

# Insight and Outlook . . .

By Joseph Kraft

## Alliance in Crisis-II

PARIS—Gen. Charles de Gaulle has never expressed his vision of a European settlement in the common-

sense terms understood by ordinary men. But by consulting the traditional French standards, by analyzing the General's Delphic statements and by talks

Kraft with men around him, it is possible to grasp what he has in mind and what he is now trying to achieve.

The centerpiece of the Gaullist idea is a European security arrangement anchored in an understanding between France and the Soviet Union. That is what the General implies when he says that the newer ideological commitments have given way to the traditional national interests. For traditionally France has protected herself against her eastern neighbor by an alliance with countries still farther east, no matter what the ideological alignment.

De Gaulle's immediate purpose is to engage the Soviet Union in general security negotiations. That is why he is going to Moscow in June. That is also why he has moved to separate France from the integrated institutions of the alliance. He wants a free hand to deal with the Russians. Even more, he wants to stamp himself by showing that he can quit the alliance and still keep on good terms with its members as a leader with whom the Russians can usefully deal.

THE OBVIOUS purpose of a Franco-Soviet understanding would be containment of the Germans. To that end, de Gaulle apparently envisions the rigorous enforcement of two restrictions. First, France and the Soviet Union would insist on the maintenance of the present frontiers between Germany and East European states. Second, France and the Soviet



Union would forbid any German access to nuclear weapons, either in an independent national system or through a sharing arrangement. It is because he intends to keep Germany non-nuclear forever that de Gaulle sets so much store by his own nuclear force, tiny as it is.

Besides containing the Germans, de Gaulle hopes also to content the Germans. Provided the frontier restrictions and the ban on nuclear weapons are accepted, he hopes to promote a Franco-Soviet offer to the Germans of their supreme

objective. He hopes to offer German unification.

With a unified Germany thus contained and contented, de Gaulle calculates that the West European countries would join him in the arrangement with Moscow, while the East Europeans would join Moscow in an understanding with Paris. There would thus be created that famous Gaullist objective — "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals."

As to the United States, it would be free to sign up or contract out. Either way, de Gaulle is convinced that American nuclear power would serve as a deterrent to serious Soviet military action. That is why he keeps insisting that the realities of the alliance will endure, even if its institutions wither.

Seen in this perspective, the Gaullist design is not the nationalistic folly of an old man with outmoded ideas who can be dismissed with airy references to Europe before 1914. As the first column in this series has indicated, the objectives implicit in the Gaullist design suit most of the partners in the Atlantic alliance down to the ground.

THE TROUBLE with the Gaullist approach is not in its conception. The trouble is that it will almost certainly fail. For it harbors two connected flaws of a fatal character.

First, there is no reason to think that the Russians will do business with de Gaulle.

On the contrary, all experience since 1945 indicates that for the Soviet Union the only interesting partner is the United States—the more so now that there is the Sino-Soviet split. Thus, what the Russians are almost bound to do with de Gaulle is to feign interest in an accord in hopes of disrupting the Western alliance.

Such a feint would immediately bring into play the second fatal flaw. The Germans would be unleashed. If they thought there was any chance for unification, they would not allow the French to make the deal for them. They would be off to Moscow themselves.

At that point, the situation in Europe would be dangerous. The alliance would have come apart. The Germans, having slipped their moorings, would be rattling around in the center of Europe playing the kind of East-West power game that has twice before led to war and disaster.

To prevent that awful danger the United States must now organize the alliance to beat back the French challenge.

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