

# **Our Defence And Peace**

## **Part one: The Left And Problems With Peace**

**Louis Gautier**



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## Our Defence And Peace

### Part one: The Left And Problems With Peace

**Louis Gautier**

“The main problem that appears for parties dedicated to social change is: how to give peace the biggest chances of success in an uncertain world.”

**Jean Jaurès** *L'Armée nouvelle*, Imprimerie nationale, Paris, 1992, p.41.

#### Introduction

The international scene in the aftermath of the 11<sup>th</sup> September bomb attacks does not correspond to the favourable peace predictions given at the turn of the century. Europe, which should have, for our country, defined its future, differs further each day from its promise. European defence prospects, which seemed all planned out after the successful agreements of Maastricht, Saint-Malo and Nice, seem to be crumbling. Only remnants remain of a national consensus on defence. The three pillars of the former structure have caved in: today conscription, dissuasion and national autonomy are either

obsolete, relativised or completely reorganised. Finally, our model army, in deep financial crisis, is still not completely stable.

All these uncertainties are increasing the questioning and expectations of our fellow citizens who can see how tense the international situation really is.<sup>1</sup> After a very optimistic period after the end of the cold war, we can see that the fear of external threat has increased. International terrorism is dreaded the most but the spread of arms of mass destruction is also very much apprehended. These fears must be dealt with politically by finding adequate answers and solutions, in order to rationalise and pacify the worried people.

And this is far more important than the questions of international security affecting internal security. In seeing these worries and reactions, we can say that public opinion is by no means mistaken regarding the current situation. As never seen before in a world with less and less barriers, daily international crises echoing internal problems, are contributing to social tension. But we mustn't automatically link these internal/external problems which aren't always directly dependant. Therefore, we must be extremely careful when using laws of exception. We saw this last winter when managing suburban unrest, when these laws caused an excessively reactionary outcome.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, violence has become a recurrent topic of political discussion. This doesn't mean that it was less important before, but that it only seemed to be controlled by the States using legitimate force. According to one theory, a little simplistic but previously credible, violence contained inside a country through the law of the States would overflow, at regular intervals, to the outside in the form of confrontations. This theory applied to a more and more open and globalised world, is no longer

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<sup>1</sup> Baromètre Ipsos, March 2006.

as efficient as before except to show inversely, the breakdown of the States with regard to new collective violence. In fact, it doesn't give any key to interpreting modern conflicts which are not strictly speaking the result of disputes between states.

This flaw in theories of interpretation gives the impression that there is a loss of political control, in turn, inciting fear in a world being washed away by waves of continual violence. Some speak about eternal war, and others about besieged societies. Through not standing up to these fantasies, and not taking aim at them with the arms of reason, these repeated troubles, riots, conflicts and wars are widening the political gap between each country on a global scale. This harmful shock ideology of communities and civilisations is winning ground.

The different forms of violence and the new risks linked to globalisation are creating new challenges for our democracies. They are generating an adverse effect, legitimate totalitarian prevention. In not wanting the worst to happen, and by using the same old familiar tricks, we are creating a situation which is even worse. The political outcome of our "civilisation of security" is threatening the foundations of the democratic system. On the international scene, the West seems to be getting tied up more and more in its self-proclaimed role of global policeman.

Security is, in fact, destabilising Western societies, a phenomenon which breeds mistrust, withdrawal and then hatred. It's therefore necessary to formulate sound security strategies, but limited, so as to both reinforce a feeling of trust, and avoid the ideological trap of "complete security".

Under these conditions, global security can be managed at the right level on an international scale. First, the reality of a dangerous and

difficult world has to be clearly considered. Then, faced with external dangers, an efficient defence and security policy needs to be commended. But, for those of us who are left wing, this policy needs to reinforce certain humanistic and democratic values and principles. We must fiercely stand up for our convictions in favour of peace, the State of justice, collective security and disarmament.

Therefore, a Left defence policy must give, once again, the protection of our fellow citizens a central role. In accordance with our international principles, it must be ready to intervene under specific mandates when peace and human rights are threatened. And finally, it must once again launch a European defence project.

As Léon Blum affirmed, “Building Europe, is to work for socialism. [...] Peace today is, for a large part, due to the grouping of European democracies, strengthened by their own internal grouping. None of which should hold any aggressive ideas towards another.”<sup>2</sup>

## **I. Problems With Peace.**

Peace, conflicts, our and European defence, and military matters are some of the problems which have radically changed over the past fifteen years. The prism is no longer the same. We have entered a new era.

### **1. A new era**

Under the effect of globalisation, the planet is changing faces. Under the impact of new knowledge, the meaning and structure of

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<sup>2</sup> Léon Blum, *Construire l'Europe pour aller vers le socialisme*, speech given at Stresa, 9th April 1948.

reality is being deeply modified. The fantastic progress of cognitive science, biology, communications and IT is completely changing the shape of our societies. It is breaking up systems of representation and values, and it is altering the links and the types of relation between individuals and the human communities that they belong to.

Their actual or potential military applications are transforming the stakes of different conflicts, the nature of different threats, and how battles are lead, to a point that hasn't yet been measured today.

The end of the cold war and the disappearance of the former blocks has accelerated geographical expansion and the impact of this change, with impressive consequences on the world's organisation. Globalisation of exchange, be it goods, services or information, is progressively undoing the ties between “the State-Nation” and economic citizens.

This phenomenon is helping to undermine the legitimacy of national borders, the basis of all international relations. Moreover, it is also affecting the organisation of the security system. Cultural diversity, mostly neutralised in the classic relations of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seem to be becoming, once again, one of the proactive causes or explanations of international tension.

Even if we can notice the beginnings of a “society-world” with the rapid development of communications and the standardisation of lifestyles and consumerism, we are, in fact, fuelling identity arguments, be them nationalist or religious.

Since 2001, Islamic terrorist attacks haven't really changed the international situation. Relations of power on our planet haven't been drastically altered. However, Al Qaida and groups related to this organisation have managed to go up several notches on the scale

of international violence and intensify its power of speech. International relations are being invaded by dangerous emotions.

When the cold war finished, most of the grounds of conflict that we know today were already in place, except notably, the crises directly caused by the collapse of the Soviet system (the Balkan and Caucasian conflicts). Equally, the causes of these tensions are known: regional rivalry, proliferation of arms, terrorism and the rise of the criminal economy. These hostilities of multiple causes cannot easily be put under one common denomination.

We can simply note that they are sometimes due to power conflicts of rivalling States (China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq), or sometimes due to the weakness of collapsing States ( Ex-Yugoslavia, the Ivory Coast, Colombia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

What is different compared to cold war times, is the possibility once again of changing the global status quo and regional balances, if need be, by the use of force. The nuclear stopper has blown, no longer closing conventional war in a hideout. The balance of terror no longer forbids a country or a side to try his luck, even if this means using arms.

What has also changed is the new international players (terrorist organisations, Mafias and security companies), coming out of the cracks of a both fragile and divided international system.

The structure of our globalised world is transforming, and the grammar of war is changing. This situation was originally due to the cold war, but then due to the circumstances that brought it to an end. It is especially the consequence of the unprecedented phenomenon of economic, political and cultural globalisation which claims to be

creating a more and more shared world for everybody without any deep reorganisation.

## **2. Globalisation doesn't automatically mean peace.**

In reality, the world hasn't become that accessible for everybody. Globalisation, in its current state, is increasing the disparity of wealth. It is stirring up rivalities regarding the monopoly of natural resources, and it is reinforcing inequalities regarding the access to healthcare, education and culture. Faced with violence and war, the world, in fact, isn't the same place for everybody. There is a portion of the world where conflicts between States, are completely removed from the scene as economic and cultural solidarity is so great. There are regions where the classic system has reappeared, with basic power struggles in the arms race. Finally, there are anarchic areas where all types of violence reign.

Also, contrary to liberal and capitalist beliefs, globalisation hasn't enabled the States and international players to economically sublate their rivals, on the contrary, it has stirred them up. The economy is unable to put war out of action. Likewise, the expansion of international law, generalising conciliation as a way of solving differences of opinion, clashes with globalisation paradoxes.

Of course, world law is prospering but only for certain values that are not always recognised as equal, and some of these values are even condemned by certain groups. The more law is globalised, the more it proves contradictory in an unstable system warped by dissension. Law needs power and political support from the States, but it is these same States which are, in fact, being weakened by economic globalisation and an ever developing legal system. As a result, some States freeze under this pressure and others disintegrate, leaving zones where there are no laws at all. War can't be outlawed.

Finally, global expansion of certain types of violence and the migration of certain dangers has abolished the borders between internal and external security so that, dangerously, we no longer know how to treat the different types, especially concerning the fight against terrorism. War hasn't been put offside. From all points of view, the invasion and occupation of Iraq shows a sad example of this analysis.

Therefore, universal peace doesn't exist, nor even a common desire for universal peace. Interference in the name of freedom and human rights, mainly from the West and the Europeans, is considered as a major step forward for universal solidarity, but it is inciting hostility from the South. Interventions seen here as progress are considered elsewhere as perfectly hypocritical and arbitrary, all the more so when they don't arise from a UN mandate. The planet seems to be unstable from the North, but seen from the South, it is rather closed.

Where globalisation affects the solidarity of the States, it also questions the traditional functioning of societies, it disturbs regional balances, and causes instability to dominate. In fact, it lets war rear its ugly head. The geography of conflicts and crises is, in this regard, explicit: the Balkans, the Caucasus, Africa, and the Middle and Near East. We can notice that there are zones on the planet where the only certainty is that peace is almost impossible, and others where there are so many crises and uncertainties, that they mix together to become one. There is poor Africa, stripped of its main natural wealth and made up of many weak States (bloody Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Congo, Sudan and Ivory Coast). From Lebanon to Cashmere, to the South of the Eurasiatic continental mass, there is an array of conflicts, sometimes very old, that are changing in a world marked by violence and nuclear proliferation. This world is closely linked to the Asiatic zone, dominated by Chinese power and the reactions it provokes.

Today we centre all our attention on the problems of the dramatically compromised peace situation in the Near and Middle East, but we should also be more vigilant when considering certain worrying changes in Asia. The upsurge of regional rivalry in Asia and the Far East, on the basis of complex Sino-American relations is the main element that will determine the next twenty years. Asia is unstable today, its armies are on alert with plausible war scenario that could contaminate the whole planet, although the chances of those same wars in Europe seem slight.

### **3 The spread of conflicts.**

The dangerous feeling of new conflict on an international scale, a world war, has disappeared, but it has been replaced by the fear of a new spread of conflicts, where the principles of collective security are badly adapted or very limited.

The compartmentalisation of the different zones in terms of security has become inevitable (Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, the Middle East and South East Asia), as a result, the strategic regulation of each zone is different.

Therefore, the future forms of conflict will correspond to these different strategic and military groups.

However, putting crises and conflicts in quarantine will not automatically mean their absolute confinement regarding collective security. Firstly, because this isolation requires strategic segmentation or deconstruction of international space that the logic behind globalisation refuses. This can be seen with existing examples, such as the access to natural resources and energy. There

have been numerous gas and petrol crises, from Venezuela to the Ukraine, in passing through the Gulf of Guinea.

Then there is the more classic argument of geographic proximity of certain dangerous zones, making it difficult to entirely isolate the different warring factors, for example, the Middle East and Central Asia. Finally, in order to maintain peace, the notion of regional regulation calls for a balance in the existing forces if collective security fails. Today, stability can only be obtained and guaranteed in warring zones through the help from external powers.

This is the case in Africa, where although the conflicts there can sometimes be very bloody, they hardly ever affect planetary stability. This is especially the case in Eurasia and the Middle East, where several deciding groups for world peace have to coexist with difficulty or even in conflict.

This situation puts the United States, due to their military superiority, in the position of arbiter. Also, in nearly all crisis situations, and all confrontations, the United States are automatically implicated due to their military power, and thus immediately call on their European allies. Whether the allies then act or not depends on the fate of the war and the spread or the stationing of the conflict.

There are greater risks that regional rivalry will degenerate into internationalised conflicts and increase the level of international concern and diplomatic mobilisation, where the strategic risks are higher for the whole of the planet.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, armed

<sup>3</sup> Following the example of the analysts who helped to write the report between 2003 and 2005 for the 2020 project of the National Council for American Information, we can consider that the probability of seeing, over the next fifteen years, a large conflict between powers degenerate and escalate into total war is weak. The growing dependence with regard to the financial and trading networks helps, furthermore, to prevent conflicts between large States. If, however, one of

confrontation between States due to ideology, religion or ethnic background are rare when economic or strategic interests are weak. They can almost go unnoticed regarding the international community.

In the zones of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Darfour and the African great lakes region, we stand by and watch prolonged fighting, regular massacres and the moving of threatened civilian populations. However, where a crisis breaks out, threatening the continuum of prosperity and Western security, such as in the Balkans, the conflicts are managed by the United States and Europe.

Certainly, we have observed positive affects<sup>4</sup>, over the past fifteen years, of the change in approach of the international community regarding how it leads armed conflicts. However, this change which has mainly remained limited, concerns the will to reduce the impact of interventions and the scale of damage. It is interesting to notice, on the one hand, the more and more ferocious nature of certain civil wars, and on the other hand, the intensity of military engagements in a few recent conflicts (the Gulf war, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq).

But the most remarkable phenomenon of this short stretch since the cold war is obviously the rapid change in Western military interventionism. The motives, objectives, and the length of Western military engagements have changed in nature. In the space of fifteen years, we have insensibly gone from “peace keeping” to “nation building”, then to “regional security enforcement” or “reshaping”, which aims at strategically remodelling entire regions such as the

these such conflicts should arise involving one or several super powers, the consequences would be significant. The absence of efficient machinery to resolve conflicts in several regions and the rise in nationalist pressure can lead to terrible misunderstandings and errors of judgement concerning disagreements.

<sup>4</sup> This is highlighted in the conclusions of the International Crisis Group’s last report, *Peace and conflict* 2005.

Near East. Security has taken priority over humanitarian concerns. The exportation of democracy is an ambition far exceeding the simple institution of the State of justice. We have gone from peace keeping to pacification.

This change has altered the logical use of different civilian and military tools of coercion and cooperation used in external interventions. It has caused upheaval in traditional political and polemological approaches.<sup>5</sup> Following 11<sup>th</sup> September, Western defence doctrines have substituted international security more and more for a classic concept of international stability. Coupled with the notion of interference, this idea has caused logical action to become stronger and even more intrusive. The different types of action applied to the fight against terrorism has intensified this change.

The idea of there being a security continuum in our era linking internal disorder to external trouble has not only made a name for itself as a pertinent framework of analysis, but has also been put into operation. We can unfortunately see how powerless in this perspective, the use of force really is in obtaining the sought-after political objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

Paradoxically, the more Western armies are involved, the less the situations, that they would like to see an end to, are simplified. The absence of collective control explains this sad acknowledgement. The UN crisis, prompted by the United States, has led the leaders of international regulation to lose face. Multilateral instruments, such

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<sup>5</sup> The term polemology comes from two Greek terms “polemos” (war) and “logos” (discursive thinking, reasoning). This neologism was invented in 1946 by Gaston Bouthoul to designate the study of war as a social phenomenon, distinguishing it from the science of war taught in the military academies. Cf. G. Bouthoul, *Cent millions de morts*, 1946.

as collective security or disarmament, are weak and we are collectively incapable of finding new ones. Multilateral diplomacy is undergoing a dramatic decline.

It is difficult to build coherent and long-term political solutions about proliferation in Iran, Korea or the Lebanese crisis when all we have are the G8 communiqués. In some regions, the crises are even intensifying, whilst Western military capacities there are practically exhausted.

Persisting transatlantic differences and failed European military cooperation explain this. In all recent interventions, Western military superiority has systematically hit difficulties regarding ground deployment.

#### **4 The uses of force.**

According to the Clausewitz formula, war “is a real chameleon that changes in nature with each particular case”.<sup>6</sup> Recent conflicts are dominated by a very unequal distribution of military capacities and access to the technologies, which in turn, alter and influence the behaviour and tactics of the belligerents. Recent confrontations carried out in the name of maintaining or re-establishing peace are characterised by asymmetry.

But dissymmetry of means and asymmetry of objectives aren't the only characteristics which typify future wars. The future remains, without doubt, marked by the international community's growing wish to control violence by leaning on Western military superiority. The future is also characterised by deepened competition between certain States wanting to acquire or be in possession of the same technologies that give the West its strategic supremacy.

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<sup>6</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *De la guerre*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1955.

The motives for conflicts, the nature of operations, the intensity of combats and the simultaneousness of actions all act as powerful variators in military engagement.

This observation is confirmed with each era and each intervention. But what is new, is the clear political differentiation of levels of intervention, the juxtaposition of operating modes and increased complexity, all linked to and made possible by the revolution in military technologies.

However, war occurs on different scales and dimensions, affecting as much the military operations as the accompanying civilian action. The novelty today, is the simultaneousness or the almost-simultaneousness of the action and the management of the combats in real time. The real changes can be found as much in the political aims as in the management of war.

These changes are reflected in the transformation of political-military approaches, in the change in tactic-operational manoeuvres and the techniques brought into play. In a sense, these changes show general concern for the management of operations and control of situations.

Thanks to information means and the means of command that technology brings, politicians and soldiers can wrongly dream about action without the risks of blunders and hazards of war. This is why there are intervention projects that seek to dominate uncertainty whilst trying not to attract it.

The Western army's doctrine of functioning, based on technological superiority, highlights three imperatives: preliminary saturation of the enemy's defence system, a short intense phase of combat, and limited damage.

The key question is: how can the violent part of a confrontation be reduced to a minimum? How can violence be controlled so that the confrontation isn't made worse and the return to calm and peace is still possible?

The concern isn't a new one, but it is growing in size, since in most of the current conflicts, the Western interventions are led with the explicit aim of re-establishing civilian harmony and a State of justice.

The use of arms is only successful if there are long-term political goals. If common agreement on a political solution and the conditions of future security aren't found by all the parties involved in a conflict, hostility continues and external military engagement is needed. This is the case of the Balkans, and that's where the shoe pinches! Due to the long-term nature of conflicts, as in the Balkans, direct military involvement as in Kosovo, or indirect involvement as on the Ivory coast, initial goals are automatically changed. The third party's position in a conflict is particularly fragile. "War isn't action of a living force carried out on a dead mass but [...] is always the collision of two living forces".<sup>7</sup>

Confrontation with realities in the field takes away any benefits of Western technological superiority. Whatever long distance arms give, contact with men takes back. Violence which has almost become "virtual" through technology returns to its brutal origins in ground combat, pacification and intervention.

We should have learnt our lesson in Somalia. All military intervention is inevitably traumatic. Even when they are carried out with good intentions, the success of external operations depend on

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<sup>7</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *De la guerre*, op. cit., p.54.

whether the populations concerned support them. They can't go ahead without agreement on what political aims and security are sought. In fact, it is extremely rare that a victory, through the use of arms alone, can bring a country or countries out of crisis. Peace keeping operations or diplomatic and military pressure from a third party cannot exceed a certain level, without risking a breakdown in negotiations or without risking bringing about false hopes, as with the short-lived Marcoussis agreements. Whilst in symmetrical conflicts, victory on both sides stems from an almost linear style of tactical success, in asymmetrical conflicts, victory comes from the repeated failures of one side. The winner isn't necessarily the strongest one but the one who can withstand political and military failure the longest.

In current conflicts, the West incontestably wins all the first battles because of its arms superiority, but it isn't necessarily in the position to accept later challenges of conflict management. We should, however, be wary of considering this technological advantage as an automatic right to victory or a guarantee to win all future combats.

In the future, we should expect to fight enemy forces having acquired or developed similar materials to those that Western armies already possess. Even if, in all probability, the technological differences will remain favourable for Western armies over the next fifteen to twenty years, the differences will inescapably disappear. This technological improvement will cause conventional strategies to readjust and especially cause prohibition strategies to develop, increasing the level of risks and the danger of Western engagement.

The spread of certain sophisticated arms, notably those that are easy to carry and use, such as certain ground-to-ground or ground-to-air missiles, is going to complicate peace interventions considerably, including those of low intensity such as the African conflicts. But

beyond that, the risk of ballistic and nuclear proliferation is far more worrying.

Without even mentioning the danger of terrorists coming into possession of nuclear arms, the circulation of modern weapons is leading us to fear new mixed "deterrent" positions, founded both on conventional means and mass destruction arms, destined to "sanctuarise" entire areas.

It is from this angle and the idea of competition between regional powers that the race, by certain States to possess ballistic carriers and arms of mass destruction, should be looked at.

## **5 Proliferation and disarmament.**

Experts focus on the number of countries having developed nuclear capacities. There are eight in total: the United States, Russia, China, France, Great Britain, Israel, India and Pakistan. North Korea and Northern Iran should also be added to this list. The Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) lists a further seven States having developed chemical arms, and twelve having a declared or suspected biological programme.<sup>8</sup> The proliferation of arms of mass destruction hasn't stopped since the end of the cold war, despite of nuclear disarmament recorded at the end of the 90s.

It would be totally irresponsible to close our eyes to the risk of proliferation because, in the arms of mass destruction game, the more the number of players increases and the larger the accidental or intentional threat grows, less efficient the pure deterrent strategies become.

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<sup>8</sup> IISS, *Strategic Survey 2002/2003*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.

With India and Pakistan in 1998, and Iran and North Korea, these examples highlight rather crudely, how the problem of proliferation of arms of mass destruction is threatening peace. It also shows the current deadlock concerning disarmament. International tension, stirred up by the invasion of Iraq and American unilateralism, is helping to undermine the trust between the great Nations.

Major negotiations on disarmament are in a deadlock, and the subject of how to control spreading installations is under question. Discussions with Korea and Iran are almost at a standstill. The treaty to stop arms testing has still not been ratified by the United States. The convention to stop the production of military fissile materials has been blocked at Geneva since 1995. The investigations of the TNP in May 2005 have been marking time on a regional scale, in spite of the recommendations from the AIEA in its resolution of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The proposal to denuclearise the Near and Middle East has very little chance of happening.

Regarding the control of biological arms, the convention can't be applied because certain controls haven't been accepted by the Russians, the Chinese and the Americans. This non-exemplary nature is not helping the disarmament cause. On this topic, it is easy to understand the reproach made to the Super Powers by the States not equipped with nuclear weapons, of not having taken seriously their commitments made in 2000 at the TNP conference about the progressive elimination of their strategic arsenal.

From Washington, Moscow, Peking, London and Paris, we've been recently watching in vain for the slightest initiative. Since 2002, the successive French governments have proved to be rather inactive and inefficient in this domain.

All the while we stay in this dishonest game of poker, the chances of disarmament remain slim. As always, it will be: shall we disarm? Yes! But security first, sanctions first, the others first!

The road to nuclear, chemical and bacteriological disarmament is long and torturous. Since it is impossible to scribble out the existing interventions and programmes, measures for disarmament, counter proliferation and the control of research and production units is indispensable and complementary.

Everything lies therefore, not on a new question regarding disarmament, but on the efficiency of plans of control. As Léon Blum already discovered in 1931, "What is the guarantee (of an agreement) if someone can mysteriously keep the option of getting out of it? How will international control distinguish between the different peace keeping production units and those which are virtual engines of war? And if commitment isn't guaranteed, and the reality of disarmament isn't ensured by control, how will we obtain "security"?"<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, due to the lack of shared will of the Super Powers and regarding the Europeans, their inability to influence international negotiations, the proliferation plague is probably here to torment us for a long time. In fact, several countries consider that having nuclear weapons gives access to the coveted ranks of regional power, or for some worldwide power. Nuclear arms are particularly attractive for many States inspired by international recognition and historical recovery. They also see them as a way of arousing "rational doubt" in Western strategies tempted by large-scale military interventions.

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<sup>9</sup> Léon Blum, *Les problèmes de la paix*, Gallimard, Paris, 1931.

And finally, some countries also see nuclear arms as a means of forestalling or countering similar efforts of their regional competitors. All these motives converge, making ballistic and nuclear proliferation a basic trend. This threat concerns Europe first, which is in missile range of the States the most inclined to go down this road. The Europeans are faced with conflicting choices.

War has far from disappeared in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is transforming. At the beginning of this century, we are forced to note that war remains a political means for most of the big States of the world. Humanitarian ideology has not subjugated history. Europeans remain prisoners of their post-cold war culture. The backfire wasn't anticipated, and has greatly disturbed the program of a distraught European left.

## **II. The Left and Defending Peace.**

### **1 Ideological breaches.**

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the European left has seen its ideological landmarks turned upside-down by little thought out reading, although comforting in a geostrategic context. After centuries of torment, Europe believed to have found, forever, its home in a hollow shelter of globalisation and history.

Coming from the feeling that from now on, nothing serious could affect the security of the old continent, the European left, without completely accepting this divorce, has been talked into breaking off with its traditional ideological defence substratum. This is particularly true in France where the military questions under the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic come under two main themes, singularity regarding

external relations and consensus regarding internal relations.<sup>10</sup> Since 1990, our country has had to revise all the basic principles of the 1958 Gaullian defence policy. The policy of national independence has been modified with the construction of a European defence system and recent compromises with NATO since 2002.

Nuclear arms are still an important asset for our defence but they are no longer as important on a post cold war scale. All the same, the doctrine of the use of force has focused on missions of external projection. This overhaul of our defence policy has taken place without making any sound or hurting anything, which gives the impression that national consensus on defence has been feebly re-established on new grounds.

This is a mistake. A consensus on defence is neither the expression of a stable situation, nor a definitive global agreement on certain principles. It is for the moment, the result of a change in the defence policy which, following its biggest inclinations, has got around certain difficult aspects, just like a river meandering sand banks. This, as well as conscription, after five years of being licked by waves of reform, have been washed away in the backwash.

But when considering civil service, the question comes up once again. Once again, the future of dissuasion after 2015 remains unseen. Not to mention the transfer of skills or commanding delegations which will require the construction of a European defence system, and without which will only be a dutiful wish. All these subjects concern the heart of sovereignty of our defence policy.

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<sup>10</sup> At the time of the Presidential Elections in 1974, François Mitterand officialised his siding with the strike force. The communist party professed one self, with reservations, in favour of "all out dissuasion". The exercise of power by the left from 1981 confirmed the left's conversion to a defence policy initiated by General De Gaulle twenty years before. Never since 1958, had military spending been so constantly high, as under Michel Rocard's government from 1988 to 1991.

The left, as the right, won't escape these problems or external military commitments in the coming difficult hours of truth.

In France, and also in the rest of Europe, the left is completely out of kilter regarding defence problems and its basic traditional ideologies. Over the past fifteen years, the European left has, according to the individual characteristics of each country, converted military policy and ideology.

The left has encouraged a decrease in military spending but, conforming less to its traditional position, it has also initiated or supported changes leading to the almost complete abandon of military service, and the privatisation of the industry, including a part of its defence services.

What is more, it has followed a change in doctrine, be it at a national, European Union or Atlantic Alliance level, making the conditions of the use of force more flexible. Privatisation, professionalisation, military expeditions....: in relation to precepts traditionally used to solve military problems, the European left is far removed from its original ideological roots.

It is first of all surprising to notice that the left, in the past so against military intervention, has converted to an external policy, most certainly in the name of humanitarian interference or for the prevention of conflicts. Since peace no longer seems to be threatened, war has once again become possible. It was François Mitterand who decided to deploy the largest French detachment since 1962 to the Gulf war in 1990. It was Gerhard Schroder, for the first time since the Second World War, who enlisted German soldiers in the 1999 Kosovo conflict. It was Tony Blair who sent troops to Iraq in the most controversial military expedition since the cold war. We don't need to pass positive or negative judgement on the impact

of these operations, but firstly to notice that left taboos have been broken. The European left, historically hostile to the use of armed force and promoting for decades all types of military intervention other than defensive, has converted to a policy of projection of arms. This external action is supported and made popular by a strong militant movement who justify this return to force in the name of peace and human rights.

This ideological rupture has come about exactly, due to two main points: the legitimate use of force is no longer reserved for the defence of the homeland or vital interests, but for the defence of values and the democratic model cast on the international society; the use of arms is no longer the answer to aggression but more often a preventative solution given in an emergency.

The inspiration and origins of this situation are deep rooted in the left's history.<sup>11</sup> Although, it would be exaggerated to blame the left altogether for human rights and humanitarian interference. Moreover, interference and preventative action are not the only origins of today's situation.

In France, the left's ideas on defence still remain very heterogeneous. The radical, socialist, communist and green parties are followers of tradition and diverse values. The multiple ideologies inherited by the left have never really melted into or been clarified by the left. There is no common ideological vault regarding politics. There is no real basis to their programme, although it has prevailed since 1981 and needs the government's tacit agreement.

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<sup>11</sup> In a remote way, this way of thinking draws its ideas from lawyers and theorists from the right, republicans, radicals and socialists from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Closer to our times, this way of thinking stems from arguments and ideals commended by NGOs, often in the 1970s, and ecologist and libertarian ideas of protest.

There are big differences in the speeches that are addressed to the House and what the powers actually practice.

## **2 Governmental reformism.**

The two seven-year terms of François Mitterand and Lionel Jospin's government, in spite of the criticisms on certain aspects of the management of military files, enabled them to purge a political past, and settle legal proceedings regarding the left.

The left's ability to manage the armed forces and the defence policy under the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic, is no longer called into question. The relations between the socialist leaders and military authority are, on both sides, now "rid of complexes". Charles Hernu was the architect of the rapid action force, Jean-Pierre Chevènement got the first restructurations of our defence system underway, Pierre Joxe started the overhaul and combined arming of our army model, Alain Richard saw through the professionalisation and consolidation of the aeronautic and defence industry.

From the creation of the French-German brigade, and by passing through the project for the European constitution and negotiations for the St Malo agreements, the socialists in power have, furthermore, contributed greatly to the emergence of a European defence policy.

These quite remarkable results have, however, been obtained under two conditions: by not calling into question the institutional framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic regarding political-military decisions and by reducing the Socialist party's and French left's internal debate on defence questions.

In the periods when it held power, it was the left who passively accepted the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic which gives very little space for parliamentary debate on the national defence policy. Important decisions were taken by the head of State (the stopping of nuclear testing and foreign engagements) or the government (reduced military spending and programming laws) in ways that allowed neither real dialogue nor questioning in the ranks of the parliamentary left. Except on rare occasions, under the governments of Michel Rocard (the Gulf war) or Lionel Jospin (the Kosovo conflict), national representation has been very seldomly consulted on foreign military engagements. François Mitterand fought tremendously to keep the constitutional powers intact that he had been given. Regarding Lionel Jospin, he pushed for secret defence and parliamentary investigation on Rwanda, Kosovo and notably the export of arms. He couldn't, however, go any further as his hands were tied under cohabitation.

Between 1981 and 2001, for twenty years, the socialists tried to maintain a national consensus on defence and generally stick to a regime of peace after the fall of the Berlin wall, which was a major event in this period. All the same, they still supported the principles of humanitarian interference and external action in the name of peace. They worked towards European defence. Whilst in power, they worked determinedly on adapting and modernising our defence system.

This appraisal is rich and reforming, but some of the reasons behind it are dated or even out of date. That is why political and ideological clarification is needed.

## **3 Our principals confirmed.**

The socialist left is still formally hooked on the dilapidated legacy of Jaures, his sole reference being rather meaningless since conscription has been abandoned. The Jauresian model has been used as a mascot but never replaced. In stead of renewing their military culture, the socialists are rather schizophrenic, at the same time being attached to an expert and reformist idea of defence but also avid followers of high-flown language.

The absence of a real military culture has been fatal for the left on several occasions. The political and ideological gap which has resulted from this can, once again, be the cause of errors in assessment and of divisions at critical moments. We experienced this at the beginning of the Kosovo campaign when the parties almost cracked before Lionel Jospin brought the situation under control. Moreover, without a framework of analysis and predetermined political position, the political leaders are likely to find themselves intimidated when faced with structured opinions of the military leaders about arguments on military science, especially NATO dynamics and multinational command, under which more and more of our forces are placed.

With the disappearance of traditional ideological roots, lacking explanation on the major future defence options and the idealist craze for military action, the left must clear up some of these ambiguities.

No alignment can hide behind a simple administrative and reforming position. For the first time in fifteen years, future choices will have a direct and obvious effect on the sovereignty, credibility and control of our defence policy. In other respects, the participation of our forces in numerous external operations implies the clarification of the principles which, for us, must govern the use of force.

What, today, must differentiate socialist ideas regarding national defence from the others?

Socialist thought is characterised by a reference to values and principles which guide our political practice so that it doesn't lapse into realism fearing neither God nor man, or pure opportunism. These principles follow from a constant position: the military policy of our country must be based on peace, and strictly speaking, peace that is a defensive tool and never a tool of aggression.

Because the preservation of peace in the world remains inseparable from the construction of a balanced and fair international system, our defence policy, after protecting French citizens, must also aim at preventing conflicts and consolidating the mechanics of collective security. With this aim in mind, our country must help with all its might, to save the UN international regulation system. It must unblock negotiations in favour of disarmament. It must consolidate international criminal law which is rather a hindrance in its early years. Within the scope of international mandates or conforming to the major legal principles of the protection of populations in distress, it must deploy military and civilian forces of intervention or prevention in time.

These objectives can only be reached if we have the same intellectual outlook and joint means with our European partners.

European construction gives us a framework for collective action and more fundamentally, a melting-pot where we can dissolve the old dilemma of patriotism versus internationalism which still divides our ranks. We must remember the lessons from Jaurès, Blum and Mitterand so as not to let the European promise continue slipping through our hands. Europe and its defence have authority to become a guarantee of peace for our old continent and a balanced centre for

the world. The European building site for defence is, furthermore, a way to consolidate the roots of an unsteady political union.

The organisation of a European system of defence would assume in fact, previous political confirmation of a definitive union giving the destiny of the member countries. It would also imply the assertion of a base of values, of common practices and a shared vision of the world. Following the examples of practices used in all the other Western democracies, the modernisation of our public life calls, amongst other things, for the reinforcement of information and control procedures of the Parliament regarding defence matters. The institutions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic have, in fact, reduced the Parliament's powers to control defence matters to almost nothing, mainly due to them only having a limited budget and limited scope for external operations. The socialist idea of defence would not be able to skip over ethical and legal questions linked to their military choices, even when creating contradictions that would sometimes be delicate to resolve.

This concerns, in particular, the exportation of arms and the raising of moral standards in the arms trade, as well as the control of information activities. In all these areas, all that is needed is more openness and greater control of decisions. Generally speaking, democracy requires that, in military matters, there isn't the risk of the decisions or expertise being brought into question. This recommendation of good sense applies as much to the relations between the executive and national representation, as to the relations between the civilian powers and military authority.

The forces are a Nation's and democracy's strength. This is exactly what Jaurès said.<sup>12</sup> As citizens and as soldiers, and because of the distinguished favours that they do for our country, they have the right to expect respect from others and expect the attention from

<sup>12</sup> Jean Jaurès, *L'Armée nouvelle*, op. cit, p. 339

others regarding missions that the national community assigned them. This is why it is important to put the finishing touches to professionalisation under good conditions.

The professional army's good integration into the society depends on the quality and flexibility of exchanges between the military community and the civilian environment. This situation simply needs watching over. In this respect, the professionalisation of armies needs to be backed by modernisation of the military status. Don't hesitate to hunt down a few old ghosts still hiding in our Republic's closet.

Professionalisation calls for the progressive alignment of the rights and the place of soldiers in our society. Similarly, representing authorities should be elected. The prohibition of belonging to a political party should also be possibly abolished.

Along side these statutory changes, we should also pay close attention to recruitment, training and soldiers' other conditions. The social makeup of armies should continue to reflect the Nation's diversity in all areas. It is also important, in order to avoid possible corporate temptations and eventual risks of withdrawing into oneself, to create reorientation possibilities and to nurture relations between the civil service and the army. Finally, the link between the Nation and the army could become stronger with a "defence" section, a new civic service.

The armies serve the Nation. This distinguished responsibility implies that the executive power and the legislative power, each in their own domain, should clearly define their national and external missions and provide the means to carry these out. The civilian authorities also have the responsibility of , which is not so easy for interventions under multinational command, establishing a

framework of action, rules of engagement, training procedures and the monitoring of operational action. Only a clear breakdown of the roles and responsibilities will enable the democratic control of our military engagements. What's more, the breakdown of skills in the Ministry of Defence should be clear and balanced, so as to keep decisions clear and conserve the political decision maker's power of impetus and arbitration.

For the left, the French defence policy must combine the respect of certain fundamental principles related to the external action of our country, the good working order of our democracy and deep European conviction. But this policy must be firmly anchored in reality and ensure the organisation of an efficient military tool, and substantial armed forces for the missions that the Nation entrusts to them. (Document written 18/09/2006).

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