured their counterparts that France could envisage no alternative to EEC membership. When

147. Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 146.

148. *Le Figaro* concluded that de Gaulle was "neither victor nor vanquished." Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, p. 559. Also Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 160–161; and Ludlow, "Eclipse of the Extremes," pp. 6–7.

149. Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 361. Also Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, pp. 3–4.

150. More conclusive evidence of de Gaulle's thinking after January 1966 must await forthcoming publication of the notes of relevant cabinet sessions and confidential discussions.

151. Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, p. 115.

the French permanent representative in Brussels departed, his assistant remained to conduct essential business in writing. French diplomats boycotted meetings on the development of new policies, such as fiscal harmonization, but they continued to take part in committees concerned with existing policies, such as the CAP, GATT negotiations, and even the association of Greece and Turkey. As EEC governments waited for the French elections, they were already planning to meet immediately thereafter, when disagreements were rapidly resolved. At home the French government continued to prepare its budget for the forthcoming reduction in internal EEC tariffs, which was carried out on schedule during the boycott. There is no public indication that plans for withdrawal were made in France.¹⁵² It is clear that much of the interstate negotiation during the crisis was in fact no more than shadow boxing—the search for a face-saving way out for all.

Geopolitical concerns offer little help in explaining the General's caution. De Gaulle's ideological antipathy toward supranationality suggests that he should have remained adamant. He would not have had to risk European and Franco-West German foreign policy cooperation; by 1965 both were moribund. To be sure, de Gaulle would have faced strong criticism from the five other EEC governments, but he was a leader willing to brave diplomatic isolation when his conception of French interests demanded it.¹⁵³ Just a year earlier, as we have seen, he quite seriously considered withdrawal from the EEC if the CAP was not completed. The following year he would carry out the threat of withdrawal from NATO's military command. In the "empty chair" crisis, however, his goals may have been "audacious," but his tactics remained far more "prudent." Why was the General's resolve—his spectacular rhetoric notwithstanding—so weak?

Only the primacy of commercial interests can make coherent sense of de Gaulle's tactics. Preferential access to European export markets for French agricultural commodities—grain, not *grandeur*—was the priority. Continued industrial exports were surely important as well.¹⁵⁴ When these concerns

152. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 292–305; Lois Pattison de Ménil, *Who Speaks for Europe? The Vision of Charles de Gaulle* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), p. 135; Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 119–120, 130–132, 151–153; Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, pp. 72–73; and Walter G. Jensen, *The Common Market* (London: G. T. Foulis and Co., 1967), pp. 145–147.

153. To be sure, the unwillingness of foreign parliaments to ratify any treaty changes and the French fears that the five other Member States would turn to Britain played a role. This concern may also have been in the mind of Fourth Republic governments that participated in negotiating the Treaty of Rome. See Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chap. 2.

154. This differs from the conventional account, advanced by Jean Monnet, whereby de Gaulle backed down because the Five stood firm. Monnet, cited in Bodenheimer, *Political Union*, p. 142. Though not false, Monnet's account begs the question of why French bargaining power was too

came into conflict with de Gaulle's antipathy toward the institutional form of European cooperation, commerce prevailed, just as it had during the negotiation of the Fouchet Plan. From a commercial perspective, as we have seen, a French threat to withdraw from the EEC if the CAP remained unrealized was credible. By contrast, a French threat to withdraw from the CAP if EEC institutions remained unreformed was not. Far from posing a frontal challenge to economic integration within the EEC, as most commentators assume, de Gaulle was exploiting its irreversibility to press others for a measure of institutional reform.¹⁵⁵ Unwilling to risk full withdrawal from the customs union for a geopolitical idea, de Gaulle was condemned to caution and compromise. When the French returned to the table, having achieved little, they did so on the explicit condition that swift progress be made toward the regulation of agricultural financing—the most important issue at stake for France.¹⁵⁶ In the end, de Gaulle settled for precisely what was minimally necessary to achieve his most consistently stated objective, namely to preserve French economic advantages in the EEC: the informal right to veto decisions concerning the CAP and GATT negotiations, combined with an arrangement for agricultural financing. Everything else could be sacrificed.

Thus even if one were to concede the ideological *origins* of the crisis—and, as we have seen, one need not necessarily do so—commercial considerations preordained its *outcome*. In the end, de Gaulle's inability to realize the intergovernmental European institution of which he had dreamed since entering office was dictated not by the weakness of the General's international position, but above all by the weakness of his domestic mandate. Pressure from agricultural interests imposed sharp constraints on the French government's ability to threaten withdrawal from the EEC. These constraints

weak to split the Five or force a more favorable compromise, as had happened repeatedly over CAP financing. The answer, according to the commercial interpretation, is simply that the French threat to withdraw over institutional reform was not credible, whereas the French threat to withdraw over agriculture was. As we have seen, moreover, the opposition of the Five to institutional reform was lukewarm.

155. Lindberg, "Stress," pp. 237–238, 252–256. As a commercial explanation would predict, de Gaulle explicitly linked satisfaction of French agricultural demands to European participation in the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations—thus both placing pressure on West Germany and maintaining control over agriculture. He permitted the EEC to participate in the Kennedy Round immediately after achieving the CAP financing provisions and the Luxembourg Compromise, whereupon GATT negotiations concluded swiftly. Not coincidentally, the result was a total defeat for U.S. efforts to control European agricultural subsidies.

156. Ludlow, "Eclipse of the Extremes," pp. 7–8. Ludlow also cites the assessment of Lahr, a participant, found in Hans-Peter Schwartz *et al.*, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1966*, Vol. I (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), p. 116; see Ludlow, "Challenging French Leadership," p. 116.

were symbolized by de Gaulle's poor showing in the direct presidential elections of 1965–1966—a final aspect of the crisis to which we now turn.¹⁵⁷

The patterns of domestic societal support provide perhaps the clearest evidence of the predominance of commercial interests in de Gaulle's conduct of the “empty chair” crisis. De Gaulle's willingness to jettison central elements of his geopolitical vision reflected the demands of the narrowest and most self-interested of domestic interest groups—farmers. Fearful that de Gaulle would compromise the CAP in order to realize his intergovernmentalist ideals (despite de Gaulle's consistent unwillingness to do just that), farmers organized to oppose French policy. Initially de Gaulle's government was curtly dismissive of their pressure.¹⁵⁸ The normally non-partisan *Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles* (FNSEA) recommended that its five million members vote against de Gaulle, who was painfully aware of the irony. Farm groups had interpreted a policy designed in large part to defend farm interests as a threat. In private, de Gaulle bitterly criticized “demagogues” among farm leaders, a group he had tried and failed to defeat since entering office.¹⁵⁹

As a result, de Gaulle was denied a first-round majority in the first direct elections under the Fifth Republic, a disappointing outcome universally attributed to opposition from farmers mobilized by the apparent threat to the EEC. A pro-European but otherwise unremarkable Christian Democratic candidate gained over 15 percent, disproportionately from rural areas, forcing a run-off with the Left, headed by François Mitterrand. The 44 percent of the votes de Gaulle did receive were considered embarrassingly few for the man who had sponsored the constitution and proposed its revision. De Gaulle triumphed in the second round, but again by a disappointingly small margin.¹⁶⁰

157. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 620. In late October, the Five issued a statement, based on a more explicit secret agreement, defending the basic provisions of the Treaty. They “made no secret of the fact that they were thinking of approaching the British if the French continued their boycott.” The Five were close to a decision to begin transacting normal Council business without France when de Gaulle, electorally embarrassed at home and diplomatically isolated abroad, returned to the table. Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, p. 122; Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 140–142; and Émile Noël, “Some Institutional Aspects of the Crisis of the Communities,” Lecture before the International Faculty for the Teaching of Comparative Law, Brussels, 15 September 1966. More generally, Robert de Bruin, *Le Pays Bas et l'Intégration Européenne 1957–1967* (Paris: Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris, 1978), pp. 720ff, 734, 755.

158. Newhouse, *Collision*, pp. 146–147.

159. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 298–299, 369, 612. On the electoral front, de Gaulle was also unlucky that Erhard was reelected with an unexpectedly strong showing in September 1965. *Ibid.*, pp. 288, 294, 302–305.

160. *Ibid.*, pp. 612–613; Anne Jaumin-Ponsar points out that de Gaulle's election rhetoric was strikingly favorable to the EEC, defending West European cooperation on economic grounds against those on the left who called for East-West détente. See her *Essai d'interprétation d'une crise*, pp. 104–105, 124.

The decisive importance of this event can be judged from de Gaulle's response. In retrospect, it emerges as one of the half-dozen turning points of his presidency, though one often neglected by historians. After his first-round failure de Gaulle was initially speechless and despondent. He seemed to his advisers to be paralyzed with depression—a pattern not unlike his erratic behavior in response to the unrest of 1968. A close associate phoned Peyrefitte from Columbey with the news that de Gaulle planned to stay at his country home and retire from the Presidency: “He is beaten down to a point you just can't imagine.”¹⁶¹ The source of De Gaulle's depression was the direct affront to his style of governance. De Gaulle brooded, considering resignation. As Pompidou, named prime minister of the incoming government, observed in January 1966:

For a few days . . . he did not want to stand for a second term. . . . The election . . . marks a total collapse for his convictions. He was living in the dream of unanimity that he had during the war and the Liberation, and which he found again between 1958 and the end of the Algerian war. Today, he is losing his illusions. He realizes that democracy is not about consensus; it is about a majority and an opposition. A “presidential majority” has to rest on a “legislative majority” even if the President must take care to act like the President of all the French.¹⁶²

The president's closest associates sought to dissuade him from resigning. The essential point, they told him, was to act as a political pragmatist. One step was to alter his public image by consenting to “censor” his television and radio persona more carefully so that he would not seem to be speaking “from on high.” De Gaulle accepted this heretofore unprecedented level of interference in the cultivation of his own image, though not before complaining to Peyrefitte: “You want me to address the French in my pajamas.”¹⁶³ More important for the purposes of this analysis, de Gaulle reduced his reliance on the appeals to the “national interest” (thought to be the centerpiece of traditional Gaullist governance) in favor of a strategy of exploiting the divisions among his opponents to forge a coalition based on specific constituencies—precisely the sort of interest-group politics he had long disdained. At his first Cabinet meeting after the election, de Gaulle offered a rare admission of error. At the behest of his advisers, he informed ministers that he had wrongly

161. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 606, more generally pp. 605–611 on this episode.

162. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 17.

163. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 609–611.

treated the first round as a referendum, in which he would be appealing to public opinion, rather than an election, in which interest groups and particularistic constituencies were essential.

I was wrong. . . . Comparisons with referenda are worthless. . . . The mass of votes [opposed to me] is divided into three irreconcilable factions. . . . Such [elections] are exceptional circumstances for demagoguery. The policy of stability, that is to say, the national interest, has multiplied discontent. This is true also for the Common Market, which alarmed farmers who are pressured by change and therefore believe whatever myths they are told.¹⁶⁴

To reestablish interest group support—not least by bolstering farm support—de Gaulle refocused his message and further restrained his anti-European rhetoric.¹⁶⁵

This was a turning point not just in de Gaulle's electoral style, but in his approach to policy—not least in agriculture. The General turned more activities over to Prime Minister Pompidou, a man known for his consistent advocacy of economic interests. De Gaulle redirected his farm policy, one agricultural expert concludes, from the “abrasive” policies of the first five years to policies “more accommodating to . . . traditional agriculture.”¹⁶⁶ Within a few months Edgar Faure, an old Fourth Republic centrist, was named minister of agriculture with “a very precise aim: to bring back to the majority a million-and-a-half rural votes.” Faure quickly raised milk and beef prices and removed a tax on wheat.¹⁶⁷ French diplomats returned to Brussels and swiftly agreed to the Luxembourg Compromise, a settlement that sacrificed principle to pragmatism. As Camps observed shortly thereafter, “the outlook after a year of exaggerated hopes [was that] everyone had lost a few more illusions, the Common Market had not broken apart, [and] the Six had decided, once again, to live with their differences.”¹⁶⁸

164. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 607–608. Peyrefitte adds a commentary emphasizing the role of farmers, who represented at least 20 percent of the vote. *Ibid.*, p. 608n. After the second round, de Gaulle reiterated this view. *Ibid.*, pp. 612–615.

165. *Ibid.*, pp. 614–616, generally pp. 612–621.

166. Edmund Neville-Rolfe, *The Politics of Agriculture in the European Community* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1984), p. 118.

167. François-Henri de Virieu, *La fin d'une agriculture* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1967), pp. 46, 210. See also Lindberg, “Stress,” pp. 239–245; “Agricultural Decisions of July 1966,” *Common Market*, Vol. 6, No. 11 (November 1966), pp. 238–241; William F. Averyt, *Agropolitics in the European Union* (New York: Praeger, 1977), pp. 56–57, 64; and Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 618–621.

168. Camps, *European Integration in the Sixties*, p. 124.

Conclusion: What Can We Learn From De Gaulle's European Policy?

We have seen that the price of grain, not the geopolitical *grandeur* of France, was the vital national interest that decisively shaped the four major elements of de Gaulle's policy toward European integration. Decisions to promote the Common Market, to negotiate the Fouchet Plan as he did, to veto British membership, and to resolve (and perhaps to provoke) the "empty chair" crisis are best explained in terms of enduring French agricultural and industrial interests. De Gaulle gave—or was forced to give—priority to the promotion of export opportunities for French agriculture and industry, not to the realization of geopolitical interests and ideas. Any other French government of the period would have sought the same objectives. The objectives were no different from those pursued by de Gaulle's predecessors in the Fourth Republic and his successors in the Fifth Republic. This is what the preponderance of direct evidence—the consistency of policy, the timing of shifts, the response to new information, the nature of domestic pressures, and the confidential deliberations of policy makers, led by de Gaulle himself—unambiguously reveals.

Any other explanation of de Gaulle's policy toward the EEC, in particular those that stress his distinctive geopolitical ideology, must rely excessively on ad hoc speculation unsupported by concrete empirical evidence. Why did de Gaulle, in the end, fail to achieve his distinctive geopolitical and ideological objective of a confederal Europe with autonomous foreign policy capabilities? Not because he miscalculated and acted rashly, as is often conjectured about the "empty chair" crisis. Not because he was myopic, irrational, or inattentive, as geopolitical interpreters are compelled to claim of his odd conduct of the Fouchet Plan negotiations. Not because he was narrowly vindictive, as is often speculated about his opposition to British membership or association. Not even because he was hamstrung by opposition from recalcitrant or idealistically "European" foreign leaders, as he himself sometimes complained. Such accounts are contravened by the overwhelming evidence of steadfast vision, tactical genius, and remarkable long-term strategic planning underlying the General's foreign policy. He did not realize his distinctive geopolitical and ideological vision because, in the final analysis, it was not (or could not be) his first priority. His first priority was to maintain his electoral position in France, which required the satisfaction of powerful domestic economic constituencies, notably large farmers and industrialists.

Let me reiterate what I do *not* assert. I do not claim that the promulgation of the Fifth Republic and the accession of de Gaulle to its Presidency made no difference for French policy toward Europe. The advent of Gaullist

rule had domestic and international consequences. Domestically, the final governments of the Fourth Republic, though they shared the same economic goals, had been forced to announce their intention to postpone implementation of the Common Market when they proved too weak to triumph over domestic protectionists, to carry out devaluation, and to impose fiscal austerity. De Gaulle was able to do all three and could therefore fulfill the commitments of EEC membership on a sustainable basis. These reforms, long favored by business leaders in France, rendered French industry competitive and swiftly transformed their skepticism about the customs union into enthusiastic support. No wonder that West German business leader Fritz Berg called the Gaullist reforms of 1958 “the most important event in the economic domain since the end of the war.”¹⁶⁹ This French domestic policy shift was, in part, the result of structural economic change, but it also reflected constitutional reform, electoral support, and personal perseverance—each connected with Gaullist initiatives. Internationally, moreover, de Gaulle played a relatively weak hand brilliantly. In 1957 it was by no means obvious that the CAP would ever come into being or that the “small European” customs union would prevail over the “large European” free trade area. By playing to Adenauer’s geopolitical concerns, audaciously blocking policies he opposed, and disguising his true intentions—the policy of “deliberate deception”—the General wrested concessions from West Germany and the four other EEC members under circumstances in which a less confident, less skillful leader might have been forced to compromise.

I insist only that these brilliant constitutional and diplomatic tactics were deployed primarily in the service of underlying commercial objectives no different from those pursued by French governments in the 1950s and the 1970s, namely the establishment of protected export markets for French industry and, above all, French agriculture. Achieving a “political Europe” was never de Gaulle’s first priority, because it was never the first priority of French interest groups and voters. The General began his presidency with an understanding that domestic economic pressures compelled him to attend to commercial goals; he was repeatedly forced to limit his visionary ambitions even further in favor of commercial concerns when faced with subsequent domestic electoral and interest group agitation. Forced to choose between continuous advocacy of the CAP and the Common Market and pursuit of his distinctive geopolitical vision, de Gaulle chose the former. If historians and biographers seek to understand French policy toward Europe in this period, they must pay more attention to French economic interests and less to the psychology and ideology of its leader than they have to date.

169. For this citation, I am indebted to materials from Jeffrey Vanke’s archival research.

The Integrity of de Gaulle's Policy and Personality

The empirical finding that de Gaulle's policy followed economic, not geopolitical or ideological, imperatives leaves us with a puzzle: How do we explain the exceptional nature of de Gaulle's policy toward European integration, when viewed alongside his other foreign policy actions? De Gaulle did not always privilege commercial concerns over geopolitical vision. His attitude toward NATO, nuclear weapons, the Third World, the Soviet Union, Québécois nationalism, decolonization, and perhaps even the Bretton Woods system, unlike his policy toward the EEC, appear to have been deeply influenced by his distinctive geopolitical ideas. In these other areas, strikingly idiosyncratic goals—military-industrial autarky, partial withdrawal from the Western alliance, the independence of France and Europe—appear to have guided policy. De Gaulle's leadership style also appears to have conformed precisely with the interpretations put forth by most analysts. In areas other than European policy, he sometimes carried the day with bold preemptive actions and mass ideological and symbolic appeals. No matter how one evaluates the long-run consequences, de Gaulle appears to have achieved greater short-term successes in these other areas. Hence we can restate the puzzle: Why does President de Gaulle appear to have been so constrained in dealing with the EEC yet so free elsewhere?¹⁷⁰

The answer is to be found, ironically, in the writings of one of the most perceptive advocates of a geopolitical interpretation of de Gaulle's European policy, Stanley Hoffmann. Hoffmann observes that de Gaulle was not uniformly successful at employing his distinctive style of leadership. When faced with a broad public opinion constraint, de Gaulle successfully pursued idiosyncratic goals, issued symbolic appeals, and exercised theatrical leadership. Yet when faced with organized interest groups committed to material goals and impervious to ideological appeals—as was the case in de Gaulle's policies toward labor, students, and domestic producer groups—such techniques were far less effective. Hoffmann writes:

170. Philip Cerny argues that Gaullist ideology was a tool of domestic political legitimation: "*Grandeur* refers primarily to the need to create a new and more profound sense of national consciousness, capable of transcending the traditional divisions which have characterized the French polity, thus allowing and reinforcing the development of a consensus supportive of a firmly established and active state pursuing the general interest, within a stable political system." Philip Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 4. Cerny's insight is not entirely inconsistent with the interpretation I advance here, though Cerny does not discuss the interest group sources of domestic political consensus, instead taking for granted the notion that de Gaulle's ideological leadership style characterized the essence of his rule in all areas.

[De Gaulle's] leadership, clearly, was not equally innovative in all domains. . . . In foreign affairs, where elites were divided, the public more indifferent than enthusiastic, he moved whenever he thought that his actions would succeed. [Whereas] when effective innovation required not mere acquiescence by an undifferentiated public but the active cooperation of the groups the reform would affect, he refrained from trying to get his ideas realized, [as] in the whole domain of business-worker relations. . . . From the start, he was more concerned with, and at ease in, security and foreign affairs.¹⁷¹

Hoffmann's insight captures the essence of a primary constraint on ideological statecraft in a modern democratic polity. Ideological appeals and symbolic leadership rarely prevail in the face of concentrated, well-organized domestic groups with intensely held preferences, such as producer groups, unions, and mobilized ethnic minorities.

Yet the conclusion Hoffmann draws from this general principle—namely that French foreign policy in this period, and therefore French policy toward the EEC, was amenable to de Gaulle's leadership style—does not follow. In contrast to policy on issues like NATO, nuclear weapons, the Third World, Quebec, the superpowers, even Bretton Woods, French policy toward the EEC stood apart. In each of the other areas, the role of concentrated pressure groups, in particular economic interest groups, was either marginal or, as with the French arms and nuclear industries, supportive of Gaullist policy. By contrast, the EEC was primarily an economic organization, and its policies generated strong, consistent pressure from powerful economic interest groups—notably the *Patronat* and farmers. The activism of these groups on Europe predated and outlived de Gaulle's presidency.¹⁷² Economic interest groups proved essentially impervious to the mass ideological or symbolic appeals that were the political foundation of de Gaulle's leadership style. Whereas Hoffmann's own particular analysis treats de Gaulle's European policy as foreign policy or "high politics," Hoffmann's general criterion suggests that EEC policy in this period should be seen as mainly a question of

171. Hoffmann, "De Gaulle as an Innovative Leader," in Gabriel Sheffer, ed., *Innovative Leaders in International Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 57–81, p. 70. Many commentators take this view. See, for example, Regis Debray, *De Gaulle: Futurist of the Nation* (London: Verso, 1994).

172. However, for evidence that even in at least one narrow area of defense policy, when economic and geopolitical imperatives did clash, political economic interests prevailed, see Andrew Moravcsik, "Armaments among Allies: Franco-German Weapons Cooperation, 1975–1985," in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson, and Robert Putnam, eds., *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 128–168.

“domestic” or “low” politics. Hoffmann’s prediction about the nature of successful French policy toward the EEC must therefore be reversed: His principle successfully predicts why his own interpretation of de Gaulle’s foreign policy *cannot* be extended to French EEC policy.

By paying close attention to de Gaulle’s failures to impose his ideological vision, we learn something about the man. De Gaulle repeatedly resisted the primacy of economics—here is the small kernel of truth in the ideological interpretation of his European policy—and thereby provoked political crises. He had far less intuitive grasp and technical knowledge of economic management than of the high politics of war and diplomacy. In economics, therefore, he tended to govern through a series of crises, policy failures, and responses, often reversing or limiting policy objectives when the situation became untenable. Striking examples include the failed domestic reform of agriculture, the elections of 1965, strikes and labor policy, and, most notably, the *événements* of 1968. This tendency has not escaped de Gaulle’s biographers, who have made it into something of a virtue. Hoffmann observes that “it is the combination of inflexibility on fundamentals and pragmatism on tactics that made his style of leadership so predictable and so unpredictable at the same time.”¹⁷³ Of the French government’s surprising acceptance of the EEC in 1958, Raymond Aron observed that de Gaulle “had the intelligence to renounce his conceptions when they were overtaken by events.”¹⁷⁴ Among de Gaulle’s maxims was: “Audacity in words and prudence in actions.”¹⁷⁵ Yet such interpretations fail to tell us what underlying political purpose motivated de Gaulle on numerous occasions to betray his own ideals.¹⁷⁶ This case study, like de Gaulle’s political career as a whole, suggests that these departures from his vision were not simply tactical. Nor were they random errors. They reflected the consistent primacy of the fundamental economic interests of France over geopolitical concerns on the rare occasions when the two came into direct conflict.¹⁷⁷

173. Stanley Hoffmann, “De Gaulle as an Innovative Leader,” p. 71.

174. Raymond Aron, *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Paris: Julliard, 1983), p. 254; and De Ménil, *Who Speaks for Europe?*, p. 76.

175. Cogan, *Alliés éternels, amis ombrageux*, p. 42.

176. Such explanations are in any case intrinsically weak. Any explanation of de Gaulle’s actions as principled except when tactical is of limited utility, because any action can be explained in this ad hoc way: either as the direct realization of his vision or as a tactical departure from that vision.

177. In this regard it is worth noting that the postwar Gaullist position on European integration was in fact extraordinarily malleable, varying widely over time. De Gaulle and Gaullists supported dismemberment of Germany and an “Atlantic Community” in the late 1940s, advocated a “federal” Europe until around 1951, criticized proposals for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Defense Community (EDC) and a confederal Europe in the early-1950s, remained relatively silent on European economic integration from 1952 to 1958, pro-

There are those, including Hoffmann and Aron, who believe that de Gaulle stood sovereign above even the contradictions between ideas and reality. His ideology and leadership style, we are told, effortlessly encompassed the need for both principled leadership and departure from principle. Yet the historical record belies this, for de Gaulle did not cope with these failures well. The realities of democratic governance had to be brutally imposed on him. We see this in his extreme reluctance to accept the U-turns in policy required to satisfy domestic interests. The resulting “cognitive dissonance” more than once led him into anguish and paralysis. The most striking such case during his presidency was his response to domestic disorder in 1968. His extended silence, panicked flight to West Germany, and hysterical ranting at that time have been widely chronicled. Much less often noted is the example analyzed above: his behavior during the “empty chair” crisis between the first and second rounds of the 1965–1966 elections. When particularistic opposition from farmers overrode the General’s plebiscitary appeal and forced an embarrassing second round of the first direct presidential elections under the Fifth Republic, the General retired to Colombey and brooded, seemingly bent on resignation. Not until his closest advisers convinced him to adjust his policies to domestic political pressure did he find the strength to return to the political fray. It is striking that these fundamental crises arose in response to domestic pressure and were resolved in large part by making economic policy concessions.

It is worth noting in conclusion that the domestic constraints imposed by economic interests may be even narrower than Hoffmann’s analysis implies. In the long term, de Gaulle’s policy toward the EEC was arguably the only one of his distinctive foreign policy initiatives that had an enduring impact on France’s global position. A “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals” has come to pass, but it is not the Gaullist vision of a united Europe. It is, instead, the vision of West Germany. The decisive policy instruments were not nuclear weapons, classical diplomacy, and ideological appeals; rather, the decisive instruments were changes in civil society, trade policy, independent central banking, and financial assistance, all promoted by West Germany. European political cooperation, de Gaulle’s ultimate ideal, has made only modest progress over three decades. Today NATO remains the indispensable

posed a United States-Britain-France triumvirate excluding West Germany in 1958, pressed for the implementation of the Treaty of Rome in 1958, advocated European political cooperation from 1960 to 1962, supported a close bilateral Franco-West German relationship after 1962, and turned to Great Britain in the late 1960s. Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 1–86, 177–181. By the early 1960s, the General sought to have his positive references to “federalism” expunged in an anthology of his statements on Europe and then forbade its publication altogether (even though it had been edited by a very friendly associate, namely Peyrefitte)—ostensibly because the contradictions were by that time so manifest. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 64–65.

pan-European security institution, whereas military autarky, compromised by its extreme cost, has hardly bolstered French influence in Europe and the world. France would surely have decolonized, one way or another, though de Gaulle no doubt smoothed the process in Algeria. The General's flirtation with Québécois nationalism and *Francophonie* more generally had little long-term impact on French interests. No one speaks today of the *grandeur* of France. We are left with the EU—in particular, its CAP, commercial policy, and modest financial resources. These are the only remaining means through which Europe can play a larger role as an independent actor on the world stage than its modest size permits. Ironically, it is primarily in those areas in which French civil society firmly supported and decisively constrained de Gaulle's efforts to create an independent Europe, namely matters of trade and agriculture, that he left a distinctive legacy in world politics.

Are Geopolitics and Economics Distinct? An Answer to Skeptics

Some may accept the facts of my empirical analysis, yet object to the strict distinction between geopolitical vision and commercial interests that underlies it. Does not the “either-or” question itself—geopolitics or economics?—impose a narrow, “scientific” dichotomy on a far more complex political reality? Is the explanation above not a Procrustean simplification?

As an empirical matter, this criticism is largely misplaced. I do not assert that economic interests motivated de Gaulle to the total exclusion of geopolitical vision. De Gaulle did hold distinctive geopolitical ideas, which played an important, even dominant, role in French foreign relations of this period, affecting policies toward nuclear weapons, NATO, the Third World, and the superpowers. I assert only that in the General's policy toward the EEC, the one area in which major economic and geopolitical interests were directly engaged, commercial considerations were by any objective measure far more important than geopolitical concerns. The interests of producers imposed extreme constraints that severely restricted de Gaulle's leeway to indulge his idiosyncratic geopolitical vision. Nor do I assert that commercial motivations were the *sole* national interest underlying de Gaulle's policy toward the EEC. There are episodes, especially the initial bid for the Fouchet Plan and the “empty chair” crisis, in which ideological and geopolitical factors appear to play some secondary role. I insist only that constraints imposed by economic interest groups, particularly agricultural interests, constitute a *primary* and *sufficient* explanation of French policy toward the EEC in this period. The existing literature on de Gaulle, I maintain further, systematically understates, and often misstates, this fact.

Persistent critics might nonetheless insist that even this very qualified dichotomy between geopolitics and commerce distorts the subjective understanding of historical contemporaries. Was de Gaulle not a sort of modern mercantilist? Perhaps it is inherently impossible to separate geopolitical vision and economic interests in Gaullist foreign policy making. After all, is it not a cornerstone of French policy since Colbert that geopolitical power begets plenty and plenty begets geopolitical power? In this mercantilist view, is economic wealth not a precondition for security and prestige? Do not de Gaulle, Peyrefitte, and others express a more nuanced view, in which there are close connections between economics and geopolitics?¹⁷⁸ Even if we were to reach agreement that de Gaulle's EEC policy aimed to satisfy commercial interests, is it not possible that he ultimately had French *grandeur* in mind?

Surely economic modernization augments the power, independence, and *grandeur* of France, a claim that finds eloquent support in de Gaulle's memoirs. And surely no leader aiming to establish stable finances and maximize global prestige wants farmers continually disrupting domestic politics and uncompetitive industries weighing down fiscal policy. Perhaps the pursuit of electoral success, the promotion of material prosperity, and the subsidization of backward sectors of the economy were consistent with the Gaullist vision because they were in some sense preconditions for an important world role for France. Yet this mercantilist criticism of my argument is misplaced, for three reasons.

First, contemporary politicians and officials consistently viewed de Gaulle's motivations in just the categories I employ. One striking piece of evidence comes from the first meeting of EEC national representatives after de Gaulle announced one of his most audacious acts, the French veto of British membership in January 1963. Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, speaking for the other governments, rose to ask two direct questions of Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, which set the agenda for a marathon meeting. Besides asking about future French plans, he queried: "Does the French delegation want to suspend negotiations for political or economic reasons?"¹⁷⁹ Official West German and British post-mortems of the negotiations pose the central issue in similar ways. Despite occasional caveats to the contrary, even the General himself often divided his writings paragraph by paragraph between considerations of each factor. Any analysis that fails to distinguish economic and geopolitical motivations as I have done would be remarkably ahistorical.¹⁸⁰

178. Peyrefitte notes at one point that economic, political (NATO), and nuclear questions were "inextricably mixed." Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 303, also pp. 348–355.

179. *AAP*, 1963, Doc. 60.

180. To be sure, historical reality as lived by participants is always more complex and ambiguous

Second, the mercantilist argument for the primacy of Gaullist geopolitical ideology fails to predict de Gaulle's behavior. The evidence for the mercantilist argument—that de Gaulle sought economic growth only for geopolitical reasons—is sparse, and it also encounters contradictions. We see this clearly in the case of farmers, an “archaic” group de Gaulle initially sought to liquidate swiftly and whose obsessive concern with commodity prices elicited contempt from de Gaulle. In confidential settings, the president continued to rail against the farmers throughout his presidency; at times his government sought to dismiss their demands—unsuccessfully, as it turned out—by invoking the “national interest.”¹⁸¹ Yet it was precisely this group that had the greatest impact on his policies toward the EEC. Outside the area of military technology, de Gaulle was no mercantilist; he sought economic liberalization. He achieved this goal only when dominant economic interest groups were favorably inclined.

Third, the definition of *grandeur* required to support a mercantilist explanation is so broad that it is meaningless. Mercantilist analyses of de Gaulle's European policy tend to construe anything that advances the French national interest, broadly defined, as consistent with the promotion of French *grandeur* and therefore “explained” by Gaullist ideas. Yet if the notion of French *grandeur* implies that geopolitical calculations led de Gaulle to pursue precisely the same external objectives that other French politicians would have pursued for economic reasons, it renders any claims about the consequences of de Gaulle's ideas circular and meaningless. It thereby also makes irrelevant the decade-long debate over de Gaulle's distinctive “vision” of Europe and concedes my claim that what distinguished de Gaulle's policies were tactics and skill (persuasive speeches, successful domestic management, diplomatic facility), rather than distinctive objectives. If the promotion of French *grandeur* through economic liberalization is indistinguishable from the pursuit of producer group interests, what remains of the notion of de Gaulle as a visionary ideological leader? If any successful economic policy promotes *grandeur*, what could ever permit us to distinguish

than any subsequent explanation. This is true for many reasons, not the least of which is that most actors in any major international event are ignorant—or deliberately kept ignorant—about the true mix of concerns motivating key decision makers. All governments tend to employ public justifications opportunistically. Even years later, each participant sees only part of the picture. This is one reason I do not place heavy interpretive weight on the speculations of participants.

181. In the midst of the “empty chair” crisis, for example, the French government responded to a request from the four largest French agricultural groups for information on France's official position. The response contained three sentences, the relevant one of which read: “It will not have escaped you, I think, that international negotiations reside within the sole competence of the Government responsible before the country and cognizant of the interests of the nation.” Newhouse, *Collision*, p. 146, citing *Le monde*, 2 September 1965.

de Gaulle's purported pursuit of French *grandeur* from the mundane commercial considerations he professed to despise?¹⁸² Even this mercantilist interpretation undermines the conventional view of de Gaulle.

Not by chance do nearly all of de Gaulle's biographers and commentators employ precisely the same two categories. I do little more than reverse the assumed primacy of geopolitical ideology. Vaisse, perhaps the leading modern historian of de Gaulle's foreign policy, asks:

Was European union an end in itself and a primary concern or one factor among others in a foreign policy that assures France a primary role in the international system? . . . For General de Gaulle the economic success of the Europe of the Six was not an end in itself. His grand design was to give Europe a political dimension.¹⁸³

Such commentators believe that de Gaulle's geopolitical vision was linked not only with distinctive rhetoric and tactics, but also with distinctive underlying goals and strategies. Like most of the existing literature, this essay addresses not the question of whether de Gaulle's policy was ultimately geopolitical or economic, but the narrower problem of whether the proximate cause of de Gaulle's policy was geopolitical or economic. This is the question that contemporaries and subsequent commentators alike have cared about most.

Revising the History of European Integration

The revision of our understanding of Charles de Gaulle advanced here suggests a skeptical attitude toward an interpretation of European integration as essentially motivated by geopolitical ideology. This interpretation, still dominant in Germany and Britain, views integration as an effort to employ economic means to realize geopolitical and ideological goals. Most studies of integration stress the desire of European governments to strengthen Western cohesion against the Soviet threat, prevent yet another Franco-German conflict, enhance the global prestige of European governments vis-à-vis both superpowers, or advance a federalist vision of governance. Similarly, in explaining opposition to integration, such interpretations emphasize nationalism, extremist ideology, divergent

182. Any domestic political move—the pursuit of electoral advantage, the subsidization of backward sectors, a policy reversal in the face of domestic opposition—can be reinterpreted as a precondition for an active and prestigious role for France in the world. Such an explanation is impervious to empirical disconfirmation. This renders meaningless *any* discussion of the causal relationship between de Gaulle's thinking and his motivations. Surely this is not what geopolitical interpreters of Gaullist policy intend.

183. Vaisse, *La grandeur*, pp. 162, 175.

colonial legacies, and idiosyncratic geopolitical perspectives and political traditions. This dichotomy is at the core of nearly all historical analyses of European integration, of the dominant Realist interpretation of the stability of the post-World War II balance of power in Europe, and of most contemporary commentaries about European integration.¹⁸⁴

This study suggests, instead, that the motivations for governments to promote the EEC are more commercial and less geopolitical than is commonly supposed. The primary motive behind European integration was the interest of European governments in promoting the economic welfare of their citizens and, above all, the particularistic interests of powerful domestic producer groups. The EEC, particularly its agricultural policy, evolved primarily to increase export opportunities for industrialists and farmers, to modernize the economies of European governments, to coordinate effective regulation of environmental and other externalities, and to stabilize the macroeconomic performance of its member states. The EEC captured gains from rapid exogenous increases in intra-sectoral trade in agriculture, trade diversion in agriculture, and coordination of regulatory policies.¹⁸⁵ For the economic interpretation, de Gaulle is what social scientists refer to as a “most difficult” case. For a generation de Gaulle’s foreign policy was held up as definitive evidence that integration was primarily about competing geopolitical interests and ideas, not commercial and economic interests. If it can be shown that de Gaulle did not pursue geopolitical and ideological goals, there is good reason to expect the primacy of economic motivations among other European governments.¹⁸⁶

Still, there remains much more to be said about French policy toward Europe under de Gaulle, and European integration more generally, not least because primary documents from this period have only begun to be made available to scholars. In this regard, my findings are far from conclusive. Indeed, the use of replicable methods of inference and publicly available evi-

184. For a review of this literature, see Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, chaps. 1, 3. Even neo-functionalists, who stress the ultimate preeminence of economic interest, concede to their foremost critics, notably Stanley Hoffmann, both that initial decisions to integrate are taken for geopolitical reasons and that “dramatic-political actors” motivated by nationalism or geopolitical concerns could block economic integration for long periods of time.

185. Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1993); Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*; Andrew Moravcsik, “Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (December 1993), pp. 473–524.

186. Eckstein, “Case Studies and Theory in Social Science,” in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 79–138. For a more general argument, see Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*, which concludes that the more exceptional country is Germany.

dence invites criticism. More rigorous methods ease the critic's task by rendering more transparent the choice of the fundamental theoretical issue at stake, the derivation of hypotheses employed to explore it, the data selected to evaluate it, and the nature of causal inferences from those data. We need no longer make due with one-sided interpretations, but can seek to find a more properly balanced understanding of French policy toward Europe in the 1960s and thereafter. This essay is intended not to foreclose future debate on this vital topic, but to expand it.

Why Have Scholars Underestimated the Impact of French Commercial Interests on Gaullist Policy?

We are left with one final puzzle. If economic and geopolitical imperatives are distinct, and the evidence suggests that de Gaulle pursued the former in his EEC policy, why does the enormous literature on de Gaulle's foreign policy unanimously set forth an interpretation of his European policy that is at best misleading and one-sided, and at worst plain wrong?¹⁸⁷ Two reasons seem particularly important; each has implications for the proper use of qualitative methods in explaining contemporary history.

One reason has been the absence, until recently, of much direct primary evidence about internal decision making in Gaullist France. In published memoirs, most former associates and ministers of de Gaulle remain deliberately vague (as does Couve de Murville), openly engage in imaginative reconstruction (as does Pisani), or focus almost exclusively on their own contribution (as does Debré). All offer ex post facto commentary, but rarely cite direct primary evidence of contemporary confidential deliberation. The speculation and public statements of former associates constitute an unreliable basis for analysis. This is particularly so in the case of de Gaulle, an overtly theatrical politician who often used rhetoric to create false impressions—the tactics of “as if” and “deliberate deception” referred to above. Foreign policy making was centralized within a very small group of presidential advisers, and the General regularly misled the public, his own Cabinet, and his own prime minister. Even his more candid statements in Cabinet meetings were prudent and guarded.¹⁸⁸ For 30 years a consensus among histori-

187. For a few recent exceptions, see footnote 7 of Part 1 of this article.

188. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 7–8; and Hoffmann, “De Gaulle's Foreign Policy,” pp. 283–331. This explains also the striking divergence we have observed *even within memoirs of participants themselves*. Memoir writers tend to speculate openly that the General must have been motivated primarily by geopolitical ideas, yet provide evidence to the contrary. Hence it is essential to my analysis that I have discarded the conjectures of participants and relied upon them only for factual testimony about contemporary justifications, motivations, and circumstances. This is indispensable for accurate historical reconstruction of Gaullist foreign policy.

ans and commentators has recapitulated, with remarkable uniformity, the public image deliberately crafted by this self-consciously theatrical leader. The absence of reliable evidence changed somewhat with the publication of Alain Peyrefitte's memoirs and the recent opening of European archives, mostly outside France. These sources, along with the facts recounted in traditional biographies, constitute a far more reliable documentary basis for interpretation and are closely corroborated by public documents.¹⁸⁹

Yet the absence of primary sources and de Gaulle's "deliberate deception" alone do not provide the entire explanation for the one-sided nature of the existing literature, for we have seen that an objective reading of circumstantial evidence and even the public record cited by geopolitical interpreters of de Gaulle favors, on balance, a commercial interpretation. De Gaulle expressed himself in rich, allusive, often deliberately ambiguous rhetoric, and wielded a magnetic hold on those close to him; but he rarely lied outright. Half-sentences from prominent documents that refer explicitly and exclusively to economic interests are persistently cited out of context in favor of a geopolitical and ideological interpretation. The most striking examples are passages from de Gaulle's memoirs and his press conference of 14 January 1963, where de Gaulle's lengthy comments on the British veto were entirely and unambiguously dedicated to a discussion of the political economy of Britain and the United States. He made not a single mention of NATO, the MLF, the "special relationship," or any other geopolitical issue. The overwhelming majority of explicit statements by de Gaulle on Europe are of this

189. Most French archives for this period, including de Gaulle's personal materials, remain at most partially accessible. The analysis in this section rests heavily, therefore, on published primary sources: oral history projects, documents from countries other than France, leaked French documents, reconstruction of the precise sequence of events, and the notes of Alain Peyrefitte found in his memoirs. The latter is a critical source, because it is extensive, detailed, and credible. Peyrefitte was de Gaulle's chief staff assistant in this area and one of only three officials (the others being the prime minister and the Elysée itself) permitted to take notes at de Gaulle's Cabinet meetings, from which he cites verbatim. Before doing so, he cross-checked them against the two other sources. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 7. Peyrefitte was consistently involved in internal deliberations, and his rising role under de Gaulle—from member of parliament to press secretary to minister—suggests that he had earned the General's trust. Peyrefitte, a classical Gaullist and, unlike Prate, not particularly involved in economic issues, appears to have no particular interest in exaggerating the economic roots of de Gaulle's actions; indeed, nowhere does he himself espouse an economic interpretation. No materials I have uncovered call Peyrefitte's account into question; indeed, Peyrefitte's account is corroborated by his strategy document, which was leaked and reprinted in the mid-1960s, and by his contemporary articles in *Le monde*. See Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vols. 1 and 2. Historians Georges Soutou, Gérard Bossuat, and Françoise de la Serre, who have seen some of the archival material in question, and Charles Cogan, who has worked with public documents, report encountering no materials that contradict Peyrefitte's account. Still, it is important to note that my analysis, which rests almost exclusively on *published* French primary sources, as well as British and German documents, is itself open to revision, should systematic French archival work using previously *unpublished* documents fail to support my conclusions.

kind: Only a small minority—typically the most vague and most indirect allusions—mention geopolitical concerns. Many less spectacular but more reliable documents that cast a unique light on de Gaulle’s policies—Peyrefitte’s strategy document, for example, which has been available since early 1963—are almost never cited.¹⁹⁰ Readers basing their judgments on the secondary literature alone—despite its enormous size—would have no way of thoroughly evaluating the relative importance of economic and geopolitical factors in French European policy. Why are selective citation and interpretation so rampant? What accounts for the myopia of the literature on de Gaulle and Europe?

The answer may lie in a second weakness of de Gaulle scholarship, namely the tendency to engage in imaginative biographical reconstruction. De Gaulle’s extraordinary appeal—more books have been written about him and his policies than about almost any other modern political figure—is essentially personal and ideological in nature. Just as de Gaulle’s magnetic presence attracted associates of uncommon personal devotion, his extraordinary saga attracts commentators with biographical, literary, even philosophical sensibilities—especially in France, a country whose intelligentsia has long been celebrated for just these qualities. The secret of de Gaulle’s popularity among commentators lies in their desire to tell a compelling, heroic story. Nearly every interpretation of de Gaulle’s personality and politics rests on the unquestioned premise that his foreign policy was governed by a unified personal and philosophical vision. Such analyses proceed hermeneutically. Analysts seek to reformulate de Gaulle’s written and spoken expression in a way maximally consistent with his subsequent actions, and then explain the latter with the former. To my knowledge, not a single scholar has seriously entertained the possibility that de Gaulle’s foreign policy was incoherent in the sense that different aspects of it responded to different imperatives. As a result, not a single analyst has dispassionately assessed a commercial interpretation of de Gaulle’s actions.¹⁹¹

This hermeneutical mode of interpretation is suspect because of its overt, if often unwitting, bias and circularity. Nearly all biographers and scholars ex-

190. Isolated exceptions are Silj, “Europe’s Political Puzzle”; and Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 1.

191. Because of the large number of distinguished former associates of de Gaulle who have ventured their personal opinions, and the brilliance and incisiveness of many other analysts of de Gaulle’s foreign policy—Grosser, Lacouture, Aron, and Hoffmann, come to mind—there is an exaggerated tendency (when compared to the diplomatic history of any other modern leader) to cite secondary interpretations as if they were grounded in objective evidence, even when reliable primary sources are available. With secondary interpretations, as with participant testimony, it is essential to base any historical reconstruction on fact, not conjecture—no matter how elegantly the latter is rendered.

amine de Gaulle's overall policy—his views on World War II, nuclear weapons, the superpowers, the developing world, and NATO—and then argue that the same considerations *must* underlie his European policy, ostensibly because the General would not have tolerated intellectual incoherence. Such reasoning assumes what it sets out to demonstrate, namely that de Gaulle's policy reflected an integrated vision, without considering alternative interpretations or evidence. This hermeneutic mode of analysis neither requires nor encourages sound analysis of the existing evidence and competing arguments. Departures from the personal and philosophical "vision" are explained away as isolated acts of tactical expediency or emotional expression. Just as Dwight Eisenhower's liaison with Kathleen Summersby was long denied simply because "General Eisenhower just would not do that," so de Gaulle's commercial motivations were long denied because "General de Gaulle just would not do that."

If this article draws the opposite conclusion, it is because it presents and evaluates competing commercial and geopolitical hypotheses explicitly and even-handedly, weighing the evidence for each.¹⁹² Unless readers are presented with the evidence for alternative explanations, they can never know whether generations of commentators, scholars, and memoir writers have read into de Gaulle's rhetoric only what they wanted. The discipline imposed by social scientific and historical methods—the statement of clear competing theories, the specification of explicit hypotheses, and the careful presentation and balancing of the evidence both for and against each explanation—is the metaphorical equivalent in diplomatic history, albeit admittedly an inexact one, to the DNA testing that identifies criminal suspects. The historical record of French European policy in the 1960s, when thoroughly analyzed, leaves nearly as little doubt about the true motivations of General de Gaulle.

192. The methodological lesson is that only adherence to the two analytical principles employed here—thorough consideration of a full range of competing theories and hypotheses, and reliance on a representative sample of factual data, rather than participant or secondary conjecture—offers reason to accept the results of this study as more reliable than those found in the existing literature. In a case like de Gaulle's foreign policy, only an a priori statement of competing hypotheses and clear standards for confirmation and disconfirmation protect the reader against an exaggerated or one-sided interpretation. As I have argued, no existing analysis fairly states and evaluates, much less confirms, a commercial interpretation of de Gaulle's EEC policy. Reliance on primary sources and factual data, even if limited to published sources, protects the reader against the tyranny of past beliefs. Even a representative sample of historical commentary—recommended by some political scientists as a surrogate for primary research—would condemn the reader to repeat the conventional wisdom of participants and secondary interpreters. This challenges the widely accepted view that social scientific case studies can safely rely on the consensus of secondary interpretations. Cf. Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (September 1996), pp. 605–618.