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France, Islam and the Chirac Presidency: Strategic Choices and the Decision-Making Framework

ROBBIN LAIRD

This article provides an assessment of the framework within which the Chirac administration deals with the challenge of Islam and of North Africa. The impact of immigration and the dynamics of change within North Africa are inextricably intertwined with the dynamics of change within France itself and in France's relationship with Europe.

The assessment of the Islamic challenge is at once a domestic and foreign policy challenge.¹ Assessing the parameters of choice and the likely patterns of behavior of the Chirac government can only be tackled by linking domestic and foreign policy variables in a framework of analysis. This article makes a preliminary attempt to provide such a framework.

The article is based on interviews during 1995 and 1996 in France with key members of the government (both politicians and functionaries) and leading non-government analysts. In addition, a wide range of French publications have been examined to assess the factors of change affecting French analysis and perceptions of the challenge of Islam.

The article is divided into four parts.

In the first part, the impact of immigration upon economic, social, cultural and political development in contemporary France is reviewed. The broad domestic context for French government action is thereby identified.

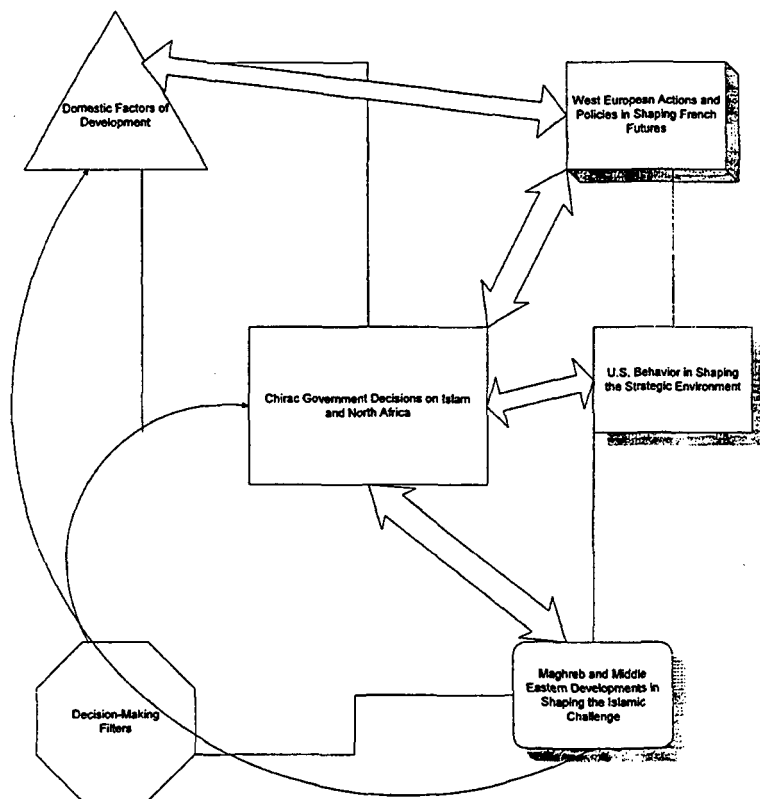
In the second part, the role of key 'filters' of decision making in shaping choices is reviewed – notably, the role of historical legacies, economic stakes, the 'Arab' apparatus, and the priorities of national security policy.

In the third section, the impact of the external environment upon French choices is examined. The impact of direct activities in the Maghreb and the Middle East is critical as well as the actions of key French allies in the West in shaping parameters of choice.

Finally, the scope of action for the Chirac government is summarized. A continuum of action is identified as well as a discussion of the key drivers for action by the government in the period ahead.

The model followed in this article is summarized in Figure 1 below:

FIGURE 1



DOMESTIC FACTORS OF DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGE OF IMMIGRATION

French policy toward Islam and the Maghreb is decisively shaped by the development of French society itself.² The intersection between domestic and foreign policy is deep and significant for the framing of French government policy toward Islam and the Maghreb.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Economically, immigration has been an important part of French development.³ French industry developed in the nineteenth century with a considerable input from immigrants. The demographic gap after World War I was filled by immigrants. The 'economic miracle' after World War II was

assisted in part by a ready supply of immigrant labor.

As France faces the 1990s, the immigrant challenge is closely connected with the problem of economic development.⁴ The needs for industrial labor are in decline. Agrarian society is in decline as well. The classic roles for immigrant labor will not be met by the French economy of the turn of the new century.

The nature of work is changing and with it the demands for more educated labor and different patterns of work activity.⁵ Education within the dominant culture and with a clear capacity to work within a European-Atlantic-Asian zone of activity is increasingly important. Immigrants who fit into this economic model are potentially valued; those who do not are not.

There is an additional problem for the Maghreb immigrants. Historically, Algerian immigrants have provided industrial labor, Tunisians have worked in small shops, and Moroccans have worked in businesses. The Tunisian and Moroccan propensities remain more relevant than the Algerian ones. A fragmentation in orientation among Maghreb immigrants is evident from the perspective of providing inputs to the French economy.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The French have developed a clear model of assimilation of immigrants throughout modern French history.⁶ Assimilation of the individual within the context of the French Republic's stress upon the rights and duties of the citizen has been the priority. The rights of communities as such are not elevated to the same level as the rights of the individual.

The role of the school and the use of the French language as a socialization tool have been central.⁷ Public education has been freely provided in order to support the ideal of the citizen of the republic and equality of opportunity. Equality of output which requires an emphasis upon balancing interests among ethnic groups is not recognized as a priority in the classic notion of the ideal of the Republic.

The role of the French language is central as well.⁸ French is both a means and an end to the shaping of a concept of the Republic. It is a means in terms of providing basic literacy to the population and a common set of ideals which all citizens are to uphold. A citizen is a part of the polity to the extent to which he enters the debate about France by using the French language. The use of communal languages other than French excludes from the polity; it is not an alternative means to participate. It is an end in the sense of excluding those who do not participate in the language of the polity. In this sense, French is not the dominant language of social and political life; it is the only language.

The state shapes the society by providing the mechanism for the integration of the diverse elements making up the society.⁹ Indeed, one can argue that the immigrant impulse has been central to the dominance of the state over society. By promoting the ideals of the citizen in the context of extensive influx of immigrants, only the state could provide the means to socialize immigrants rapidly.

But today there are at least three challenges to the French model of integration associated with immigration.¹⁰

First, the economic slowdown has resulted in the emergence of a significant group of unemployed youth in French society.¹¹ This general trend overlaps the trend of the coming to age of a significant number of second generation migrants from Islamic countries. Although the majority of this generation stills seeks integration, there has been a growing tendency for a minority of Islamic immigrants to assert the rights of the Islamic community against the dominance of the institutions of the republic. Indeed, there is a demand that the Republic change to accommodate communities, not just individuals.

Second, the schools and the language are challenged by this trend. The demand of some Islamic youth to practice their religious beliefs within the public school ('the veil incident' above all) counters the practice of the separation of religion and the state critical to the Republican ideal. The French language is challenged by the enhanced significance of the Arabic language within *French* culture.

Third, the role of the state as an assimilator of the society is being challenged by a variety of forces in France.¹² The demands of the 'ultra-liberals' like Minister of Finance Madelin who was pushed out of the Juppé government in September 1995 for a reduction in the dominance of the state over the individual would limit the rights of the state to dominate society. These demands correlate with demands of communitarian radicals associated with Islam who demand greater freedom from the dominance of the state in assimilating individuals and negating communities. The roots of these demands are starkly different, but combine in being a challenge to the dominance of the state.

The economic demands of greater global competition and the enhanced role of French business and cultural communities in dealing with non-French communities (outside of France) challenge the state as well. Under the notion of the French nation, the core republican ideals and the French state define the extent of community. But economic and cultural relations of the twenty-first century are calling into question such a definition of community.¹³

The state could well end up as the barrier to change, not its facilitator. Some innovative sectors of French society are 'leaving' in the sense of

participating in a broader global community. The cultural communities of Islam are participating through various communication means in the reshaping of the Islamic identity throughout the Mediterranean. France and the other European Mediterranean states have become key locations for Islamic 'immigrants' to participate in the broader Islamic community of the Mediterranean basin.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Immigration has clearly become a dominant factor in the broader political debate. It has become a key aspect of political restructuring as well. Indeed, it is difficult to discuss right and left on this subject. The media frequently uses these political terms, but it obscures more than it clarifies.

On immigration, one can identify at least four developments reshaping the political spectrum.

The National Front seeks to protect the French Republican ideals from communitarian challengers.¹⁴ Although there are clearly racists among the electorate and leadership of the National Front, the main thrust of this political organization is conservative – to preserve the French Republic in the face of the challenges of modernity.

The supporters of conservative presidential candidate Villiers are quite different. They seek to protect core Republican values without being racist at all. They wish to maintain the vitality of Republican values in the face of the forces of change. They seek to redefine and to protect; not merely to protect in a reactionary sense.

A proportion of workers seek to protect their jobs against the challenges from 'ultra-liberals' and the forces of new immigration and global competition. These natural supporters of the left have become supporters of the right. But their support is for the corporatist state to protect them from the forces of change.¹⁵

Several intellectuals have ended up arguing for the use of stringent immigration controls in order to ensure the viability of France in facing the competition of the twenty-first century.¹⁶ They argue as follows:

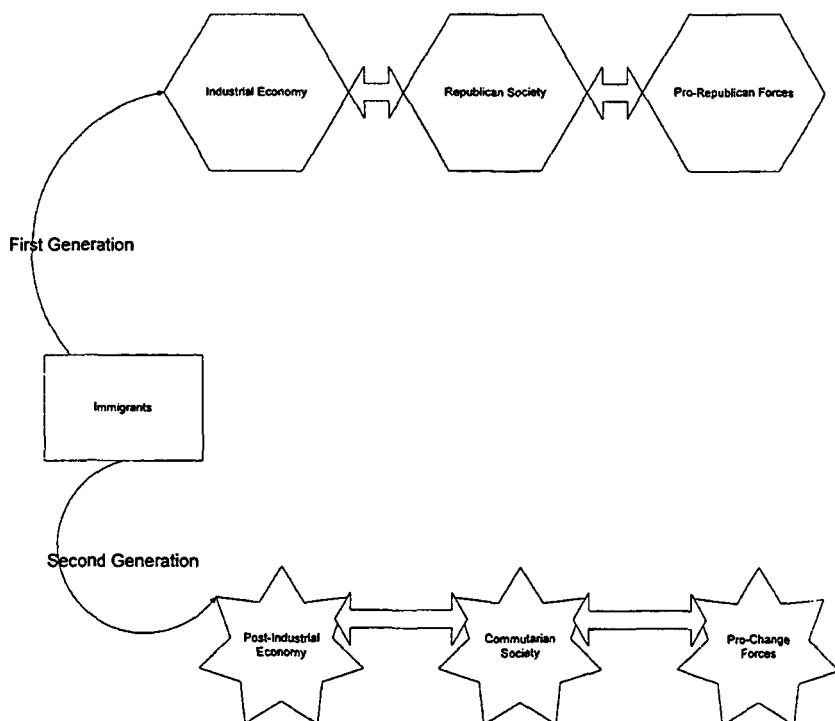
The gap between the intelligentsia and the worker will become greater if the concept of work disappears as a core requirement of French life. The younger generation thinks of its privileges as a right, rather than a consequence of their own effort and of the productivity of French society. French education and work habits need to change in order for France to become viable. If immigration is too easy, the immigrants will do the dirty work and the new-generation French youth will not participate in a realistic manner in the functioning of the French

economy. They will "live off" the work of others and become a generation of parasites.

IMMIGRATION AS A DYNAMIC FACTOR SHAPING FRENCH POLICY

In short, immigration has become a key factor in the overall dynamics of change within France. These dynamics are summarized in Figure 2 below:

FIGURE 2



Decision-Making Filters

In addition to the impact of the broad trends of domestic development identified above, there are 'decision-making filters' which affect the range of action by the Chirac government. Here I have in mind key domestic 'players' or perceptual factors which shape the *art of the possible* for the Chirac government and the *paths of legitimate actions* by that government.

HISTORICAL LEGACIES

Foreign policy remains a key aspect of action by the President of the *République*. Public perceptions are shaped in part by the benchmark of historical legacies in judging the actions of the President of the *République*.

Notably, the French experience in Algeria historically remains a key element by which the French public judges actions by the President of the *République*.¹⁷ In part, the President is supposed to have a policy toward Algeria because of the historical stake which France had in Algeria. Algeria was the last vestige of a significant colonial stake for France and part of the French definition of themselves as more than people simply occupying a part of Europe. As such, Algeria remains important symbolically.

The French experience in Africa also takes on significance as a measure of French power and influence outside of Europe.¹⁸ Notably, one of Chirac's first trips as President of the *République* was to Africa.¹⁹ During this visit in July 1995 he laid out several of the themes of his Presidency with regard to foreign policy. Indeed, during the campaign for the presidency, Chirac and his supporters were very critical of Balladur's propensity to play down the African legacy in favor of a European and Western role for France in the new world of East-West interdependence.

ECONOMIC STAKES AND LEGACIES

Among the key instruments of French influence in North Africa and Africa have been economic presence and foreign aid. Balladur sought to shift emphasis from support for African development to French economic development and European Union aid. He sought to shift from bilateralism to multilateralism. Chirac not only criticized this but during his trip to Africa underscored the continuity of the Gaullist legacy by including in his entourage the aged advisor of De Gaulle – Foccart.²⁰

But economic difficulties have raised the specter of a foreign aid debate within France which affects the African presence of France.²¹ Challenges within the European Union (EU) have led to conflicts among key partners over the levels and direction of aid to Africa as well.²²

The privatization of key French firms may undercut the use of state enterprises to support French state actions in Africa and the Middle East as well. The internationalization of the French economy indeed is part of a strategic shift away from state sponsored interventions in Africa and the Middle East toward greater activities within Europe and the United States.

THE 'LOBBIES AND ADVISORS'

Historical involvement, economic stakes and cultural involvement in North

Africa and the Middle East have led to the emergence of a large group of influential lobbies and advisors in Paris shaping French involvement in the region.²³ The activities of states throughout Africa and the Middle East are channeled in part through the 'private' apparatus of power in Paris. The RPR has strong ties to the Arab and African lobbies and, indeed, significant funding has come from these lobbies for the party.

Generational ties and experiences of former residents of colonies remain of significance as well. The 'pied noires' are an example of a continuing sense of history shaping the present. Memories of past generations living in North Africa continue to shape perceptions of activists in articulating French interests in the region.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF STAKES AND INTERESTS

Broad public opinion affecting activity in the Islamic zone is obviously shaped by the debate about immigration identified above. But in addition, there are three key aspects of public opinion shaping choices.

First, after the Cold War ended, the French public has increasingly focused upon the threat from terrorism.²⁴ Above, all the proximate causes of terrorism for the French come from instability in North Africa and the Middle East. The modern means of terrorism associated with communication and transportation interdependence has made the blurring of Europe and the Islamic Mediterranean possible and threatening to the French way of life.

Second, there is a clear fracturing of generations in terms of perceived priorities.²⁵ For the generations over 45, there are memories of the Cold War and World War II. There has been an experience of significant economic growth and the emergence of a new Europe. There is a strong historical memory of the strategic threats to stability from war and conflict. Within the over 45 generations, a sense of a strategic stake in the stability of North Africa and the Middle East is evident and resonates with the 'lessons of history'.

For the generations under 45, this is much less the case. The experience of stability within Europe is the reality.²⁶ Economic difficulties have seemed out of place in a Europe of social benefits and privileges. Here the concern is economic benefit and social stability. There is no evident strategic vision and conflicts over immigration substitute for any sense of a broader historical struggle in the Middle East and in North Africa.

Finally, there has been a broad shift in public opinion toward European development and away from concern with the historical commitments to the French presence in Africa. The debate about European development in today's France is about the scope and direction of French development itself. There is concern with the impact of outside threats on the growth and

development of Europe, rather than a sense of the need to include non-European regions within a global pattern of interlocking regions of prosperity. There is a clear disjuncture between elite discussions of inclusion of the Mediterranean within Europe and public perceptions of the threat of the Mediterranean to European development.

THE RESTRUCTURING OF NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Another key filter for the definition of policy in the region has been the shift in French national security policy away from the Cold War balance toward low-intensity and peacekeeping operations outside of the defense of the NATO treaty zone.²⁷

The Gaullist security concept emphasized a priority upon deterrence of the Russians and a continued low-level engagement in Africa. Now the public perception of the shift in threat is so strong, that there has been much evident negative public reaction against the resumption of French nuclear testing. For the public, it is not clear what role nuclear weapons has in dealing with the main national security threat to France – from the Mediterranean.

And the French national security community is indeed shifting to a priority on dealing with threats of the type which might emanate from North Africa and the Middle East. The post-Cold War national security concept and approach has begun to emphasize the following: missile defense of France and other European states from the South; rapid intervention forces to operate with key European and other allies to stop threats from reaching Europe; the use of the historical legacies of the French Army in Africa and the colonies to restructure the French military for peacekeeping missions; and a reliance upon the nuclear forces to deter the Russians (rather than keeping regular large army formations for use in an East–West war).

A MEDITERRANEAN BASIN CONCEPT AND THE CONVERGENCE OF FRENCH INTERESTS

The fragments of filters of decision-making can be seen to coalesce around a new concept of the Mediterranean basin as the key challenge to French national security and foreign policy outside of Europe. The old concept of a Euro-Arab dialogue has gone up in smoke and been buried in the sands of Kuwait in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War. In its place has emerged a new ideal of Mediterranean development.

For the French at least four ideas come together for the 'Mediterranean Idea'.²⁸

– The rejection of Islamic fundamentalism and the nurturing of a secular

Islam in the region. France is perceived to be, along with Italy and Spain, part of the Islamic basin;

- A sense of the threat from terrorism in the region and from state-supported aggressions against the European way of life;
- A sense that the historical legacy of African involvement provides France with a legitimate place at the table in shaping Western-African-Middle East relations;
- And a possible disjuncture between the public and the elite on the capacity for Europe to absorb the 'other side' of the Mediterranean in an emergent common economic space. At least some members of the French foreign policy elite place an emphasis upon the possibility of an expanded zone of economic and cultural relations between North Africa and the EU along the model of the NAFTA and other emergent regional economic zones in the world economy.

EXTERNAL FACTORS SHAPING FRENCH POLICY: STRATEGIC CONSTRAINTS AND CHOICES

There are three broad categories of external forces shaping French choice in policy toward North Africa and the Islamic Challenge:

- Events in the Maghreb and the Middle East with regard to the Islamic approach to development;
- Actions and policies of West European partners in shaping cultural influences, social policies and European Union approaches to the Islamic world;
- Actions by the United States in shaping the strategic environment within which France deals with the Mediterranean.

THE MAGHREB, THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ISLAMIC CHALLENGE

The French analyses of the challenges from the Maghreb and the Middle East focus above all upon the Algerian crisis and the impact or inter-relationship of that crisis to the Islamic movement in the Mediterranean.²⁹ Algeria represents the time bomb against a broader sea of conflict and development in the region.

The Broader Challenge

Most French analysts of the Islamic challenge in the Mediterranean see a highly interactive environment among the dynamics of change throughout

the region. The crises in Algeria, Bosnia, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq each present significant differences. But élites and counter-élites in the region see linkages among these variant crises. Also, there are organizational and informational linkages among various elements of the Islamic world.

A significant reason why the French government sees a need for a multi-ethnic resolution of the Bosnian crisis is the perceived impact of the elimination of a Muslim-enclave in Bosnia upon developments in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, the French press has been noting with increasing frequency the participation of various Islamic forces in supplying weapons and forces to Muslims in Bosnia. The validity of the Western approach to secularism, tolerance and multi-ethnic states is seen to be hanging in the balance with the Bosnian crisis.

Some French analysts see a domino effect in the region – radicalism in one part undercutting moderation.³⁰ The task for the West is to combat fundamentalism as the enemy and to reinforce non-fundamentalist states and movements in the region.

Other French analysts see a highly interactive process but without necessarily creating a domino effect.³¹ Differences among Islamic movements is seen to be so significant that success of one branch of Islam does not necessarily lead to the inevitable victory of fundamentalism. For these analysts, fundamentalism should not be explicitly identified as the enemy of the West. Rather, the West should pursue a policy of differentiation in the region to undercut a theological view of Islam.

By blocking the ability of fundamentalist states to operate as a subversive grand coalition the West will significantly attenuate fundamentalism as a threat to western interests in the Mediterranean. This means working with fundamentalist states, not quarantining them.

Still others see a clear conflict between the forces of development (with an emphasis on greater internationalization and secularism) and the forces of isolation and militancy.³² The forces of militancy represent a reactionary, not progressive vision of the future and as such will be undercut by forces of economic development and change, it is believed.

Iran is a case in point. As Iran re-enters the process of regional economic development, fundamentalism will be undercut by the inevitable social changes associated with economic development. Islamic fundamentalism is seen to be incompatible with advanced industrial development.

North Africa and Turkey

An emphasis upon inclusion of the Mediterranean Islamic states in the European Union – Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco – and the provision of aid to the region is seen by French analysts as a key tool to promoting development at the expense of fundamentalism. The French government

and the élite has focused growing attention upon the need to have a closer relationship with Turkey precisely as buffer to the impact of theocratic Islam upon Europe and its interests in the Mediterranean.³³

Tunisia and Morocco are notable examples of the challenge of inclusion economically within the EU and key states worthy of French aid.

Tunisia is referred to by some French analysts as the most 'European' of the Maghrebian states.³⁴ France sees Tunisia as the key state for future containment of the spill over impact of an Islamic regime in Algeria and is actively promoting ties to the Tunisian government.

In the French view, Turkey represents the buffer state to the East and Tunisia to the South in containing the overspill impact from Islamic fundamentalism in the region.

Morocco is seen as also an early potential adherent in an expanded EU as a reward for promoting secularist Islamic stability. Underlining the importance of Morocco to the EU and specifically France, one of President Jacques Chirac's first foreign visits was to Rabat.

Algeria

The conflict between the military-dominated regime in Algeria and the Islamic opposition is seen as one providing France with very few good opportunities for seeing the desired outcome of the Algerian development for France – social stability, economic development and political commitment to a secular government respecting but not dominated by Islam.

Through the last two years, there has been a surge of publications in France assessing developments within Algeria. French analysts of Algeria have provided a wide range of assessment of the spectrum of possibilities in Algeria today.³⁵

On one end of the spectrum, the current conflicts are seen by French analysts to be a stage in the transition to democratic development in Algeria. The diversity of the country and the experience of independence dominated by a secular regime provides a fertile soil for the rejection of Islamic extremism.

On the other end of the spectrum, the crisis in Algeria is seen by French analysts to undercut the government and to restore the siege mentality which Algeria lived through during the war for independence. The actions of the military are seen to have eroded the basis of legitimacy for the secular state, leaving Islam as the only source of legitimacy for a one-party state. The correlation of the return of the siege mentality with the evaporation of state legitimacy and deepening of commitment by radicals to theocratic Islam is seen to provide the grounds for the real possibility of creation of an Islamic state in Algeria (see Figure 3).

WEST EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND THE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The West European partners of France affect French policy toward North Africa and Islam in at least three major ways.

First, EU policies and the struggle to shape the strategic direction of the EU provide a framework within which France deals with the Mediterranean.

Second, specific national policies of key partners affect the efficacy of national policies on discrete issues, like immigration and the struggle against terrorism.

Third, the processes of integration within Western Europe have enhanced the significance of the impact of non-French European cultural experiences upon French policies and approaches to dealing with key challenges of development.

The European Union

The EU provides the major foreign policy framework for France outside the national context. Indeed, the work style of the foreign policy apparatus often places key officials in closer contact with members of European partner governments than with the French people. This is one source of alienation of the public from EU activity. Means of communication and transportation linkages provide the virtual office for diplomats of the EU.

The EU provides the framework for economic development within which France shapes relations with the Maghreb and the Islamic countries of the Middle East. The broad incentive for these countries is to enhance their economic and political relations with the EU. France uses its key position within the EU and in the Maghreb to act as an interlocutor.³⁷ The French have sought a transmutation of their colonial heritage into a key interlocutor role between Europe and the Maghreb.

To enhance the ability of France to play this role, Paris has sought to augment the power and significance of the Mediterranean lobby within the EU. This has meant augmenting the cooperation among Rome, Madrid and Paris. The French have sought to develop the conceptual language and approaches which would strengthen the role of the Mediterranean lobby within the EU.

For example, the French have promoted joint military exercises with the Spanish and Italians to protect joint interests in the Mediterranean. They have sought to create a new southern orientation to the West European Union as the WEU has become recognized as the military arm of the EU.

In addition, the French have sought with its European Mediterranean partners to strengthen the aid outreach of the EU to the South. Throughout 1995 the British and French have been in significant conflict over the orientation of EU aid. The French sought a bargain with the Germans on a

balance between Eastern and Southern orientations for the outreach of the EU in part to contain the British pressures.³⁸

The presidency of the EU for half of 1995 was held by the Spanish. France worked closely with Spain to try to reinforce a southern orientation to the EU. In the Fall of 1995 a conference was held by the EU with the Islamic Mediterranean states. The conference placed some markers on the table to try and measure progress or not to a southern orientation in future EU expansion.

National Policies of Key Partners

The nation-state remains the key actor within the EU and, indeed, the restructuring of the EU being debated today in Western Europe plus the expansion of the EU itself may strengthen the role of the nation-state *vis-à-vis* the commission. As such, the national policies of key partners of France within the EU are central in shaping both the impact of specific policies on France and upon the orientation of the EU understood as the broad framework for shaping French and European foreign policy outside of Europe.

A notable area of divergence and conflict among the EU nations is over control of national borders, immigration and policies for dealing with terrorism. The EU has tried to reconcile national differences to forge a common policy. Indeed, much progress has been made in this regard. But the priority which the French place on fighting terrorism will limit their willingness to cooperate with EU partners seen to be less strict in dealing with this threat.

In the summer of 1995 there was significant press coverage of the threat to France posed by the terrorist networks based throughout Western Europe.³⁹ The French press asked: 'Why do we French have to be threatened by terrorists operating on West European territory? Why should we support a EU policy for common national controls when our partners do not protect us from terrorist threats?'

The capture of an alleged Algerian terrorist in Sweden elevated these questions to the front pages of the 1995 vacation period in France. The Swedes only recently joined the EU. If the Swedish approach to asylum is seen to take precedence over perceived French requirements for a common tough EU policy against terrorists, the French reluctance to adopt common border controls will be enhanced.

Diffusion of Cultural Experiences

The processes of integration associated with the construction of the EU and the evolution of a post-industrial society has accelerated the impact of cultural diffusion of different national cultures upon one another within Europe. A cultural learning cycle has emerged within Western Europe whereby innovations in one part of Europe influence the evolution of

approaches and policies in another part of Western Europe.

The most significant aspect of cultural diffusion for the shaping of French policy toward the Maghreb and Islam is the impact of divergent approaches to immigration and assimilation upon both migrants and citizens within France.

For example, the Turks in France are a fragment of both European and Turkish history. Unlike the classic Maghrebian immigration, the Turkish community in France does not seek assimilation at all. Heavily influenced by experiences of the Turkish community in Germany, the Turkish community in France increasingly articulates its demands for recognition as a community. The Turkish community also has no experience with the Republican ideals of France. Hence, the Turkish community in France represents an interesting case study of the impact of European partner's experiences in dealing with immigration and assimilation upon the French legacy and approach.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Although one could identify significant impacts of US domestic development upon France and its policies toward Islam, there is very little attention paid by French analysts and journalists to such an assessment. Rather, the United States is seen to affect French interests by its capacity to shape or reflect linkages in the Mediterranean strategic environment.

The implicit judgment of French analysts and policymakers is that the United States remains a superpower in one important way – only the US can forge alliances among players in the region by manipulating external forces and pressures upon those players. Washington has significant military assets in the region and can introduce even more dramatic military capabilities in a crisis. The US is the core of any broad coalition building capacity in the region and among non-Mediterranean players. The US has a significant role in international organizations and can shape a variety of instruments of international aid. And the US is the key ally of the wild card in the region – Israel.

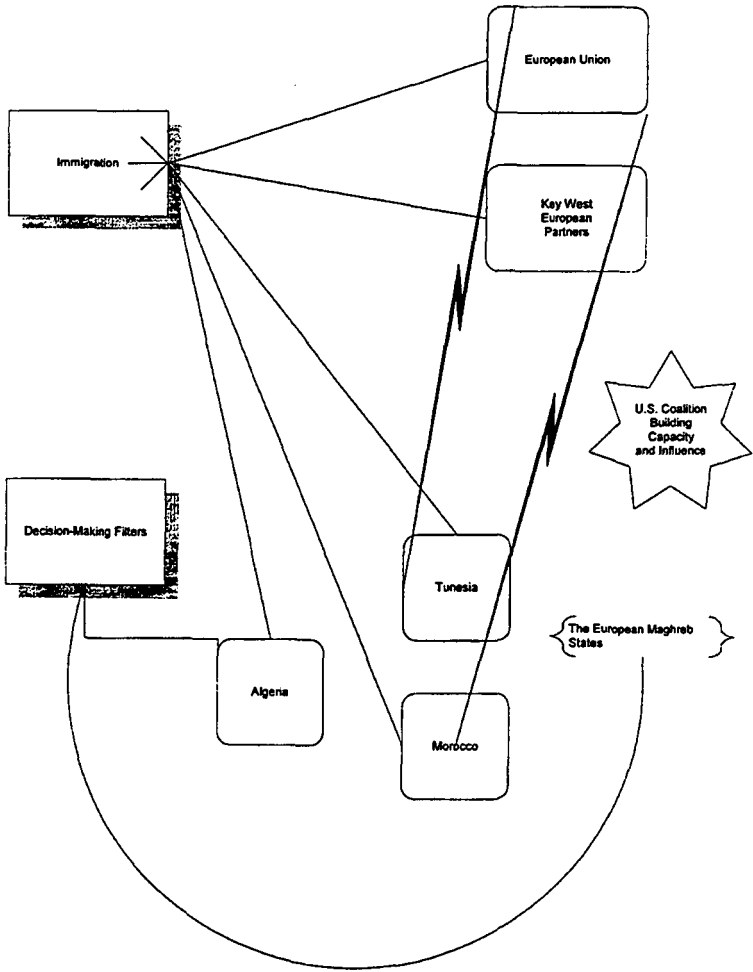
French policymakers exhibited much concern with Clinton administration policies in the Maghreb during its first two years. Nonetheless, more recently, Washington has been seen to be more cautious concerning its ability to introduce reform in the region and multi-ethnic pluralism as part of the 'democratic engagement' strategy of the Clinton Administration.

The election of Chirac as President of the *République* has brought to power a politician who believes the importance of working closely with Washington. But this is seen more as a strategic fact of life than as a desire

to follow the American lead. Rather, Chirac and his administration seem bent on influencing Washington to assist Paris in forging a Mediterranean policy supportive of French interests. This approach clearly shaped Chirac's visit to Washington in the winter of 1995.

The impact of external factors on the framework for French policy is summarized in Figure 4 below:

FIGURE 4
CORE DYNAMICS OF EXTERNAL INFLUENCE



CONCLUSIONS

French policy toward the Maghreb and Islam under President Chirac contains several interactive elements combining domestic and foreign dynamics of continuity and change. These elements are shaped by the broad policy framework identified and assessed in this article. These elements are summarized in the first sub-section of the conclusion; and the final sub-section summarizes the nature of the broad policy framework shaping Chirac administration policy.

KEY ELEMENTS OF POLICY

President Chirac has sought to revive the image of continuity with de Gaulle and the classic mission of France in Africa and the Maghreb. At the same time, he has indicated a change in how that mission would be played out – France would spearhead a reform of the EU to expand relations to the South and work with other key Mediterranean members of the EU. He indicated change as well in seeking good relations with Washington in forging a broader partnership between Europe and the United States in redefining a Mediterranean bargain for the region.

But any strategic initiatives are seriously constrained and defined by the realities of the interaction between immigration and domestic development. Economic, cultural and political development are closely intertwined with the processes of immigration, assimilation and the evolution of the nature of community in the new Euro-Mediterranean region.

At the same time, the capacity of France to shape strategic options and to frame domestic choices are inextricably intertwined by actions of the EU and of key West European states and cultures. Developments in the Maghreb, Turkey, Bosnia, Israel and the Gulf shape the nature of pressures upon France and the interactive role of the United States and Europe in framing a Mediterranean policy.

Under Chirac, France will seek to pursue the following objectives with regard to the Mediterranean region and Islam:

- Augment multilateral aid to the region and to stabilize bilateral aid.
- Reinforce secular Islam at the expense of fundamentalism.
- Strengthen the capacity of France and the EU to fight against terrorism.
- Pursue a hardline policy with regard to a common borders policy in the EU.
- Seek to promote reform in Algeria without openly undercutting the government.
- Seek to work closely with Spain and Italy in finding ways to resolve the

economic conflict with Morocco and Tunisia over improved relations.

- Seek to enhance the role of Morocco and Tunisia along with Turkey as buffers to the threat from fundamentalist Islam.
- Seek to have a major success at the aid and development conference on the Mediterranean in fall 1996.
- Reinforce the capacity of West European Mediterranean states to act in their collective defense against threats from the South.
- Work with the United States to enhance the capacity of Southern Europe to be defended by NATO capabilities.
- Seek to influence the United States to work with Iran and Iraq as possible in order not to isolate Islamic states from processes of development and normalization.
- Reinforce the notion of assimilation of immigrants on the lines of the classical French model of the citizen.
- Use the employment crisis to reinforce the role of the state and of the model of the citizen of the Republic.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

The spectrum of choice in French policy toward North Africa and Islam falls along a continuum defining the future development of France within Europe.

On one end of the spectrum is a clustering of attitudes and policies toward enhancing the role of the state, social corporatism and the defense of the nation. Here policy toward Islam and North Africa is one of a defensive France and a tendency toward combating terrorism and fundamentalism.

On the other end of the spectrum is a clustering of attitudes and policies toward reducing the role of the state, enhancing France's openness to the world and to the successful inclusion of the Islamic community as a secular force within the Euro-Mediterranean community.

In short, the continuum can be conceptualized as follows:

Key Variable	State Corporatism and the Defense of the Nation	New State-Society Relationship: France as an Open Community
Terrorism	High	Low
Algerian Conflict	High	Low
Economic Growth and Development	Low	High
State Job Creation	High	Low
European Union Cooperation and Coordination	Low	High

NOTES

1. For an insightful treatment of the foreign-domestic merging of the Islamic challenge see Gilles Kepel, *À l'ouest d'Allah* (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1994).
2. The intersection of domestic and foreign dynamics of change in reshaping French security policy is a key theme of my National Defense U. McNair paper published as *French Security Policy in Transition: Dynamics of Continuity and Change* (Washington DC: Nat. Def. U., 1995) McNair Paper 38.
3. See Anne Roze, *La France Arc-En-Ciel: Les Français venus d'ailleurs* (Paris: Editions Julliard 1995) and Michèle Tribalat (ed.) *Cent ans d'immigration, étrangers d'hier français d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques 1991).
4. For a detailed statistical treatment of immigration in the French economy, society and culture see *Les étrangers en France: Portrait social* (Paris: INSEE 1994).
5. See, e.g., Jean Bossonnat (ed.) *Le Travail dans vingt ans* [Rapport de la Commissariat général du Plan] (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1995) and Gérard Blanc (ed.) *Le travail au XXI^e siècle* (Paris: Dunod 1995).
6. On the assimilation challenge see the following: Jean-Claude Barreau, *De l'immigration en général et de la nation française en particulier* (Paris: Belfond, 1992); Emmanuel Todd, *Le destin des immigrés: Assimilation et ségrégation dans les démocraties occidentales* (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1994); and Jean-Claude Chesnais, *Le crépuscule de l'occident: Démographie et politique* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont 1995).
7. Béatrice Compagnon and Anne Thévenin, *L'école et la société française* (Paris: Editions complexe 1995).
8. See 'Être Français?' *Crises* (No.2 1994).
9. On the role of the state in France and its difficult transition see René Lenoir and Jacques Lesourme, *Où va l'Etat? La souveraineté économique et politique en question* (Paris: Editions Le Monde 1992).
10. For a general treatment of comparative types of assimilation of immigrants see *Migration and Development: New Partnerships for Cooperation* (Paris: OECD 1994).
11. For shifting attitudes see Adil Jazouli, 'Les jeunes Beurs dans la société française', in Olivier Duhamel and Jérôme Jaffré (eds.) *L'état de l'opinion, 1995* (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1995) pp.157-76.
12. See e.g. 'Islam en France: Les intégristes sapent la République' *Le Point*, 2 March 1996 and a special issue of *Esprit* entitled, 'Vers une société de pluriactivité?' in *Esprit* (Dec. 1995).
13. See e.g. Alain Cotta, *La troisième révolution française* (Paris: Editions Jean-Claude Lattès 1995).
14. See the assessment by Guy Birenbaum in his book *Le front national en politique* (Paris: Editions Balland, 1992).
15. See e.g. Dominique Sanchez, 'Le PCF invente la lutte amicale contre Chirac', *Liberation*, 25 Aug. 1995, p.12.
16. See e.g. Patrick Weil, 'La police s'en prend à tort à l'immigration légale', *Le Nouvel Economiste*, 16 June 1995, pp.58-9.
17. See e.g. Jacques Frémeaux, *Le monde arabe et la sécurité de la France depuis 1958* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1995).
18. See e.g. Claude Wauthier, *Quatre Présidents et l'Afrique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1995).
19. See e.g. 'Jacques Chirac annonce un doublement de l'aide française au Maroc', *Les Echos*, 21-22 July 1995, p.4; and 'Jacques Chirac dénonce l'égoïsme du gouvernement américain en Afrique', *ibid.* 24 July 1995, p.5.
20. Philippe Gaillard, *Foccart parle* (Paris: Editions Fayard 1995) Vol.1.
21. See e.g. Observatoire permanent de la Coopération française, *Rapport 1995* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer 1995).
22. For a treatment of the conflict between Britain and France at the European summit at Cannes in July 1995 see 'Bras de fer franco-britannique sur l'aide à l'Afrique', *Les Echos*, 24 July 1995, p.8.
23. See e.g. Nicolas Beau, *Paris, Capitale Arabe* (Paris: Editions due Seuil 1995).
24. The annual assessments provided by SOFRES for the French government on public attitudes

- on national security policy demonstrate this trend quite clearly. The studies are released annually in the fall by SIRPA.
25. For a fascinating treatment of generational change in France see Georges Tapinos (ed.) *La France dans deux générations: Population et société dans le premier tiers du XXI^e siècle* (Paris: Editions Fayard 1992).
 26. The studies of SOFRES indicate the generational shifts and I would like to thank Didier Witkowski of SOFRES for discussing this and other public opinion issues with me.
 27. The major changes in French national security policy announced by President Chirac in Feb. 1996 have focused upon the need for France to operate more effectively in the new post-Cold War environment.
 28. See e.g. Paul Balta, *La Méditerranée réinventée: Réalités et espoirs de la coopération* (Paris: Editions la découverte 1992).
 29. An important aspect of the interaction between domestic and foreign dynamics is the key role of European Islamic populations. See the important study by Bernard Lewis and Dominique Schnapper (eds.) *Musulmans en Europe* (Poitiers: Actes Sud 1992).
 30. See e.g. Philippe Aziz, *Le Paradoxe de Roubaix* (Paris: Plon 1996) which includes report from the Ministry of the Interior to the Elysée regarding the threat of the radicalization of French youth into Islamic movements.
 31. See e.g. Ghassan Salamé (ed.) *Démocraties sans démocrates: Politiques d'ouverture dans le monde arabe et islamique* (Paris: Fayard 1994).
 32. See e.g. François Burgat, *L'islamisme en face* (Paris: Editions la découverte 1995).
 33. For an insightful treatment of general trends in the Maghreb see Bassma Kodmani-Darwish (ed.) *Maghreb: les années de transition* (Paris: Editions Masson 1990).
 34. See e.g. the special section in *Les Echos*, 1 June 1995, pp.15–22, on Tunisia as the 'European state' of the Maghreb.
 35. Among these publications are the following: a sp. issue of *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* pub. in early 1995 on Algeria (No.36–7, Winter 1994 and Spring 1995) entitled *L'Algérie*; Amine Touati, *Algérie, les islamistes à l'assaut du pouvoir* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan 1995); Gérard Ignasse and Emmanuel Wallon (eds.) *Demain l'Algérie* (Paris: Syros 1995); Omar Carlier, *Entre Nation et Jihad: Histoire sociale des radicalismes algériens* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po 1995); Rémy Leveau, *L'Algérie dans la guerre* (Paris: Editions Complexe 1995); Pierre Robert Baduel, ed., *L'Algérie incertaine* (Paris Édisud 1995); Lahouari Addi, *L'Algérie et la démocratie: Pouvoir et crise du politique dans l'algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Editions la découverte 1995); François Burgat, *L'islamisme au Maghreb* (Paris: Editions Payot and Rivages 1995), rev. ed. with first ed. pub. in 1988; Ghazi Hidouci, *Algérie: La libération inachevée* (Paris: Editions la découverte 1995); and Benjamin Stora, *L'Algérie en 1995: La guerre, l'histoire, la politique* (Paris: Editions Michalon 1995).
 36. For an assessment of Pasqua see Thierry Desjardins, *Pasqua: Portrait étonnant d'un ministre surprenant* (Paris: Édition Première 1994).
 37. Throughout the preparation for the 1996 IGC, the French have emphasized a need to focus upon the challenges from the South.
 38. This bargain seems to have been reached and is reflected in the joint statements of the Germans and French on EU policy in 1995 and 1996.
 39. The scope of the consensus on this is revealed by the convergent treatment of immigration issues by the left and the right-wing media. See the cover story in *Valeurs Actuelles*, 26 Aug.–1 Sept. 1995, with the cover story in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 24–30 Aug. 1995.