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Garret Joseph Martin. *General de Gaulle's Cold War: Challenging American Hegemony, 1963-68*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013. x + 272 pp. Acknowledgments, abbreviations, introduction, annexes, endnotes, eight figures, bibliography, and index. \$95.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-1-78238-015-3.

Review by Michael H. Creswell, Florida State University.

It is difficult to think about modern France without also thinking about Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970). As with Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, de Gaulle was a larger-than-life figure who left a deep imprint on his time and his country. Indeed, according to a 2005 French television poll, de Gaulle is considered the greatest Frenchman ever. Given the formidable competition, we get a strong sense of how deeply he is etched in the country's collective memory.

While much of de Gaulle's reputation rests on his leadership of Free France during the Second World War, he also founded and then became president of France's Fifth Republic. But while these accomplishments certify his status as a political giant, de Gaulle was, and remains, highly controversial. He often irritated France's allies with his barbed comments and his seemingly egocentric behavior. As Churchill reputedly quipped, "Every man has his cross to bear--and mine is the Cross of Lorraine."^[1] Equally important, de Gaulle puzzled others with his inscrutability. Even today, scholars are locked in dispute over what he truly meant both in word and deed.^[2] Decoding de Gaulle is thus an active enterprise.

The latest scholar to take on the task of deciphering de Gaulle is Garret Martin. A graduate of London School of Economics and Political Science, where he obtained his Ph.D. in International History, and an Editor at Large at the European Institute, Martin currently lectures at the School of International Service at American University. He has also written a number of articles dealing with French foreign policy during de Gaulle's time in office. Martin is thus well equipped to explain how the General dealt with the rest of the world.

Martin divides assessments of de Gaulle's foreign policy into three schools of thought. The first school sees de Gaulle as difficult to deal with and an anti-American egomaniac. This view is a seemingly popular one. The second school agrees with this characterization, but instead sees de Gaulle as driven, not by anti-Americanism, but by hostility to a unipolar or bipolar world. Accordingly, tensions between de Gaulle and the United States resulted from differing political interests, not from some deep-seated atavistic aversion to all things American. The third school grapples with whether or not de Gaulle even had a grand foreign policy design. Some in this school argue that he had no grand design, others that he did have one but pursued it inconsistently, while still others contend that if we look past the General's flamboyant gestures, we see that he achieved modest, but tangible gains for the French state.

For his part, Martin argues that de Gaulle was not driven by blind anti-Americanism, but rather vehemently opposed hegemony in general, which by definition put him at odds with the *hyperpuissant* United States. Martin equally asserts that de Gaulle did have a grand design and he pursued it with a good deal of constancy. This grand design consisted of the resurrection of France's great-power status

and an end to the Cold War division of Europe. Ultimately, though, this grand design collapsed due to, among other reasons, internal contradictions and changes in the international political landscape.

To make his case, Martin avoids analyzing French foreign policy piecemeal and instead views regional concerns, as well as economic, political, and security matters through a single wide-angle analytical lens. He believes that this approach offers a superior understanding of de Gaulle's grand strategy to other methods. Martin also relies heavily on de Gaulle's own words, often those recounted by Alain Peyrefitte, de Gaulle's political confidante and his Minister of Information from 1962 to 1966.[3]

In assessing de Gaulle, Martin admits that the General "made important mistakes that lead to the undoing of his diplomatic agenda" (p. 5). He also contends that changes in the international system worked in favor of middle powers like France, according them great sway on the world stage. In that sense, de Gaulle was in the right place at the right time in order to reap the benefit of these international political developments.

De Gaulle was anything but passive or rudderless, however. His foreign policy was guided by a political philosophy anchored in specific bedrock beliefs: France was a historic great power that should once again hold that rank; France had to be free to act independently; the nation-state was the basic unit in international affairs; conflict was inevitable and thus power was the coin of the realm; and history trumped ideology.

Martin also writes that de Gaulle was convinced that the Cold War could be brought to an end because the communist world was not immune from the changes then occurring in the world. These changes, which included the threat of nuclear weapons, the desire for greater freedom among the peoples of the Eastern bloc, and the eventual Sino-Soviet split, would persuade Moscow to choose détente over confrontation. The General also believed that France could play a special role in healing this division of Europe.

De Gaulle equally wanted change in the Western Alliance that would garner France greater independence. Upon his return to power in 1958, he asked President Dwight Eisenhower and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan for an overhaul of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), including the creation of a London-Paris-Washington triumvirate that would direct the alliance's affairs.[4] To de Gaulle's dismay, the two leaders rejected this request.

De Gaulle responded to this rebuff by distancing France from NATO. In March 1959, Gaullist France announced that it would withdraw its Mediterranean fleet from NATO command and, in June 1959, de Gaulle banned the stationing of foreign nuclear weapons on French soil. In 1963, France withdrew its Atlantic and Channel fleets from NATO command. Most famously, France exited NATO's integrated military command in 1966 and demanded that all non-French NATO troops leave France. As a result of this withdrawal, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) moved from Paris to Casteau, Belgium in 1967.

De Gaulle, however, had other ambitions. In accordance with his grand design, the General threw his support behind the European Economic Community (EEC) in order to strengthen France's economy and to augment its military might so that a 'Franco-German couple' could create a Europe that could act in its own right independent of the United States. This newly empowered Europe (led by France) would also be able to seek a lasting agreement with the Soviet Union. To this end, de Gaulle made a number of efforts to reach out to Moscow.

While he was sidetracked by the need to focus on the French economy and the Algerian War (1954-1962), the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962) fueled his belief that the Superpowers wanted to avoid nuclear war, that Moscow would not attack Europe, and that the United States would

not use nuclear weapons in defense of Europe. This realization meant that France needed to achieve greater independence and acquire a nuclear arsenal of its own—the *force de frappe*.

Events in 1962 gave de Gaulle's foreign policy a boost. A change in the French constitution which mandated that the president be elected by universal suffrage, combined with a parliamentary victory by de Gaulle's party, rid him of near-term electoral concerns. The French economy had also made great strides during this period.^[5] In addition, the signing of the Evian Accords, which ended the Algerian War, lifted a huge diplomatic albatross from around France's neck. De Gaulle now had a free hand in redirecting French foreign policy.

This free hand in foreign policy did not mean that de Gaulle would be given a free ride. Indeed, the General's grand design collided with its American counterpart: President John F. Kennedy's grand design. While de Gaulle sought an independent Western Europe led by an independent France, Kennedy flipped this vision on its head, wanting a Europe which coordinated its policies and strategies with those of the United States. Kennedy also harbored severe doubts about Gaullist France. Martin quotes Kennedy as saying that "these bastards [the French] just live off the fat of the land and spit on us every chance they get" (p. 3). For his part, de Gaulle did not think much of Kennedy. Given the two leaders' personal disagreement, as well as conflicting political objectives, official Paris and Washington were deeply suspicious of each other.

Conversely, the General was much more optimistic about the future of Franco-German relations. He held Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who had led the Federal Republic since its inception in 1949, in much higher esteem than Kennedy. And on January 22, 1963, France and Germany initialed the Élysée Treaty, an agreement that called for reconciliation between the two countries. Unlike his doubts about the state of relations between Paris and Washington, de Gaulle saw the Franco-German relationship as fundamental.

But despite the optimism surrounding the Élysée Treaty, tensions between France and Germany arose in the wake of its signing. One big reason was France's inability to overcome American influence. The United States's vast power and influence cast a huge and inescapable shadow over Europe, placing strict limits on de Gaulle's grand design. Another reason was because de Gaulle took actions, like the unilateral recognition of the People's Republic of China, which made political life difficult for German Gaullists. Germany also contributed to the tension by taking its own unilateral actions, like signing a defense deal with the United States without first consulting France. In addition, Adenauer resigned from office in October 1963 and was replaced by Ludwig Erhard. In contrast to his relations with Adenauer, however, de Gaulle and the new chancellor not only had differing policy outlooks on important issues, but the two men also failed to mesh well personally. As a result, the July 1964 Franco-German summit was an outright failure.

NATO also posed a challenge to de Gaulle's grand design. In recognition of the profound changes in the international political environment, NATO produced the Harmel Report. The document dealt with the future of the Alliance and was up for renewal in 1969. The 1967 report committed NATO to improving political relations between East and West. Yet this goal clashed with de Gaulle's grand design, according to which France would be the primary interlocutor with the East. Moreover, France had been distancing itself from NATO for years. Ultimately, the Harmel Report helped hold the Alliance together in the face of de Gaulle's challenges and the Eastern bloc's desire for better East-West relations.

The EEC was another battleground for de Gaulle's grand design. One of the General's concerns was Britain's entry into the EEC, which he feared would open the door to unfettered American influence in European economic affairs. Thus in 1963, de Gaulle vetoed Britain's application to join the EEC. Undeterred, Britain made a second bid to join the EEC in 1967, putting France, which did not want to

be targeted as obstructionist, on the defensive. Despite the risk of isolation from his partners, who supported London's bid, de Gaulle again said no to Britain's application on May 16, 1967. France was then in the awkward position of wanting to lead Europe, but defying its ostensible followers on an issue of major importance.

The Six-Day War between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in June 1967 also harmed de Gaulle's grand design. Continuing a recent trend in French foreign policy, France moved further from Israel politically and closer to the Arab states. This move hurt de Gaulle's popularity at home, as most French people sided with Israel. It also injured France's relations with Germany and the United States, as well as diminished France's global stature. Finally, the conflict was ultimately settled by the two superpowers, not by France. This outcome underscored the continuing dominance of Moscow and Washington in global affairs, which was the opposite of what de Gaulle's grand design was supposed to produce.

These are among the many factors that Martin says doomed de Gaulle's grand design. While there is a lot of information for readers to take in, the subject is inherently complex, spanning different aspects of French foreign policy and the politics of other countries and institutions. In spite of this complexity, Martin displays a good grasp of the material. The book is the product of archival research in England, France, and the United States, as well as engagement with published collections and the relevant secondary literature on the topic. Martin has thus covered most of his bases.

There is, though, one omission that stands out. As mentioned above, a lively scholarly debate over the motivations behind de Gaulle's foreign policy has been taking place. Curiously, Martin makes no mention of this still active debate, save for the three main schools of thought he identifies in the book's introduction. Martin's relative silence on this issue is unfortunate, as readers would otherwise be better positioned to assess his contribution and determine where it fits into this larger discussion. As it stands, some readers might underestimate the value of his account [6].

On another matter, the book might not translate well into the classroom. For one thing, the book's price places it beyond the reach of most students. For those who are able to access the volume, they should first possess a strong background in the topic, as Martin seemingly expects readers to already know a fair bit about the Cold War, the EEC, and the Bretton Woods system, for example. Martin also does not define or explain heavily referenced terms like "grand strategy." But for more advanced scholars, this well-researched book adds to the continuing debate over de Gaulle's foreign policy.

NOTES

[1] The Cross of Lorraine was the symbol of Free France during the Second World War. According to a number of sources, this remark was actually made by Major-General Sir Edward Spears, Churchill's envoy to France.

[2] The book's author notes that de Gaulle nourished a "cultivated air of secrecy" which extended even to his own advisors (p. 2).

[3] *C'était de Gaulle*, vols. 1-3 (Paris, Fayard, 1994-2000). Irwin Wall has stated that "he [Peyrefitte] he is far from entirely reliable." See Irwin Wall, "Comment." n.d., available at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/comment19.htm>.

[4] Similar proposals had been launched by de Gaulle's predecessors, all of which were rejected.

[5] The Union pour la nouvelle République, which de Gaulle formed in 1958, grouped with the Gaullist Union démocratique du travail (UNR-UDT) to win the 1962 legislative elections. The UNR-UDT was aided by the Républicains indépendants, a party founded and led by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

[6] For the main revisionist argument on de Gaulle's foreign policy, see: Andrew Moravcsik, "Charles de Gaulle and Europe: The New Revisionism," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14/1(Winter 2012): 53-77; Andrew Moravcsik, "De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The Economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970," Part I and Part II, *Journal of Cold War Studies* (2/2[Spring 2000]: 3-43 and 2/3[Fall 2000]: 4-68; and Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998). The chief challengers to Moravcsik include: Robert H. Lieshout, Mathieu L. L. Segers, and Anna M. van der Vleuten, "De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and The Choice for Europe: Soft Sources, Weak Evidence," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6/4(2004): 89-139; Melissa Pine, "European integration: a meeting ground for history and political science? A historian responds to Andrew Moravcsik," *Journal of European Integration History* 14/1(2008): 87-104; Marc Trachtenberg, "De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and Europe," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2/3(Fall 2000): 101-116; and Jeffrey Vanke, "Reconstructing De Gaulle," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2/3(Fall 2000): 87-100.

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