

worldview

A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

CRISIS FOR THE WEST

The immediate problem of the Atlantic community is not that it lacks vision but that it has at least one too many. And President Charles de Gaulle, in brusque and almost brutal fashion, has shown that he means his to prevail. He has said "no" to Britain's entry into the Common Market and he has said "no" to French participation in a multilateral NATO nuclear force.

For his severe critics—and how their numbers increase—his vision has gradually assumed the proportions of a nightmare. For what it portends, they say, is a grandiose attempt to impose French hegemony on Europe. This would be a Europe that would stand between the Soviet Union and the U.S., neither of which is to be wholly trusted, to act independently and responsibly under the firm guiding hand of de Gaulle. Those who support de Gaulle see the same picture, but from a distorted perspective that makes it look highly attractive.

There are so many barriers in the path of de Gaulle's triumphant advance upon his goal that there is grave doubt that even his self-made, seven-league boots can clear them all. There is less doubt that he has thoroughly beclouded the vision, which many were beginning to share, of a united Europe in an Atlantic community. He has, in fact, thrown into disarray highly developed policies of most of his allies.

Macmillan's government, to begin with England, has committed itself to entry into the Common Market, even on terms that many, including the late Hugh Gaitskell, judged unfavorable. The anti-Gaullism now prevalent in England cannot long do service for an effective alternative policy. There is no time for England's political leaders to play Micawber, pleasantly waiting for "something to turn up."

Chancellor Adenauer should, supposedly, have reason to be satisfied, for the Franco-German Treaty of Cooperation seems to fulfill the dream he has had since the end of the first world war. But though it was far-sighted to have the dream of friendly cooperation between France and Ger-

many at that time, it is short-sighted to attempt to realize that dream now. At that time it would have dampened animosities and restrained hostilities in Europe; now it increases tensions and separates allies. That particular dream has grown too small for present demands.

Italy and the Benelux countries have made known their fears and worries. They do not wish to come under French domination, they do not easily accept the idea of a Europe that does not include Britain, and they are concerned about the reaction of the United States to de Gaulle's plan.

The vision that de Gaulle dismissed in favor of his own emanates, of course, from Washington where it has been called "Kennedy's Grand Design." If de Gaulle were to have his way that "Grand Design" would be reduced to a shambles. As it is, the damage is severe enough so that some parts need to be replaced or rearranged.

President de Gaulle's policy not only envisages a strong, integrated Europe, capable of guarding its own interests—a policy which has much to recommend it—but it has what can easily be interpreted as strong anti-American tendencies. It is, in fact, how many commentators did interpret his strong desire to remove American military strength from Europe when the whole principle of German security now rests on that strength. And when the Common Market and the Atlantic alliance allegedly depend upon that security. These are the considerations which cause some to look askance at the recently concluded Franco-Soviet trade treaty.

A correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* has said that now "the political world ahead will be much less tidy and structural than the grand design contemplated . . . but it will be more human, more dangerous, and—more interesting." He may be right. He is at least partially right, for in the short run it is certainly going to be more dangerous.