

Report from Paris by Philip Golub

The Jimmy Carter of France

Mitterrand's appeasement policies are cutting adrift French allies in Africa, the Mideast, and the Pacific.

Jimmy Carter should be happy. His spirit lives on in the policies of French President François Mitterrand. Just as it was hard to understand the tortuous logic which led Carter in the brief and yet too long four years he was President to deliberately destabilize America's key allies in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe and demoralize America's military and intelligence services, it is equally perplexing to watch President Mitterrand rapidly undermine France's allies.

The amount of damage Mitterrand can do is limited by the fact that France is a middle-sized power. Yet the damage is already great, both to the long-term interests of France and to the unity of the Western world as a whole.

Major if not irreparable harm is occurring in the fight against international terrorism. A week or so after having met Libyan Colonel Qaddafi in Crete, thereby lending credibility and respectability to an international outlaw, President Mitterrand flew off to Damascus for a two-day state visit. Mitterrand got nothing out of the trip and was sharply criticized by the otherwise pro-government papers *Le Monde* and *Liberation*. But Assad gained a major concession from the French government: Mitterrand announced that to his knowledge Syria had never been involved in acts of terrorism against French interests.

French military sources point out that the declaration is as extraordinary as it is false: Not only has Syrian intelligence been directly involved in major terrorist attacks on French soil,

but also, it has been proven beyond a doubt that without Syrian backup the bombing of the French and American compounds in Beirut would have been impossible. To add to the outrage, the French ambassador to Beirut assassinated in 1982, Louis Delamare, was killed by a faction of Syrian intelligence. Hence, by whitewashing Syria, Mitterrand is insulting the French military, France's intelligence services, and those who died for the sake of Lebanon's liberty. One cannot but conclude that the French President, by legitimizing both Libya and Syria in this fashion, has made what he thinks is a deal with the main forces of international terrorism. Whether he sees this deal as an "armistice" or not is irrelevant. Like another armistice of not so long ago, it is a capitulation. It has led to a serious worsening of what were good Franco-American relations.

This policy shift, like Carter's in 1977, has worried the already shaky moderate allies of France and the West in Africa and other parts of the world. In Francophone Black Africa, Qaddafi is viewed as a major threat who is involved in financing efforts to overthrow the existing regimes. Some French observers have voiced the idea that, if the trend continues, France will lose all of its remaining influence in Africa.

Yet even more astonishing is the "benign neglect" policy of the French government toward threats to its own sovereignty, notably the immediate insurrectionary threat in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia.

Led by a small terrorist ethnic organization called the FLNKS (Socialist National Liberation Front of the Kanaks), a minority of the population of New Caledonia is engaging in overt, armed rebellion. The rebellion followed elections in which 70% of the voters endorsed a party which stands explicitly for continued affiliation to France. The government, however, unhappy about the election results, has chosen to support the autonomists in spite of incalculable consequences.

The FLNKS is the Melanesian equivalent of the ethnic and tribal terrorist organizations backed by Survival International and the German-based Society for Endangered Peoples. As in the case of Shining Path in Peru, radical anthropologists are found behind the Kanak movement. The son of the head of the ethnology laboratory of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris is, according to well-informed sources, one of the leaders of the movement. The museum's head, Jean Guiart, is also known to have trained the head of the FLNKS provisional government.

Moreover, it is public knowledge that the FLNKS is being financed and trained by the Libyan government and, hence, by the secret services of the East Germany, the "Stasi." Hence, we find the French part of the Socialist International acting with the Libyan government to destabilize a territory affiliated to France. Also involved are the left-wing Australian security services and the Anglican Church, which openly called for independence two days ago, for its own particular reasons.

New Caledonia is a major French naval base. What happens in New Caledonia will be a test for all of France's strategic ocean positions—French Guyana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and, of course, Corsica.