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## The Oceans and Geopolitics: A World United

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# The Oceans and Geopolitics

## A World United

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Vice Admiral Guy Labou rie, French Navy, Retired

**N**OTHING ILLUSTRATES BETTER our contempt of the oceans than a map of the world from the nineteenth century that we find not only in our schools and universities but see daily in France during the news broadcasts on channels 1 and 5, where it is used as a backdrop. While one might say that all maps are by definition flawed by their projection method, this map is nonetheless representative of nineteenth-century ideas that exist even today. If we ignore its euro-centered orientation (Europe—center of the world!) we can still note the following:

- The Pacific Ocean has disappeared! It either does not exist or is deemed to be more than Europe can handle. The Europeans were quite content to acquire a few islands there, even if they did not know exactly what they were going to do with them, as long as they could be had for a bargain price.

- The Arctic Ocean is a nonentity. It is true that the Arctic Ocean remained an obstacle to navigation until 1958, when the USS *Nautilus* sailed under the ice to the North Pole and beyond. However, that voyage was the catalyst for the only major change in strategic thought over the last forty years. It was the beginning of what might have become a direct confrontation between the superpowers in those frozen waters. The names of potential naval campaigns give the flavor: the Norwegian Sea campaign, the Battle of the Arctic.

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- The Indian Ocean, the last decolonized ocean, is reduced to a size and shape that reflect neither its real dimensions nor the fact that this ocean—mother of the human species, the ocean of slavery, poverty, hunger, and Islam—is the preferred area for the indirect strategies of all nations of the world, weak and strong alike.

- This map would have you believe that at least two-thirds of the world is land and only one-third water. Of the four oceans, the only one that counts is the Atlantic, and it is Anglo-American.

If one combines these notions with the north-south separation of the Mediterranean established over several centuries by the Islamic Arabs and then the Turks, we can note two important consequences. The first is the “Talleyrand syndrome”: that is, mistaking what are merely European affairs for world affairs, and thus seeing world events only in a European context. In European minds this has tended to elevate any political policy that is not domestic to the level of world policy. This played right into the hand of England and subsequently benefitted the United States.

The second was the advent and the development of strategic theories that stressed a “longitudinal” explanation of local conflicts, giving priority to an enemy, always situated to the East, as the dominating power of the day. Three of these theories comprise the thought of three centuries. These are the theories of Sir Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, and Raoul Castex (1878–1968). All are regional theories.

Mackinder is well known for his concept of the “Heartland,” the owner of which becomes the master of the world unless balanced by sea power, itself split between two island nations: Great Britain (the paradigm of the Western naval power, the only kind that counted) and Japan, a symmetrical if not logical balance in the equation. One hundred years later, we can see that the famous Heartland is crumbling internally, and that Great Britain has almost completely disappeared.

Haushofer imagined four great poles of activity: the United States, Germany, Russia, and Japan. He cut the world into vertical zones centered on these four poles: the Americas, Euro-Africa, Russia-India, and a Pan-Asiatic zone. Starting in 1920, Japan tried to consolidate the last zone, while Haushofer’s disciples were persuading Hitler that Germany could conquer the two interior zones for itself. In both cases the results were dramatic and abominable.

As for Castex’s theory, the most interesting part of it was his idea of historical “troublemakers” who came out of the East until the reign of Charles V of Spain, when for a time they went instead from West to East. The most seductive theory of the three, even though people saw that the world was undergoing a major change, Castex’s view was reinforced by the fear of China after the victory of Mao Tse-tung in 1949, which led to a rebirth of studies in Europe on the “Yellow Peril.”

## A Closed World

After having been vast, empty, and open in all directions for many centuries, after World War II the world can be seen turning inward and closing the door. In fact, during the 1950s the world seemed entirely closed: by then people had been everywhere on earth, seen everything, photographed and recorded everything, and so on. We numbered in the billions, we had only thirty percent of the earth in which to live, and there were no more places on our planet to be discovered.

This process of closing took place in four ways:

*Physical.* With the discovery in Borneo of perhaps the last tribe living as they had during the Stone Age, scientists finally had an understanding of the culture and the values of human society from forty thousand years B.C. to the present day. This closure includes as well studies of the Amazon and its people, explorations of the barren Antarctic, and the transit of the North Pole from beneath the ice cap. The ensemble of these studies and exploits culminated in the Geophysical Year beginning in 1956, when for the first time in history the scientific world understood, in many disciplines at the same time, the physical association of man and his geography, in particular the relationship between man and the oceans.

*Spatial.* Following and complementing the physical closure of the world, this part of the process began with Sputnik in October 1957. Essentially from that moment, the world could be observed, listened to, photographed, and monitored at any moment. As a result of this technology, all sorts of techniques evolved and a powerful space industry was developed. This had an immediate effect on surveillance, on intelligence, and on the transmission of electromagnetic signals.

*The news media.* With the advent of the new technology, the rapid spread of news was no longer limited to regional and national items but became global. Nothing on Earth today can stay hidden for very long, and millions of illiterates are able to stay abreast of the news, true or imaginary, via radio. Television adds an even larger dimension to this phenomenon, thanks to worldwide coverage by satellites. While it is true that television educates and informs, it can also manipulate populations and bring down social and political regimes.

*Juridic.* At the end of the Second World War, the nations of the world put in place through the aegis of the United Nations two rules to be understood and respected by all organizations and every state: that no country's borders may be violated, and that every state's internal policies are the business of that state and are inviolable. Except within the Bolshevik part of the globe, these two rules were quickly accepted throughout the world without much reflection, because every country found in them an advantage—for colonies, to become independent; and for colonizing countries, to rid themselves of heavy responsibilities

by permitting the independence of their colonies. These rules were nonetheless contradictory—contradictory between themselves and also with another part of the United Nations Charter which affirms the right of peoples to govern themselves as they see fit. What is “a people”? What is “a nation”? What is a “cultural identity”? Where are the true boundaries? Unfortunately, no one anticipated those problems or expected the difficulties of self-administration (where are there politicians able to govern?) these nations faced once they became independent.

It is true that one could consider that until 2 August 1990, the day that Iraq invaded Kuwait, the two rules played a pacifying role. However, the world did not see, or did not want to see, that behind this apparent tranquility two phenomena were working which would stretch the world to the breaking point—that a new era was beginning. These phenomena were demographic pressure and the dynamic character of decolonization. I use the word “dynamic” because decolonization does not end with the signing of papers establishing a country’s independence. As we see in Asia and Africa today, that is only the first step. After a century or more as some other country’s colony, a new nation takes a long time to become really independent culturally, politically, and economically. Jurists and politicians would like to establish in this world a new order, one that would be easy to observe and for which criteria of action could be set. Unfortunately, the world defies order, and global human geography rejects any attempt to limit the flexibility it needs to live and to progress by its own definitions. This factor can be seen everywhere in the aftermath of global decolonization.

## Decolonization

Europe’s peoples and governments did not understand, in fact, that if it took between one and four hundred years to colonize a country, the reverse process would be no less dramatic and would require generations to complete. Beyond this consideration, there are four other important points that concern the general decolonization of the world. Coincidentally, examples of all four processes can be found on the shores of the Indian Ocean.

- *Political decolonization.* In Bandung, Java, this began in 1955, when newly independent countries (Japan among them!) grouped together to gain political influence in the international scene. They could do so more effectively together, especially in the UN, than if every country tried to do it alone. Thereafter, these countries’ influence would be felt in international affairs.

- *Economic decolonization.* The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC, created on 14 September 1960 in Baghdad following the Mardi Treaty of 16 April 1959, is the best-known illustration of the power that natural resources give to certain countries.

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- *Cultural decolonization.* This phenomenon involved the rejection of materialism (regardless of origin), the renunciation of utilitarianism, and the denunciation of Western culture, often considered degrading in the former colonies. The international debut of this phase was marked by the ascent to power of Khomeini in Iran on 1 February 1979.

- *Juridic decolonization.* This aspect of decolonialization is distinguished by the rejection of the limitations imposed upon new nations by the artificial boundaries they inherited at independence. These peoples also rebelled against treaties that were concluded in their name but upon which they were never consulted. This factor has the potential to be the most dangerous feature of the decolonization process if the liberated peoples do not understand or fail to respect their borders and treaties. This situation is spread throughout the world, but the first serious incident dates only from 2 August 1990, when one country tried to obtain by war that which was forbidden by the rules of the UN. The rules are, in fact, European or American, and not every country is ready to follow them willingly.

The result of these four aspects of decolonization is that international politics have become more difficult, more confused, and ultimately less stable. International organizations will have an arduous task both in modifying their representation from the newly independent nations—it seems unreasonable that a country such as Fiji, with fewer than a million people, should have the same voice in the UN as India, with nearly a billion—and in ensuring that international law is reviewed and revised as necessary to take decolonization into account. All nations must be consulted, and their cultures acknowledged, so that new laws can be adopted that will be respected by everyone, for one is unlikely to obey a law contrary to one’s culture. Moreover, these organizations will have to put measures in place to enforce these laws, not delegating this authority to a regional or world power. This reorganization will require several generations.

At the same time, the world will be watching the evolution of these new “nation-states” under the pressure of demographics and migratory currents. One can only hope that these nations will become states that respect the rights of their citizens.

### Demographic Pressure and a Return to the Oceans

Demographic pressure is tightly connected with the world’s population. To this point, the world has been satisfied merely to note the increasing global population in a mechanical, calculating fashion, without considering all the potential results. In the near future, world population will grow from five to eight billion people and in the long term is likely to reach twelve billion, if not more. Beyond the dramatic and disquieting development of gigantic cities, one can observe other phenomena directly linked to demographic pressure.

One is the present condition of Africa, a continent that will contain over one billion inhabitants by the turn of the century, but that the world has reduced to the status of a minor actor. Neither Japan nor the United States will invest there, believing that Europe must take charge of its former colonies. The future of Africa is not clear; the leaders of the African countries watched the fall of the Berlin Wall with concern, knowing that without help, either from West or the East, they will have little hope of crawling into the twentieth century. Where the U.S.-led UN humanitarian intervention into Somalia will lead is still a mystery.

Another is a global movement of population toward the oceans. Sixty-five percent of the world's population lives less than 180 miles from the coast, and eight-seven percent live within three hundred miles. While this concentration is due in part to the generally temperate climates near the sea, it results primarily from the capacity for growth and communications with inland areas that one finds in the ports of the world. The migratory currents spawned by demographic pressure are heading for these areas.

Also, because of the effectiveness and efficiency of maritime trade, the merchant shipping of the world has undergone rapid growth in the last forty years. The number of merchant vessels increased during this period by five hundred percent, while the associated trade grew by a factor of ten. In 1990 these ships carried four billion tons of cargo, and demand continues to raise this figure yearly. The 1945 bipolar maritime world of Europe and the United States became tripolar with the inclusion of Japan, and it will soon become multipolar, because Third World nations already control twelve to fifteen percent of the world's maritime trade. The Third World share will increase rapidly unless restrained by rules stricter than those now enforced concerning the qualifications of its ships' crews.

A considerable effort is underway to study the short and long-term uses of new maritime resources in three areas: industry, agriculture, and energy. For the moment, interest in maritime industrial resources is concerned primarily with offshore research in petroleum products. However, little by little the world will begin to search in the maritime exclusive economic zones for all products needed on land. Perhaps in twenty or thirty years the metallic nodules found on the seabeds of the deepest oceans will be harvested. Research is costly, however, and only a few countries have the means to support this preparatory phase.

As for aquiculture, the oceans contain eighty percent of all living things in the world. Twice as many edible plants grow in the ocean than are produced on land. These facts have inspired the development of aquiculture, and at the present time plants and fish are being raised to augment farming and ranching in feeding the world's population. Agro-alimentation is tightly linked to aquiculture because some of the plants produced are not edible by man but are fed to cattle. Aquiculture must not be limited to its current stage of development, that

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of the production of fish (mullet, salmon, *et al.*), but must be extended further into a large, modern industry responsive to commercial demands. It is difficult to say at this moment where this research will lead, but it is conceivable that fish hunting will be largely replaced by fish farming.

In fifty years, there will not be sufficient amounts of petroleum products to produce the world's energy. This gives the world fifty years to make a well reasoned decision on a replacement for oil. The oceans have the potential to be immense power stations, producing energy for the world. Georges Claude, a French scientist (1870–1960), did extensive research into generation of energy based on differences in water temperature. The oceans adapt easily to these requirements, water from the depths being much colder than surface water. All that is necessary is to construct an apparatus to make this application feasible. (France does have an experiment of this sort going on in Tahiti, but its power output is still very expensive.) Tides and their associated currents are another source of energy production. The generator located on the Rance River in France is a good example. Finally, and especially, if ever thermonuclear fusion is harnessed, the oceans of the world contain enough deuterium for many centuries of nearly unlimited power.

All of this has been accompanied by the emergence of new international maritime law, endorsed by France, which will undoubtedly create tension and turmoil. Organized around the definition of exclusive economic zones as extending to two hundred nautical miles and by a common legacy beyond this distance, the law is attractive to the lesser-developed countries of the world, but the new rules have less appeal for those nations currently able to exploit the oceans. This is illustrated by the fact that not one of the major maritime or industrial powers (even France!) have ratified the 1985 convention of Montego Bay, the origin of this international legislation. The institution of the Haute Autorit  des Fonds Marins (High Authority for the Seabottom) is, as a result, pushed well into the future, and its eventual authority is not clearly established.

### The Stratoworld

The slow movement toward the oceans, with all of its associated consequences, becomes even more interesting when one looks at, instead of the euro-centered chart already discussed, a map of the world projected from the North Pole. Such a map, designed in 1942 by Richard E. Harrison, first appeared in 1944 under the evocative title of "One War, One World." Not copied in Europe until the 1960s, this chart clearly establishes that the world is composed of six islands: North America, South America, Africa, Eurasia, Australia, and Antarctica (although the projection would have one forget the latter). The four great oceans contain these islands and also the three pivotal areas of the world: the oldest of these is the Arabic world (bordered by Egypt, Turkey, and Iran), an area which



has agitated the world for over seventy centuries; the other two are Southeast Asia and Central America.

There are certain points one can draw from this map. First of all, of the four oceans, only two have proper names; "Pacific" and "Indian" are only adjectives.

*The Pacific Ocean.* This immense ocean covers half of the world. While one can measure it in physical terms such as miles and time zones, there are other, less objective, scales. The cultural, spiritual, economic, and social distances between the nations on its shores are no less important than the physical ones, even if less well delineated. The Pacific has, however, played an important role in the world's history for less than two hundred years.

*The Atlantic.* A European ocean for over five hundred years, the Atlantic is an ocean of adventure and of discovery. In its northern half, this ocean is the heart of Western philosophy, democracy, and of the wealth of the world. It is the father of the maritime nations, succeeding the Mediterranean Sea, which retains her title as mother of the maritime cities.

*The Indian Ocean.* This ocean is radically different than the first two. It is an ocean of slaves, of Islam, of fundamentalists, of hunger, and of violence. Man has navigated on these waters for over three thousand years, and all the great nations of the world have primordial interests in this area. It was in Mesopotamia and on the banks of the Indus and Nile rivers that the first empires and civilizations were founded.

*The Arctic.* An unsurmountable obstacle on the surface, only in the last fifty years has the space above its waters been conquered by airplanes and have submarines passed below the polar ice cap. During the bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, this ocean became the geopolitical center of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as well as the central battleground of the "Cold War."

To quantify geopolitics and geostrategy in the last forty years as merely "bipolar," however, is not accurate, for the world has been multipolar in many areas. For example there are four poles of global power:

- *The United States:* the most powerful nation economically, industrially, in space, in nuclear weapons, and in naval aviation, among other areas.
- *Western Europe:* the most powerful commercial confederation, comprising four of the six most industrialized nations.
- *Japan:* the most powerful country in terms of finance, the second most powerful in industry, and perhaps soon the dominant technological country in certain areas.
- *Russia:* the main component of the former Soviet Union, the latest colonial power, and even in its present condition the second most powerful nation in nuclear and space weapons.

But there are also six poles of demographic pressure and natural resources, and in particular, sources of energy. They are South America, North Africa,

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Sub-Saharan Africa, India, Southeast Asia, and China. (The Persian or Arabian Gulf area is properly a "hinge.") Unfortunately, these poles are dominated by violence in all its forms, whether it be individual, familial, national, ideological, or associated with religion. Other poles of development are increasing, especially in Asia, notably the "four dragons" (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) and China's maritime areas.

Four "grey" zones or poles also exist, the sources of drugs in the world. They are Colombia and her surroundings; Lebanon; the area between northern Pakistan, Afghanistan, and certain Islamic republics formerly in the Soviet Union; and the "Golden Triangle" of Southeast Asia. These zones have a combined revenue of \$700 billion that they must launder and reinvest in the rich nations of the world. Quite often this money is used to acquire arms and weapons. They are a source of corruption throughout the world of a magnitude that has yet to be measured.

In fact, the world that we tried to describe above in terms of a bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union is only the latest manifestation of an idea that views the history of the world in a rather simplistic way: as the opposition between a maritime power and a land power. Moreover, this confrontation was merely the result of an entirely different process, the progressive resettling of a world population that is ever growing but has little room for expansion. The worldwide nomadic movement is to be seen in the form of migratory currents that exist in fact not only toward the oceans but throughout the world—the grass is always greener on the other side of this global fence. Thus, there are migrations to Nigeria as well as to Europe, to Saudi Arabia as well as to Malaysia. . . .

The Middle East, with its Palestinians, Israelis, Kurds, East Asians, and Egyptians, *et al.*, is a remarkable demonstration of these nomadic migrations. One should not be surprised to see violence erupt when these migratory currents run headlong into states that are rich but spacious and that respect human rights. The more that the demographic pressure increases, the more people will be on the move throughout the world.

In this world, limited as it is geographically to the available land areas, there are only two domains of real strategic mobility left, those of Space and the Oceans. Just as one lives in the "eco-world(s)" of the economic historian Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), today one lives also in a *strato-world* encompassing the world geographically, in space, and on the oceans.<sup>1</sup> In this stratoworld, as in all other worlds, one is either an actor or a spectator. A nation must both possess the political desire to be an actor and produce the material and human assets to succeed. There is no longer such a thing as a local or a regional policy. The

1. The stratoworld comprises the countries of the planet as a whole, conceived as being more or less motionless, and three fields of strategic maneuver: space, the oceans, and the information media. The link between the eco-world and stratoworld is international business.

events in Iraq and Kuwait have illustrated, as only one recent case, that policies must be global or they will have little effect at all. This global reasoning has application beyond national politics. It is equally true for any activity, whether it be economic, commercial, industrial, cultural, or military. The policies of Japan are an obvious example of this reality. It would be a little surprising if the political leaders were the only ones not to understand this global orientation, since all the other actors, from the commercial, industrial, and service sectors, are already thinking in world terms. For over forty years the world has benefitted from a security policy that has been truly global in nature—that of the United States—and it would not be pointless to remember the real dimensions of this policy.

**An example.** The American national strategy was remarkable for its concept of the oceans and its consistency over time.

Until the cruise of the *Nautilus* in 1958, as we have seen, the confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union had a longitudinal orientation, thanks to the seemingly impregnable Arctic Ocean and to the relative positions of the players at the start of the Cold War. The Berlin crises, the Korean War, and the wars in Indochina were examples of this longitudinal orientation, as were the various organizations that were formed in response to the Soviet or Western menace, respectively: Nato, Seato, Cento, Anzus, and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. It is interesting to note that of all the treaty organizations established, only Nato, weakened by its geographic restrictions, and the Rio Treaty, never threatened by the Soviets, remain after forty years.

In fact, everything changed with the advent of nuclear propulsion. The moment that the crew of the USS *Nautilus* navigated the Arctic Ocean, the old strategies had little remaining application. As an example, naval aviation became more and more important to the Americans as the potential battleground moved to the north, much to the dismay of the army general commanding the Nato forces in Europe; England and France sensed this change of strategy as early as 1956 in the evolution of differing policies concerning nuclear weapons in Western Europe. The American improvements as well in submarine technology, in acoustic performance in the very-low-frequency spectrum, in all types of intelligence gathering, in surveillance, in radio transmission, in electronic warfare, and in the use of space—not forgetting the capability to fire missiles through holes in the polar ice cap—kept the Soviet Union continually off balance and forced it to keep pace.

The Soviet Union, fortunately, did not have the means to follow all these advances. The collapse of the USSR was fundamentally a matter of philosophy, but it was accelerated by the Soviets' inability to follow the American technological challenges. "Star Wars," or the Strategic Defense Initiative, for example, planted doubts in the minds of the Soviet leaders and made it much more difficult for

them to hold on to Eastern Europe. The USSR tried to compensate for its weakness by developing strong blue-water commercial, fishing, fighting, and scientific fleets and also by participating in the origination of two grand axes: Moscow–New Delhi and Peking–Islamabad.<sup>2</sup> The final result was the fall of the “Iron Curtain” and the implosion of Marxism. President Reagan anticipated these events by coming to Berlin in June 1987 and predicting the end of totalitarian rule in Europe.

At the same time, the Americans were establishing a base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Supporting a policy of action that was not dependent on the current views of foreign governments, this base gave the United States the possibility of enveloping the Eurasian world that its satellites were watching with increasing precision. This base would also be important to the American effort in the recent conflict with Iraq.

Perhaps even more decisive in this effort against Iraq was the ability of the United States to transport its troops by way of a maritime logistical force protected by space reconnaissance and if necessary by naval aviation. Though everyone knows that nearly all the 500,000 troops went by air, few remember that nearly all their food, fuel, and ammunition went by sea. This action demonstrated convincingly that a significant projection of force beyond the territorial limits of one’s country is possible only if one has a strong navy. One of the revelations of the Gulf War was that the United States’ dream of transporting a million well-armed and well-supplied men to Europe in one or two months was impossible. But the revelation has come only after the dream has lost its meaning.

**Europe and France.** What is to become of Europe in general, and of France in particular? Their weakness was obvious during the events of 1990–1991 in Kuwait and more recently in the Balkans. What does the future hold for them? Are they capable of being actors on the world stage, or will they be merely local and regional pawns in the great human dramas of the future? According to the script of today the Americans are the stars, but who will direct the scenes of tomorrow, when the peoples from the “South”—the Hindus, the Chinese, and the blacks from a federation rising from South Africa—arrive on the scene? (And what role will the Japanese play? Japan, of course, belongs neither to Nato nor the CSCE, and it is not a part of the “Third” world. Japan is elsewhere. Japan may have many difficulties in the next thirty years identifying her place in the world.)

Are France and Europe capable of a vision that goes beyond their Mediterranean

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2. For the moment one does not hear much about these axes, but we soon will. In the year 2000, these axes will cut through four major powers having a total population of over four billion. Such numbers will yield an influence bigger than their economies or armies. Their cultures and civilizations are very different from ours, and it is difficult to see precisely how these facts will affect the world. But they will.

borders? Can they hope to understand the Arab world that is at their doorstep, or will they be simply commercial nations that never require their politicians to resolve the problem the Arabs present, that of integrating a multitude of people of very different cultural and social foundations? If France succeeds in internalizing the Muslim faith in a secular environment, conservative Islamic countries may sense themselves to be in real danger.

Europe, the twelve countries that are constructing the Europe of today, has all the assets, human and material, to form a historic union. But does a collective Europe really exist? Or is it simply an economic and commercial fantasy? In any case, Europe will find its identity only in responding to the six great challenges that will be presented to this prospective union in the next eight to ten years. These trials will be:

- *The Western security blanket.* Nato is the foundation of the real wealth on both sides of the Atlantic. Its purpose will continue, but changes will have to be made to its organization. Europe cannot expect the United States to continue paying twice as much for the defense of 350 million rich Europeans as they are willing to pay themselves.

- *The return of the Russians.* Today the future of the former Soviet Union is not clear. However, it would be a colossal mistake to assume that the Russians will not reappear, eventually, as the European force they have been for over ten centuries. One has only to read Solzhenitsyn's views to see the truth in this statement. He uses the same words as Peter the Great: "Take all equipment and modern organizational work methods . . . from the Occident, but the Occident is rotten, without moral references. So we must build our own civilization based on the eternal Russia."

- *Japanese investments.* Japan invests not only inside but also outside the European Economic Community. It is ready to plunder its best customers on every occasion, selling by fair means or foul, but in any event refusing to buy.

- *Eastern Europe.* What will be the future of Eastern Europe? Over the years, these countries have seen independence alternate with domination by various empires. As a result, except for Poland, they have never developed national identities but have been content simply to quarrel with one another and each within itself. Of the Eastern European countries, Poland and Rumania are of strategic importance. So is Turkey, astride the boundary between East and West, partaking of both but not quite belonging to either.

- *The Arab "South."* What will become of these nations? It is true that they are little understood in France, yet even France's political leaders prefer to talk about their Franco-Arabic demographics instead of trying to find solutions to the problem of immigration. In France the numbers and expansion of this section are much less worrisome than the press and a certain extremist political party would have one believe.

• *World hunger.* In the world today one sees not only widespread physical hunger but a cultural, political, and spiritual hunger as well. As Pope John Paul II and Mohamed Arkoun have said on numerous occasions, the bottom line is that Europe will have to define its spiritual identity and continually resist the tendency to describe its position in the world in relation to the West—that is, to the United States (which to the rest of the world is the West).<sup>3</sup> Europe has a materialistic and mercantile identity that affirms its ties to the West, but there is another side of Europe, arising from its history and culture, that many expect to blossom in the coming years. There is no need for any of us to copy each other stupidly.

These questions may seem far removed from the oceans and sea control, but in fact they are closely associated. Five of the six challenges have a major maritime component.<sup>4</sup> This component may take the form of commerce, industry, or culture. Isolationism created by a refusal to develop a global vision and by an unwillingness to consider and solve these six questions will lead Europe down the road to failure.

For the people of France, who manage a predominantly terrestrial heritage, to develop a world vision will require a veritable revolution of ideas and a change of mentality. While France has understood the importance of space and has tried to encourage her partners in Europe to participate in the exploitation of this medium, she is incapable, at least at present, of appreciating the importance of the oceans—beyond as a means of hiding her ballistic missile submarines.

This limited view of the oceans by Europe in general and by France in particular is totally unacceptable. It reflects the myopic European habit of confusing naval power, which includes only a navy's strategic assets, and maritime power, which integrates all sorts of activity, from fishing to satellite reconnaissance. Europe and France will have to ponder these questions and build a common vision of the oceans and their importance if they are to be credible and effective actors on tomorrow's world stage. One speaks of an agricultural Europe, of nuclear energy, of space, and even of commercial fishing, yet one does not hear of Europe's twenty-five million square kilometers of exclusive economic zones in the sea, collectively the largest in the world. This is curious, for it is this capacity that will provide one of the essential elements for the future of Europe.

**T**he property of no one, yet belonging to all, the oceans remain the foundation of strategic mobility, human and material—complemented in

3. Mohamed Arkoun, of the University of Paris, teaches around the world. A French citizen, a Muslim, and a native of Algeria, he is a specialist in Arabic cultures.

4. The sixth is the challenge from Eastern Europe, though even there the opening of a channel from the Rhine to the Black Sea provides a naval aspect.

this regard by space, even if the latter is limited because of its inability to support life, especially human life. The world will find in these two media, space and the oceans, the possibility to learn about, to predict, to measure, and to defuse earthly tensions and internal forces before they explode in violence and destruction. This fury that has accompanied the nations and peoples in their history can no longer be allowed to erupt. The oceans and space will be the means by which power will be repositioned and transported to counterbalance economic and cultural forces. In the worst case, this power will be in the form of military forces required to contain uncontrollable violence, or necessary to provide order following ecological or natural disasters—which become more and more frequent every year.

Means of conquest for many centuries, the oceans have in just the last forty years become, for some, the last line of defense. The oceans must become in the future the source of wealth for the ensemble of humanity. This will require that new global policies be developed and applied that, to this point, only the United States, Japan, and to a large extent the Soviet Union have ever practiced; but the last of these, now under its old name of Russia, is probably out of this field for fifty years. Yet several countries have now started this process: Brazil, Spain, Singapore, and, in spite of its weaknesses, even India. It is urgent that the European Economic Community start down this road as well. France must adapt her vision, not simply to maintain her place in society but in order to become herself the catalyst for European growth. The oceans bordering France call to her, and if this cry is not heard, France will not be the master of her destiny in the stratoworld in which she is immersed. The same is true of Britain.

Still, with the creation in Brussels of a naval forum with four commissions, Europe may begin its return to a good and complete strategy for the future. It will only be after such new policies are developed that the European Community will be able to define a common security policy that is not merely a pale remaking of Nato. It will then be possible for France to address the goals she wishes to achieve instead of conducting endless technical discussions on means while never considering the ends. This process will not be easy and will require farsighted people having a clear understanding of what the future holds and the courage to face the problems that this process is certain to create. The future demands no less an effort.