

3. FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND'S EARLY SUMMITS: 1981 - 1985

A. OTTAWA, 19-21 July 1981

François Mitterrand was elected President in May 1981. In June his socialist party won a massive victory in the ensuing legislative elections. Of the seven heads of state or government at the Ottawa summit, he was, with Ronald Reagan of the US, one of four newcomers. The new President of the European Commission, Gaston Thorn, was also part of this changing of the guard. For the G-7, Ottawa was a transition summit, an exploratory non-decisional meeting, during which the new group of leaders showed restraint in expressing their differing positions on the key issues that were to dominate the summits until Tokyo II in 1986. The most pronounced divergence of views was between Reagan and Mitterrand, on issues that included high US interest rates, the corresponding level of the dollar, international trade, East-West commercial relations and the North-South gap. Indeed, the "dialectic between Reagan and Mitterrand would colour all the summits of the early 1980's."³⁹

Mitterrand, unlike his predecessor Giscard, was not a trained economist. In his long political career he had never had an economic portfolio. Furthermore, he had campaigned against the policy of "austérité". After more than twenty years spent in opposition, the socialist party's new government quickly implemented its promised policies of increased spending for welfare and employment, while undertaking an extensive nationalization programme. This Keynesian approach to public expenditures was clearly out of phase with prevailing international economic policy trends. On Mitterrand's part, it amounted to a calculated risk taken on the assumption that France's financial reserves would suffice to generate growth until the Western recovery that was then mistakenly expected by the end of 1981. By 1982 - 1983, the far-reaching economic and political consequences of this miscalculation would lead to a historical shift in French socialist policy orientation, a change which would be reflected at the summit level.

Mitterrand was not a neophyte in international affairs. He had been a cabinet minister many times prior to 1958 and more recently had served as Vice-President of the Socialist International. Still, his participation in the Ottawa summit was his first appearance on the international stage as President. As such, it was of considerable symbolic importance, especially since he had just appointed four members of the pro-Moscow French communist party as ministers in his government. Already having an absolute majority in the National Assembly without its support, he effectively diminished the communist party by co-opting it. The four communist ministers were given responsibilities unrelated to economic and national security matters. Furthermore, Mitterrand's firm position on East-West security matters - tougher than the one adopted by the centre-right Giscard had been - quickly reassured summit and NATO member states, in particular the US.⁴⁰

The new French foreign minister, Claude Cheysson, was a career diplomat. As EEC Commissioner in charge of relations with the third world, he was the European architect

of the Lomé convention. His appointment was due in part to his strong commitment to North-South issues. Mitterrand's sherpa was Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, a highly respected academic and former minister under De Gaulle, whose transitional appointment signalled a degree of continuity in French policy.

The three principal issues at the Ottawa summit were high US interest rates, East-West commercial relations and North-South relations. On all three questions, Mitterrand adopted positions that conformed to basic French foreign policy orientations at the previous summits. Apart from very real nuances concerning East-West strategic relations, the differences between Mitterrand and Giscard would prove not to centre on the actual definition of the French national interest, but rather on temporary differences of underlying analyses.

On the American interest rates, budget deficit and strong dollar, the French, faithful to their traditional goal of exchange rate stability, joined in unanimous criticism of "Reaganomics" by the rest of the G-7. As would remain the case until 1985, the Americans made no concessions. In 1981-1982, Mitterrand differed from the other critics by his advocacy of a looser US monetary policy to solve the problem. This approach to both macroeconomic and monetary policies was to single out France among the G-7 for the first two years of Mitterrand's presidency. As Putnam and Bayne put it:

If the issue was simply the strong dollar and US interest rates, then the Americans were isolated; but if the issue became monetarism versus Keynesianism, then the French were on their own.⁴¹

On East-West commercial relations, France, along with the other Europeans, resisted US plans to apply economic pressure on the USSR, including retroactive curtailment of credit arrangements and technology transfers. This resistance was rooted in economic self-interest as well as in a different assessment of the political effectiveness of such measures. It is important to note that only two months after Mitterrand's election, the Americans were already confident of the French socialist President's commitment to the convergence of his conception of the French national interest and western security interests. In a separate meeting, held during the summit, Mitterrand had been successful in putting to rest Reagan's remaining fears on this subject. The Americans were sufficiently reassured on this point that Mitterrand even lost a certain traditional French margin of maneuver. As a result, the French failed in an attempt to link their solidarity in Western security matters to American nonintervention in Franco-Soviet commercial relations.

The third issue dealt with at the Ottawa summit was North-South relations. The upcoming Cancun summit (22-23 October, 1981) to discuss a new world economic order was at the centre of Mitterrand's active "tiersmondisme". Just as Giscard had taken initiatives in this area at the beginning of his presidency, Mitterrand made third world development one of his more visible early foreign policy priorities, replacing his predecessor's more technocratic discourse by a humanitarian socialist view of the world. Along with the other members of the summit, in particular Canada, France succeeded only in getting American consent to very mild language on global negotiations and development assistance.

At the summit's end, French officials emphasized two points: first, the fact that François

Mitterrand had been very careful to insure that no summit statements contradicted his commitments as the first socialist President of the Fifth Republic; second, the necessity of European unity in the face of a new American assertiveness.⁴²

B. VERSAILLES, 4-6 June 1982

President Mitterrand hosted the 1982 summit in the most grandiose setting a French head of state could choose. With what was perceived at the time as the failure of this summit - "le fiasco de Versailles"⁴³ - Mitterrand's symbolic choice of locale was not the only aspect of the proceedings to draw criticism, as the setting had indeed been the measure of his ambitions for this event.

Versailles was the first summit for Mitterrand's sherpa Jacques Attali, a role he has since continued to play without interruption. The professional, intellectual and personal relationship that exists between Mitterrand and Attali is probably without parallel in the history of seven power summits. Attali, now in his mid-forties, is a senior civil servant and university professor. An economist, he is also a prolific author who has written on many subjects and occupies a most visible place in the French intelligentsia. Prior to Mitterrand's election, he was already one of his closest collaborators. Since 1981, he has been given the unique title in France of Special Advisor to the President. His functions are far-ranging and are a direct reflection of Mitterrand's interests. He serves first and foremost as an "ideas man". On a personal level, his relationship to Mitterrand is known to be a close one. In this capacity, his influence on French summit agenda priorities must not be underestimated.⁴⁴

Since the Ottawa summit, in only the first year since his election, Mitterrand had three additional meetings with Reagan, during which the contentious issues (US interest rates and monetary policy, East-West commercial relations, North-South relations) which were to once again dominate summit proceedings were discussed. Clearly, Mitterrand through personal diplomacy had invested a great deal in making the Versailles meeting successful.

Meanwhile the failure of the socialist government's Keynesian domestic economic policy was becoming apparent. Contrary to expectations, the Western recovery had not materialized by the end of 1981. The French balance of payments' deficit was growing steadily. There had already been a first devaluation of the franc within the EMS on 4 October 1981, and another one had already been secretly decided. It took place on 12 June 1982, less than a week after the summit's end. Having lost credibility as their own macroeconomic policy failed, the French were no longer in a position to openly question the dominant G-7 monetarist approach. As a consequence, France's isolation on this front constituted an underlying but omitted issue at Versailles. Also omitted was preliminary establishment of an agenda for GATT ministerial discussions. By linking trade liberalization to prior economic recovery, the French were successful in blocking US and German demands, thereby safeguarding EEC subsidies for agriculture and steel production.

As host, Mitterrand opened the summit with an ambitious proposal for international collaboration in developing the potential of new technologies. This wholly French initiative, directly attributable to Attali, was inauspiciously shelved by the other leaders who only agreed to a follow-up study of the subject.⁴⁵ As for the championing by Mitterrand of a redefinition of North-South economic order - the October 1981 Cancun conference theme and a necessary *bona fides vis à vis* the French left - no progress was to be forthcoming, as the American position did not evolve.

As in Ottawa the previous year, the dominant issues at Versailles were the impact on the world monetary system of high US interest rates, and the strategic implications of East-West commercial relations. However, this time, US-European confrontation over these two problems, as well as the unsuccessful attempt at a linkage trade-off between them, resulted in the so called Versailles fiasco. On the European side, France played the leading role throughout the three days of discussion.

As the summit began, tension was already high. In preparatory Franco-American negotiations, similar to ones preceding Rambouillet in 1975, a tenuous compromise had been worked out between French demands for stabilizing mechanisms and US non interventionism with regard to exchange rates. Eventually, in what can be judged as a then overlooked substantive achievement of Versailles, this compromise gave birth to the multilateral surveillance function of the Group of Five (G-5) and later Group of Seven (G-7) Finance Ministers. At the time, in view of downward pressures on the franc, Mitterrand's and his Finance Minister Delors' calls for monetary stability were of an urgent nature. Simultaneously, in the wake of the martial law decree in Poland, the Reagan administration was considering and threatening to extend its embargo on Eastern block bound energy - related equipment and technology to West European subsidiaries of US firms. Such retroactive and extra-territorial measures were firmly condemned by the Europeans. Among them was France which in January 1982 had signed a twenty-five year contract with the USSR for natural gas supplies dependant on completion of a trans-European pipeline.

During the summit a complicated agreement, satisfactory to the French, was reached and actually incorporated in the distributed text of the final communiqué. Simply put, the terms of this deal were the following: Washington would not extend its embargo and would support the franc. In exchange, France and her European partners would in matters of credits to the Eastern block exercise collective self-discipline along American lines.

However, before the ink of the Versailles communiqué had dried, differences of interpretation were voiced on both sides. As both the French and Americans reneged on their commitments, each demanded that the other respect his. The deal was not implemented and bilateral tension rose, especially after the US did extend its embargo on 18 June. As a result, when questioned on the validity of future seven-power summits, Mitterrand for the first time criticized their actual usefulness. He stated: "My opinion is that, rather than doing something which serves no purpose, it is better not to do it."⁴⁶

Finally, the politicization of the summit's agenda, which the French continued to actively oppose, was rendered unavoidable by the ongoing Falklands war and the Israeli invasion of

southern Lebanon. Both counteracted Mitterrand's recent foreign policy initiatives. French support of the UK at the UN and through sanctions taken against Argentina was categorical, despite its negative impact on France's image as a friend of developing countries. The Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon curtailed Mitterrand's attempt at a measured reorientation of French policy in the Middle East.

The Versailles Summit, from the French point of view, remains the most problematic in the forum's fourteen year existence. One basic question stands out: Can a member of the summit, at least a state whose own national economy is not internationally dominant, successfully go against the overall trend of its partners' macroeconomic policy?⁴⁷ France's 1983 return to monetarist orthodoxy suggests that such opting out is not feasible.

C. WILLIAMSBURG, 28-30 May 1983

In March 1983, after a period of genuine hesitation on his part and of intense debate within his government, Mitterrand radically altered the course of French economic policy. His new policy of "rigueur" marked an important turning point in the French socialist political culture. Rather than withdraw from the EMS to then stimulate growth by renewed public spending in a domestic market protected by raised tariff barriers, Mitterrand opted for a restrictive anti-inflationary fiscal policy and the continuation of France's openness to the world economy. This involved the franc's third devaluation within the EMS in eighteen months, carried out on 21 March 1983. It involved as well the prolongation of wage and price controls already imposed in June 1982, the announcement of a FF20 billion reduction of the budget deficit, strict foreign exchange controls, an increase in income tax rates, and a long delayed industrial restructuring that would increase unemployment.⁴⁸ The Minister of Finance Jacques Delors who had been the staunchest proponent of "rigueur" for over a year was confirmed in his position and saw his powers increased.⁴⁹ For the next two years, Mitterrand's domestic political fortunes would deteriorate, with much criticism being directed at his management of the economy. Although this did not diminish his control of foreign policy, the French President's margin of maneuver on economic issues within the summit was clearly diminished.

In Europe, the Franco-German partnership was renewed. Paradoxically, this coincided with the arrival of the new conservative government of Chancellor Kohl, with whom Mitterrand has had a much better working relationship than he did with his own nominal ideological companion Schmidt. As regards East-West strategic problems and the EEC's development, the Mitterrand-Kohl link was to be of definite consequence. By 1988, the two leaders would have met to conduct talks more than fifty times.

In the year following Versailles, the tensions over East-West commercial relations had diminished as a result of quiet diplomacy - led by new US Secretary of State and former sherpa George Shultz - and adjustments in respective positions on both sides of the Atlantic. The mutual desire to avoid any repetition of the disunity shown at Versailles was obvious. So as to prevent any further damage to their bilateral relationship, one month prior to the

summit,

the French and the Americans had worked out what one insider later called "a well implemented non-aggression pact," with a private agreement between the two sherpas being confirmed by top-secret messages between the White House and the Elysée."⁵⁰

On international monetary and trade liberalization questions, Williamsburg was of minimal consequence. On 9 May 1983, Mitterrand had called for "a new Bretton Woods". This symbolic choice of words in calling for a conference devoted exclusively to monetary reform was only effective in positioning France at the forefront of any future discussion, as the U.S was still resisting any form of interventionism in monetary affairs. This statement, although not a product of the Finance Ministry but rather a direct presidential initiative and presumably drafted by Attali, showed continuity of French purpose as regards stabilization of exchange rates. Meanwhile, American interest rates and the dollar were to remain at record high levels for another two years, thereby constraining the policies of other summit states. In practical terms, Williamsburg did serve to confirm the multilateral surveillance function of the G-5 Finance Ministers as set out at Versailles. This emergence of an institutionalized version of the original Library Group met with French approval, since it corresponded to their enduring conception of the summit process as a means of international policy co-ordination.

As for international trade liberalization, the Americans were only capable of extracting from the other summit members a rather noncommittal undertaking of continued ministerial consultations concerning a proposed new GATT round. French resistance to opening up markets played a large role in this lack of progress. It was rooted in at least two structural causes: first, a historical statist and regulatory form of economic management, falling under the broad concept of "colbertisme", a tendency all the more pronounced as a result of the growing balance of payments deficit and the new restrictive policy of "rigueur" discussed above; second, the French economy's gradual loss of competitiveness within the OECD and the protectionist reaction to it. The loss of competitiveness is reflected in the evolution of its "solde des échanges" with its four main EEC partners (FRG, UK, Italy, Netherlands), which went from a -2,6% annual decline in 1971 to -57,0% in 1984.⁵¹ Since the late 1970s France's share of OECD markets has dwindled. It has also been affected by its reliance on an external market where demand in the 1980s has grown more slowly than average - OPEC and the developing countries. In addition, during this critical period, French export prices were raised, even though this trend was not warranted by changes in exchange rates. Its export prices went up by nearly 10% more than those of its competitors between 1982 and 1985, a period when the dollar's rise should have let France trim its relative prices. This was due to the fact that until the end of 1986 the government was controlling domestic prices by administrative fiat and, therefore, manufacturers recouped cost increases by raising export prices instead. Finally, since 1980, the French balance of current payments has shown only one annual surplus (FF20,2 billion) in 1986, which was followed by a deficit (FF26,7 billion) in 1987.⁵² In light of these trends, France's delaying tactics, if not outright resistance, in the face of international trade liberalization proposals is not surprising, and remains to this day a feature of its participation in the summit.

The dominant issue at Williamsburg was the American plan to issue a joint statement on

security, specifically East-West relations in their political-strategic dimension. In 1983, the Euromissiles deployment debate reached its height. Mitterrand's position in favour of deployment had been made clear in what was judged a historic speech to the German Parliament in January 1983. This tough stance vis à vis Soviet military power and the desire to preclude any rise of pan-Germanic neutralism formed the basis of his actions. In his speech to the Bundestag, he stated that "the determination and solidarity of NATO's members must be clearly confirmed."⁵³

Taking into consideration France's singular status within NATO, as inherited from De Gaulle's policy of independence and as having become the object of a rare national consensus, Mitterrand's speech represented an even greater commitment to Western collective security. However, the American-drafted joint statement on security, at least in its original form, was much too "Atlanticist" to be acceptable to the French.

In very difficult discussions, Mitterrand first opposed the very release of any statement that so clearly departed from a summit economic agenda, and then objected to a direct reference to NATO. Importantly, the UK's Thatcher, who favoured the Reagan joint statement approach, and Mitterrand joined forces to resist any possible inclusion of their own nuclear deterrents in US-USSR arms reduction negotiations. Finally, a joint statement was issued under American pressure. It did not refer to NATO, but in a significant broadening of the concept of occidental solidarity, it did see Japan sign for the first time a declaration on Western security. At the summit's end, French officials insisted that the statement did not in any way go beyond their President's Bundestag speech.⁵⁴ Gabriel Robin, Giscard's former diplomatic adviser and a critic of his successor's foreign policy, is of the opinion that the Williamsburg statement on security best expresses "the fundamental contradiction of Mr. Mitterrand's policy, torn between the Atlantism of his diplomacy and the independence of his strategy."⁵⁵

Although Williamsburg had marked a return to a smaller scale and non-decisional version of summitry - the continued French preference despite excesses to the contrary at Versailles - the French President soon after the summit once again questioned the usefulness of this forum as it had evolved. However, this recurrent criticism on the part of France as to process never led to its sometimes suggested or threatened withdrawal from the group.

D. LONDON II, 7-9 June 1984

The 1984 summit saw the beginning of a much less confrontational pattern of Franco-American relations within the summit. For Mitterrand, January to June 1984 was a period of intense involvement in European affairs. As President of the European Community for those six months - a job rotated among member countries for equal terms - he scored important diplomatic successes, especially in steering the Community to a compromise in the explosive decade-old dispute over the size of the UK's contribution to the budget. This European leadership on France's part would prove useful in London discussions concerning the GATT. The two other important issues on the economic agenda were high US interest

rates and third world debt.

On monetary policy, unanimous German-led criticism of the high interest rates and mounting budget deficit in the US were of no discernible consequence. The upcoming November 1984 presidential elections and the booming US economy made impossible any change in American policies. The Reagan administration even succeeded in keeping the problematic US trade deficit off the agenda.

In terms of economic performance, France stood alone. As recovery was underway in the other summit countries, the purge of "rigueur" meant that France still remained in a recession which would only give way to a measured recovery in 1985. Returning to the summit fold as regarded macroeconomic policy could not provide immediate comfort.

As concerned GATT, the Europeans arrived in Bonn apparently united behind the now traditional Franco-Italian position of continued resistance to American demands for the launching of a new "Reagan Round" by 1986. The French and Italian governments sought above all to preserve EEC subsidies of which they were the main beneficiaries, namely those relating to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which represent the bulk of the Community's budget. For France the CAP is of particular importance, in that agricultural production exports continue to be a major positive component of its deficit ridden balance of trade. During the summit discussions, Germany broke European ranks and sided with the US and Japan. Despite this unexpected defection, Mitterrand, supported by Craxi of Italy and President of the European Commission Thorn, very firmly held his ground. As a result only a minimal concession was made, in the form of a rather vague agreement to consult.

As concerned third world debt, in particular that of major Latin American countries (Mexico-Argentina-Brazil) then on the verge of defaulting, the French government, with the support of Canada, Italy and the European Commission, took a leading role in advocating that "a signal of open-mindedness" be sent to the debtors.⁵⁶ Although they succeeded in obtaining multi-year scheduling for selected debtors - significantly this was done via the increasingly influential G-5 Finance Ministers' channel - the dominant US-UK-FRG position could not be altered. It remained essentially a case-by-case approach to what the French viewed and continue to view as a global problem calling for solutions commensurate in scope. This reflects their well established view of North-South relations and Mitterrand's own brand of humanitarian socialism. Furthermore, France's calls for structural remedies to the problem of third world debt can only be properly understood in relation to its repeated demands for a reform of the international monetary system, the so-called new Bretton Woods.

In keeping with a trend in summit dynamics that the French have been unable to block, the London II political agenda was sufficiently important to produce four separate statements: on the Iran-Iraq War (which was not a source of debate); terrorism; shared democratic values; and East-West relations.

On terrorism, French and Italian resistance to any specific undertakings resulted in a very general statement. Both governments were in fact intent on avoiding any escalation in a war

of words with Libyan leader Kaddafi, which in their specific cases could adversely affect already complicated relations with Libya, and expose their populations to acts of terrorism. At the time and in the following years, as part of France's continued direct and weighty involvement in African affairs, Mitterrand was executing a delicate balancing act in his relations with Kaddafi. The French army and air force were actually participating in military operations to block Libyan expansion into Northern Chad. Meanwhile, secret bilateral negotiations were being conducted, and would actually lead to a November 1984 unsuccessful surprise Mitterrand-Kaddafi meeting in Crete.

The American and British draft of a declaration on democratic values - marking the fortieth anniversary of the end of the second world war - was considerably altered, in part as a result of French criticism.⁵⁷ As for the statement on East-West relations, stressing both resolve and readiness for dialogue, Mitterrand presented it as support for his then upcoming trip to Moscow (25-26 June 1984).⁵⁸ This Franco-Soviet summit was now deemed possible as the socialist President had by then amply demonstrated his toughness vis à vis the USSR. In fact, with the appointment of a new Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, and the accompanying cabinet shuffle in July 1984, the four communist ministers would soon be leaving the government, a departure of considerable symbolic importance.

Finally, as regards the summit process, Mitterrand expressed his rare satisfaction at the way the proceedings were conducted in London.

E. BONN II, 2-4 May 1985

In May 1985, the legislative elections of March 1986 already loomed large in France. The new Fabius government had begun to loosen somewhat the restrictions of "rigueur". Mitterrand, although not himself running as a candidate in the elections, faced the prospect of either having to resign or see his own powers radically diminished as the result of his party's expected defeat. His former Finance Minister Jacques Delors was now President of the European Commission, a position from which he would prove himself a useful defender of French interests. The new Finance Minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, did not deviate from the course set by his predecessor, and became a favorite of the private sector. More importantly, Roland Dumas had been appointed Foreign Minister. A close political and personal associate of the President, he was a well known lawyer and not a career diplomat. His only ties were to Mitterrand himself. As Minister in charge of European affairs reporting directly to Mitterrand, he had played a decisive role in the French 1984 diplomatic successes within the EEC. He was and is regarded as a pragmatic and skilled negotiator, who prior to joining the government had more than once served as Mitterrand's personal emissary on delicate diplomatic missions.⁵⁹

Although Franco-American relations within the summit had shown signs of improvement since 1982, the 1985 changes in US monetary policy under Treasury Secretary Baker marked the beginning of an actual convergence of interests in this field of primary importance to the French. The G-5 Finance Ministers' discussions, rather than Bonn II, were the forum

in which movement did in fact occur. In January 1985, the G-5 stated that the US dollar was overvalued and that concerted action was warranted. By 22 September, the Reagan administration's need to reduce a massive trade deficit led it to make a fundamental change in exchange rates policy, as embodied in the Plaza agreement. This first public statement issued by the G-5 was the result of extensive preparations. This US initiative reintroduced international economic policy coordination as a central element in multilateral relations among the major industrial democracies. As a member of the G-5 (later expanded to G-7) Finance Ministers' forum, France is a leading proponent of and participant in this process. In the Plaza agreement, which resulted in an immediate downward trend of the US dollar, the Finance Ministers declared that:

the dollar was too strong and no longer reflected "fundamental economic conditions." They therefore called for "orderly appreciation" of other currencies against the dollar, while the US agreed to take its full part in co-ordinated exchange market intervention.⁶⁰

At Bonn II, debate on monetary matters was short, as the core discussions were then taking place within the G-5. France, possibly so as to not deter progress already anticipated at that technically lower level, did not press monetary reform, nor could it succeed in linking this concession of sorts on its part to lesser American pressures for opening a new GATT round.

GATT was the central economic issue in Bonn. In explicit defence of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the French held to the EEC position set in a 19 March - agreement to a GATT round but with no setting of a starting date. Mitterrand, with the support of Craxi and Delors, came under pressure from Reagan, whom Kohl and Thatcher had rallied to, despite their previous European commitment. France's resistance was such that communiqué language concerning the starting date - "most of us think this should be in 1986" - openly reflected the disagreement. Lack of a minimal formal consensus on such an important economic issue was itself a precedent for the summit.

Although it was dealt with rapidly and inconclusively, the issue that dominated the political agenda was Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) and the invitation to participate in it, then recently extended to the other summit states. A general statement of support for the US in the Geneva arms talks gave an impression of unity without seeming to involve the other states in SDI participation. France led opposition to SDI, for reasons of strategic doctrine, national independence, and a commitment to autonomous European technological development, symbolized by the French-initiated Eureka programme. In a lengthy preface to a collection of his statements and speeches on foreign policy, Mitterrand writes of a separate pre-summit meeting on 2 June 1986 with Reagan and his principal advisers, in which he made clear France's refusal of SDI:

This conversation no doubt convinced our American friends of France's resolve to not become involved in SDI. The matter was not brought up again between us.⁶¹

The American-German rapprochement at Bonn was apparent both on the issues of GATT and to a lesser degree on SDI, as well as on a symbolic level at the controversial pre-summit Bitburg ceremony - an event which cannot have left Mitterrand, a second world

war leader, indifferent. Once again France had been relatively isolated at a summit. Indeed, it has since been reported that, upon learning at his arrival in Bonn that the Americans, Germans and Japanese had already reached separate agreements concerning SDI as well as GATT, the French President actually considered returning home immediately.⁶²

At the summit's end, as he had in 1983, Mitterrand publicly doubted whether he would attend the next summit if no procedural changes occurred.