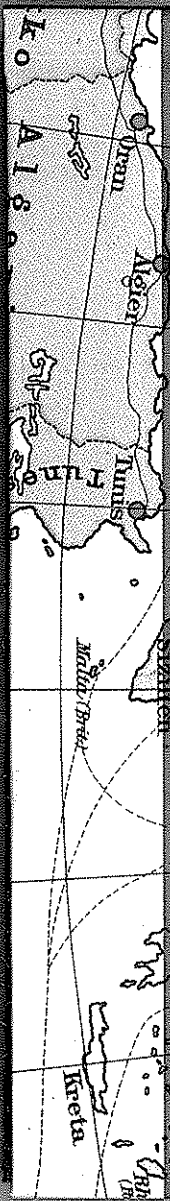


SECRET INTELLIGENCE IN THE EUROPEAN STATES SYSTEM,

1918-1989

Edited by Jonathan Haslam and Karina Urbach



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Stanford University Press
Stanford, California

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Stanford University Press
Stanford, California

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electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or in any informa-
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University Press.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free, archival-quality paper

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Secret intelligence in the European states system, 1918–1989 /

edited by Jonathan Haslam and Karina Urbach.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8047-8399-0 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Intelligence service—Europe—History—20th century. 2. Secret service—
Europe—History—20th century. 3. Europe—Foreign relations—1918–1945.

4. Europe—Foreign relations—1945– I. Haslam, Jonathan, editor of compilation.
II. Urbach, Karina, editor of compilation.

DA424.S37 2014

377.12400904—dc23

2013013384

ISBN 978-0-8047-8891-5 (electronic)

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3 Seeking a Scapegoat

Intelligence and Grand Strategy in France, 1919–1940

Stephen A. Schuker

1

Colonel Maurice Gauché, chief of French Army intelligence from 1935 to 1940, addressed the Centre des hautes études militaires as the war clouds gathered in 1939. “The study of past campaigns shows that a well-informed commander is rarely an unhappy commander,” said Gauché, “provided of course that the two opposing forces enjoy comparable resources.” In retrospect, Gauché wished he had added a qualification: “When the imbalance of power between the two belligerents is too great, intelligence becomes useless owing to the absence of sufficient and appropriate means to exploit it.” That, Gauché contends, describes precisely what happened in 1940.¹

Gauché’s colleagues and subordinates within the French intelligence community at the end of the Third Republic vigorously endorse both his approach and his conclusions. Captain Paul Paillole, deputy chief of counterintelligence, Major Henri Navarre, deputy chief of foreign intelligence gathering (Service de renseignements; SR), and Major Gustave Bertrand, the leading light in signals intelligence, enlarge upon the manifold obstacles to intelligence collection and dissemination within a military culture that tended not to value their work highly. Yet they too emphasize accomplishments over many years and believe that the chief responsibility for France’s collapse in May–June 1940 lay elsewhere.² The working-level intelligence unit, under the leadership of the much-admired Colonel Louis Rivet from 1935 onward, claimed many solid accomplishments, notwithstanding its meager budget,

shortage of personnel, and limited access to military and civilian decision-makers, all emphasized by its relegation to symbolically shabby headquarters on the avenue de Tourville, outside the War Ministry itself.³

Moreover, Colonel Ulrich Liss, head of the Wehrmacht's Fremde Heere West from 1937 to 1943, evinced high regard for the work of his French colleagues under the arduous circumstances prevailing in 1939–1940.⁴ France's military intelligence agency, the Deuxième Bureau de l'État-major général (Second Bureau of the General Staff), grossly exaggerated the number of Wehrmacht infantry and tank units in September 1939. Liss concedes in a postmortem analysis, partly because it confused paramilitary forces with fully trained divisions. Yet every intelligence agency likes to build a "security factor" into its estimates.⁵ French human agents, Liss confirms, carefully followed the transfer of German forces from east to west after the Polish campaign. They monitored the probable order of battle from the Netherlands border in the north to Baden in the south. By early May, the 2ème Bureau guessed total Wehrmacht strength at 137 divisions, just one more than the actual number; it correctly ascertained how many belonged to Army Groups A, B, and C, as well as to the reserve. It could not pinpoint the exact location of the ten Panzer divisions.⁶ The Germans had made it hard for the French by minimizing radio communication and training the Panzers well back from the front so that neither prisoners nor planning papers could fall into hostile hands. Still, if Gauché rated as something of an alarmist, he certainly got the trajectory of the German buildup right. As early as June 1938, he had predicted that the Wehrmacht could mobilize 300 divisions by the end of 1942, at a time when his phlegmatic Whitehall counterparts still imagined that finance and raw-material constraints would limit the adversary to half of that.⁷

In 1940, the Germans could have launched an invasion through any of eight routes dispersed along a 600-mile front.⁸ With a far smaller population, the French command had to make hard choices about distribution of its troops. The French commander in chief, General Maurice Gamelin, nurtured a true obsession about mounting a defense in Belgium, where an encounter would take place at prepared positions along a line half the length of the one in northern France.⁹ Nonetheless, several additional factors combined to shape his thinking. The 1914–1918 devastation of France's ten northern departments, where two-thirds of the country's heavy industry lay, rendered it psychologically inconceivable for anyone in a representative democracy to contemplate a repetition.¹⁰ What's more, the French government saw its chief support in the

British alliance, and British security interests focused narrowly on the Low Countries, the likely jumping-off point for an air or sea attack on the home islands. The 2ème Bureau had no input on the making of grand strategy; it functioned perforce within a framework crafted at a higher level.

The French had recruited one important agent, Hans-Thilo Schmidt, in the Cipher Office of the German General Staff. And they received parsimonious disguised warnings about the projected date for the German attack and its repeated postponement from the Dutch. Yet the Netherlands government, artlessly hoping that the country's usefulness as a neutral would spare it from invasion as in World War I, chose to disbelieve what Colonel Hans Oster, deputy chief of the Abwehr, told the Dutch military attaché in Berlin. Hence it never revealed its source.¹¹ Nor did Belgium, stubbornly guarding its neutrality, provide wholehearted intelligence cooperation. When a German courier plane carrying invasion plans made a forced landing in Belgian Limbourg in January 1940, the king's adviser, General Raoul van Overstraelen, turned over, not the raw documents, but merely a two-page extract to Gamelin's representative. The anti-French van Overstraelen sought to instrumentalize the Mechelen incident as part of the ongoing Belgian campaign to extract maximum promises from the Western allies while evading commitments of their own.¹² The 2ème Bureau could hardly read Hitler's mind or get authentic information about his disputes with his generals during the following weeks. It had to reason inductively from agent reports about the order of battle. And it faced ongoing pressure from the Armée de l'Air to minimize observation flights for fear of losing good pilots condemned to fly rattletrap reconnaissance planes.¹³

In any event, we now know that the Wehrmacht did not adopt the so-called sickle-cut strategy immediately after compromise of its earlier plans. Nor did it begin with a programmatic commitment to blitzkrieg. Karl-Heinz Frieser shows that Generals Franz Halder, Erich von Manstein, and others fought long and hard about how exactly to fashion their multi-pronged attack. The decision to place the center of gravity in the Ardennes emerged in late February through a process of evolution from three intermediate plans. Subordinate commanders continued to make operational adjustments thereafter.¹⁴ No dramatic single decision took place for the 2ème Bureau to ferret out.

Good intelligence work consists of sifting through a massive volume of information, disinformation, rumor, and propaganda and trying to separate the wheat from the chaff. As Colonel Liss found out when he later had to

brief Hitler, overreporting keeps decision-makers in an unproductive state of alarm. Normally, the intelligence staff cannot conclusively tell where an attack will center until air reconnaissance, prisoner interrogation, captured documents, and signals intelligence fill out the picture. In May 1940, French reconnaissance floundered because the Luftwaffe achieved early and complete mastery of the air. The Panzer corps advanced so quickly that the defenders took few prisoners; no significant documents about the German drive westward fell into 2ème Bureau hands until the night of 16/17 May; and a blackout of Enigma intercepts after 1 May (on which more below) sapped the quality of signals intelligence. Under the circumstances, Liss concludes, Gauché's 2ème Bureau and the SR had done all they humanly could. They had "nothing to fear from the judgment of history."¹⁵

11

Scholars who have reviewed the matter since documentary material became available tend not to endorse that favorable evaluation. Martin Alexander, the leading defender of General Gamelin's reputation as commander in chief, criticizes the interwar intelligence establishment as atomized, uncoordinated, and bereft of an Office of Net Assessment that could appraise disparate strands of raw intelligence accurately and bring the result to bear on policy decisions. Ministers and the top army brass paid little heed to intelligence before 1938, Alexander concedes. The fault, however, lay not merely with the chronic disorganization of French government, but also in a bureaucratic disconnect between the secretariat of the Conseil supérieur de la défense nationale, which produced studies that senior decision-makers were (theoretically) supposed to read, and intelligence gatherers and processors ranked lower on the totem pole.¹⁶ Douglas Porch expresses irritation with the intelligence insiders' retrospective pretensions to clairvoyance and their attribution of blame to policy-makers for ignoring their predictions.¹⁷ Olivier Forcade adds that the officers who compiled the daily intelligence brief both at GHQ and at Northeast Front headquarters under General Joseph Georges threw in everything under formalized rubrics. Rather like stockbrokers giving advice in a volatile market, they preferred to avoid definite predictions lest future developments prove them wrong. More often than not, that left it to Operations (the 3ème Bureau) to sort out what to forward up the chain of command.¹⁸

In a notably balanced account, Peter Jackson surveys the whole corpus of evidentiary material that became available before the return of Secret Service archives from Russia.¹⁹ He credits French intelligence agencies with numerous tactical successes. These include warning of Hitler's major aggressive moves in advance and charting the Wehrmacht's evolving order of battle. But Jackson deplores the 2ème Bureau's willingness to manipulate conclusions and accept worst-case scenarios to meet the shifting political requirements of the High Command. He likewise regrets its inability to establish credibility among civilian policy-makers, particularly at the Quai d'Orsay. Jackson also pinpoints a number of "egregious miscalculations."²⁰ Influenced by the stereotype of Teutonic efficiency and anxious to help their military chiefs wake up the somnolent civilians, the 2ème Bureau staff overestimated the productive capacity of the German armament industries under Marshal Göring's Four-Year Plan. This led them to overstate the number of divisions that Hitler could mobilize during the Munich crisis (although given the pathetic weakness of the French air force that hardly made a significant difference). Later on, however, they exaggerated the strain that mobilization would impose upon the German economy and thereby indulged their masters' fantasy that the superior resources of the French and British empires would prove decisive in the end.²¹

Among recent analysts, Ernest R. May mounts the most devastating critique of French intelligence. His powerfully written indictment has gone far to shift the contemporary focus of debate over France's fall away from strategy and policy. May ascribes the country's defeat in May–June 1940 almost entirely to an intelligence failure.²² He doesn't dispute the weaknesses of French military doctrine, training, or higher command. Yet he deems those second-order phenomena. The air forces on the opposing sides, he contends (against the weight of received wisdom), were "closely matched." And the French and British forces at the Gembloux Gap in Belgium had "more and better tanks and a huge advantage in artillery and munitions" over the Wehrmacht. May also casts aside the issue of national cohesion: France purportedly stood in no greater danger of moral collapse than Germany.

By contrast, May asserts, Allied intelligence services "performed abominably" in every way. They missed the mark in overestimating the numbers and quality of troops, tanks, and aircraft on the opposing side. Not only did they fail to predict the fast-moving German offensive through the Ardennes; they compounded the error by not recognizing for several days where the

enemy center of gravity lay. Thus, the attackers achieved greater surprise at Sedan than at Pearl Harbor or in Operation Barbarossa, where the defending forces at least acknowledged their mistake promptly. May imagines a different outcome if French reconnaissance had noticed the "horrendous traffic jams" in the Ardennes and sent in "squadrons of bombers." In any event, France's best mechanized formations as well as the whole British Expeditionary Force found themselves stranded in Belgium while the Panzer forces under Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel, protected by infantry-support dive bombers, cut through French reserve formations like butter on their drive to the sea.

A sometime adviser to U.S. intelligence agencies, May wrote his broadside partly for heuristic purposes. He presses home the point that General Kurt von Tippelskirch, head of the German General Staff intelligence directorate, enjoyed respect as a qualified troop commander. In contrast with French Army practice, German operational planners worked in fruitful coordination with their intelligence counterparts.²³ Owing to decentralization, similar coordination of intelligence and operations remained scarcely imaginable in France.

Between September 1939 and January 1940, General Gamelin dispersed his intelligence support staff into half a dozen locations. A corporal's guard remained with him at the Château de Vincennes; others, including the German specialists under Major Paul Baril, attended General Georges at La Ferté sous Jouarre, the Northeast Front headquarters forty miles east of Paris. When the war began, the 2ème Bureau took the title of the 5ème Bureau. Its administrative and evaluation sections fell under the control of General Louis Colson, army chief of staff, who took up residence at Command Post Victor, twenty-five miles away in another direction. Most of the cryptographers, including the Polish Enigma decoders, set up shop not far from P.C. Victor, although a residue remained in Paris. General Aimé Doumenc, major general of the armies, whose logistic and administrative assignments overlapped with Colson's, organized his own intelligence staff in yet another Paris suburb starting in January 1940. Daladier kept a sixth group by his side at the War Ministry. Lacking secure telephones, the various commands communicated by motorcycle dispatch rider, and Gamelin and Geoges, who cordially loathed each other, communicated personally as little as possible.²⁴ These confused arrangements serve as a metaphor for the larger disorganization and personal feuds that rendered both the military and civilian establishments dysfunctional. In December 1939, the loyal republican admiral François

Darlan, who owed his position as naval chief to the Popular Front, wrote that "the country has the impression of being out of control." On a lightning visit to Paris a few weeks later, Marshal Pétain described the tangle of responsibilities within the High Command as "complete anarchy."²⁵

May's thesis deserves attentive scrutiny. How accurately does he assess the comparative strength of the contending parties? A later part of this essay will recapitulate the position as it appeared to eyewitnesses and senior officers who later trawled the archives. Suffice it to say at this point that experts considered the northern Ardennes eminently penetrable; the team representing the Germans got through all obstacles in prewar exercises. No level playing field existed north of the Maginot Line. The Luftwaffe controlled the skies from beginning to end. If one counts aircraft that could get off the ground rather than those in the paper inventory, the Luftwaffe outnumbered the Armée de l'Air in the relevant sector seven to one in bombers and two to one in fighters. French reconnaissance planes, though outnumbered only four to three, generally lacked the speed to carry out daylight observation. The French, to be sure, possessed a competitive number of tanks. Those tanks, however, were improperly distributed, had limited range, and could not refuel under aerial attack. A parliamentary committee reported in March 1940 that the 2nd and 9th armies around the Sedan sector lacked the requisite equipment and field fortifications to defend themselves, but the High Command did not react.

Olivier Forcade, who has used the secret service archives repatriated from Moscow, acknowledges among a welter of other problems that an intelligence breakdown occurred. But he presents the issue as more complicated than it appears in May's account. The 2ème Bureau gave a dozen warnings of imminent attack from November 1939 onward, including four in April 1940. When nothing happened in the field, it lost credibility.

Gauché's team could not localize all the Panzer divisions, but a radio intercept on 3 April suggested the presence of some near Trier, opposite Luxembourg. Major Baril of the Northeast Front 2ème Bureau shortly picked up at least two more agent reports of forthcoming action on a broad front including the Ardennes. Given the imprecision of these indications, however, Gauché suspected disinformation. An undercover agent in the Abwehr reported to Major Paul Paillole at the Section de renseignements (Intelligence Section, SR) on 12 April that the Germans were studying roads, bridges, topography, and forward defenses in the Sedan-Abbeville sector. This led to a debate at Northeast Front headquarters on how long it would take enemy armored

divisions to reach the Meuse River. Baril thought they could do it in two days; the head of Operations remained unconvinced. The Polish cryptographers under Major Bertrand, working with three Enigma machines, had managed to decode five thousand messages relating to France beginning in October 1939. But few initiates knew enough about the provenance of those messages to value the results appropriately. Gauché and Baril didn't learn where the information originated until March 1940.

Colonel Rivet of SR, surreptitiously bypassing Gauché, obtained six appointments to brief Gamelin or his adjutant between 19 March and 28 April 1940. As an old alumnus of Joffe's World War I staff, Gamelin had not previously set much store by intelligence. Except when under duress, he preferred to read literature rather than to micromanage the military machine.²⁶ Hence this degree of access for an intelligence officer marked a new precedent. The Germans changed their codes on 1 May, however, so signals intelligence dried up until 21 May—too late to have decisive effect.²⁷

Forcade also explains why French intelligence could not bounce back after the initial German onslaught. First, the obsolescent reconnaissance aircraft of the Armée de l'Air could not function in the face of Luftwaffe fighter supremacy. Second, SR could not evacuate the intricate web of substations and agents that it had established—at The Hague, Liège, Brussels, and, most important, Lille—before the Wehrmacht overran those points. The French 2nd and 9th Armies had never developed significant intelligence capacity of their own. They had rather depended on the SR branch substation at Charleville-Mezières. Thus loss of the latter crippled the eyes and ears of the armies assigned to the most exposed salient. Although the SR continued to track the Panzers through radio intercepts, that effort faced formidable obstacles. In summary, Forcade is less censorious of intelligence gathering than of “the quasi-cultural and intellectual underestimation of military intelligence by the High Command.”

Would better intelligence have turned the tide? The bulk of the evidence suggests not. Based on his idiosyncratic reading of the World War I experience, Gamelin calculated in September 1939 that French and German soldiers, if they met in commensurate numbers on a prepared front, would fight to a draw. A blockade and oil shortages might eventually produce a collapse of the Nazi economy, although this would take years, not months.²⁸ Yet the hubristic notion that French soldiers could equal the Germans man for man ignored sociology and statistics. In Germany, the army acted as “the school of the

nation.” From the wars of unification onward, German soldiers proportionately outfought all opponents, even when numerically inferior and outclassed in equipment and logistics. German battle effectiveness derived from high morale, superior unit cohesion, a hierarchy of social values that attracted the cream of society to the officer corps, and a system of operational flexibility that encouraged initiative in the ranks.²⁹ German militarism also led to tragic excess and atrocities, of course. But those who call the 1940 result a “damn near-run thing” neglect the unquantifiable element in fighting power.³⁰

III

Whatever weight one accords to May's thesis, it has given a filip to the study of French intelligence in its own terms. Admiral Pierre Lacoste and a distinguished roster of collaborators have sought to identify a particular national “culture” of intelligence. They find that culture rooted in the vicissitudes of history and the evolving nature of French society. The institutions and practices of intelligence long bore the stigmata of the inferiority feelings that pervaded French institutions following Prussia's victory in 1870–1871. They also reflected the ideological divisions that separated Right and Left at the time of the Dreyfus affair, leaving a residue of civilian distrust of the military. Other considerations that made the consumers of intelligence wary from the Third to the early Fifth Republics include the rise and persistence of a Communist Party with divided loyalties; the mutual incomprehension among the followers of Vichy, Giraud, de Gaulle, and the internal resistance after the 1940 collapse; and the ever-present corporate rivalries among different ministries. Those factors have led to a widespread conviction that all intelligence is political, as well as to a proliferation of competing agencies working in isolation.³¹

The French tradition of intelligence collection goes back to the 1620s, when Cardinal Richelieu established a *cabinet noir* to intercept and decipher the correspondence of King Louis XIII's noble enemies. During the eighteenth century, those services, lodged alternately in the king's household or in the Foreign or War ministries, comprised both intelligence collection and counterintelligence. Louis XV supervised a *secret du roi* that carried out personal diplomacy behind the Foreign Ministry's back. The notion of a double-tracked foreign policy thus enjoys a distinguished paternity in France, where the civil liberties tradition never struck roots as deep as in Anglo-American societies.

Police surveillance of the citizenry became a pervasive feature of French life under every regime from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries.³²

By the early twentieth century, the Quai d'Orsay, the *Sûreté générale* attached to the Interior Ministry, the Paris police, the PTT (communications services), and the Army and Navy had each developed its own intelligence operation. Those agencies intercepted letters, cables, and telephone messages as new technologies arose. They shadowed foreigners, radicals, and other suspects as a matter of course.³³ Military and naval attachés were stationed in the leading embassies abroad to collect open-source information.³⁴ The embassies used secret funds to hire informants, some authentic but others purveyors of idle gossip, on the side. As the rotary press made newspapers affordable for the working classes, the Quai d'Orsay disbursed secret funds to the French and foreign press in order to influence public opinion. Foreign embassies in France (except for the straight-laced Americans) also routinely paid off the press. Since journalists accepted bribes from all comers, even the most discerning observer could not reliably tell who had paid whom to print what.³⁵

The spread of international telegraphy led to a race between code designers and code breakers in the late nineteenth century, analogous to the contemporaneous strivings to develop thicker armored plate and armor-piercing shells.³⁶ The reputation of the existing military intelligence unit suffered badly after its falsifications against Captain Dreyfus came to light. The Army thereafter lost control of domestic counterintelligence to the *Sûreté générale*, though it clawed back oversight over espionage on foreign soil a decade later. It gradually expanded other functions and in 1903 formally created a Cipher Bureau. The prewar decade witnessed great technical advances in wireless telegraphy and the installation of transmission links between the allies in Paris, London, and Saint Petersburg. All the same, rivalry between the military, the Foreign Ministry, and the PTT for oversight of telephones and other cryptographic functions persisted. Not until January 1914 did the military coding section and the cryptanalysis bureau agree to merge their efforts under the direct aegis of the war minister. When hostilities broke out, Paris could boast military intelligence capabilities more sophisticated than those of Berlin, but it had nothing to rival "Room 40" in London or the comparable facilities in Saint Petersburg. Most generals continued to place greater reliance on human agents than on signals intelligence.³⁷

The Quai d'Orsay, meanwhile, made its own strides in signals intelligence. As early as the 1890s, it broke the diplomatic codes of England, Germany,

Turkey, Italy, and Spain. Yet the aristocrats who ran the Foreign Ministry declined to cooperate with functionaries at the less prestigious ministries in the game, and the cabinet, which lasted a mere nine months on average in the prewar Third Republic, traditionally exercised little oversight in matters of war or diplomacy. Much duplication of effort resulted. The Quai d'Orsay failed to inform the military about the secret 1902 accord with Italy until 1909, and the War Ministry told the diplomats very little about ongoing staff talks with the British in 1906.³⁸ The French had learned the general outlines of the Schlieffen Plan in 1905 and had specifically warned the Brussels government that "neutrality" would not save their land from invasion.³⁹ The 2ème Bureau recruited a substantial network of agents within the Reich and even penetrated the German Army. It found it easy to cultivate agents among bilingual nationals who had grown up in Alsace-Lorraine. It also set up counterintelligence units in the military regions and staffed border surveillance posts to monitor German mobilization plans. Despite all those measures, the French Army remained surprisingly unprepared when the *Deutsches Heer* thrust through Belgium in August 1914.

The difficulty lay not in intelligence collection, but in intraservice rivalry and the refusal of the French commander in chief, General Joseph Joffre, to pay due attention to SR reports. The leading generals had squabbled so incessantly over strategy and personnel assignments during the two Moroccan crises that War Minister Adolphe Messimy felt obliged in 1911 to appoint a chief of staff who could crack heads. A solid logistics and supply expert, Joffre possessed the administrative skills to restore harmony. But few of his fellow generals considered him an imaginative thinker. The Army's most brilliant strategist, who reasoned inductively from evidence of railroad building that the Germans might move through Belgium, found himself squeezed out. A true believer in the fashionable doctrine of the offensive, Joffre focused single-mindedly on his own Plan XVII for a two-pronged advance into Lorraine and the Luxembourg Ardennes. He waved away reports about Berlin's battle plans that cast doubt upon his preconceived views. The 2ème Bureau obtained unimpeachable proof in April 1914 that the adversary would use reserves in the front line, bolstering its initial advance and rendering Plan XVII more risky. But that did not deter Joffre, who weakened the defenses on the northern frontier to pursue the holy grail of an *offensive à l'outrance* (all-out attack) in the east.⁴⁰

In a different military culture, the failure of Plan XVII and the country's narrow escape from disaster at the Battle of the Marne might have led

to instant respect for the intelligence function. Progress did take place, but slowly. Joffre himself remained a skeptic. In 1916, he ignored reports from the SR Belfort outpost about a German concentration before the Battle of the Somme. Military intelligence did not come into its own until Ferdinand Foch became commander in chief in 1918. By that time, the SR had an agent, Police Inspector Woegele, working within the German General Staff. And in a coup sometimes called "the radiogram of victory," cryptanalysts provided advance notice that Erich Ludendorff planned to launch an offensive in June 1918. Additional intercepts over the next month allowed Foch to counterattack at Château Thierry before the *Reichswehr* had prepared its new position.⁴¹

A crime of passion by a former prime minister's wife, followed by a spectacular murder trial, publicly revealed in July 1914 that the French routinely read diplomatic intercepts from three separate nations. Most foreign offices promptly changed their codes. During the first weeks of the world war, the French obtained no signals intelligence at all. Despite their limited numbers, however, French cryptanalysts achieved notable tactical results later on. In October 1914, they broke an important German military code. They steadily improved at reading code and radio traffic, interrogating prisoners, employing spies, and carrying out balloon, zeppelin, and fixed-wing aircraft reconnaissance.⁴² On balance, French signals intelligence outperformed its German counterpart during the war. The Quai d'Orsay files suggest that the ministry gained much high-level political intelligence through a team of gifted agents (including Emile Haguenin, André François-Poncet, and René Massigli) that it stationed in a press and propaganda bureau in Berne, Switzerland.

IV

While the maneuvers of rival secret services on opposite sides of the trenches went on behind closed doors, fantasies of widespread domestic spying raised anxiety among the French public throughout the war. Interior Minister Louis Malvy made a judgment call not to round up the thousands of radicals and syndicalists whose names appeared on "Carnet B" (the famous list of suspects) at the start of hostilities. Since the working class ignored the ideology of the Second International and rallied to the colors, this decision worked out well.⁴³ In the postwar period, however, an abundant spy literature served to sustain the popular fear of a nefarious fifth column with its tentacles reaching everywhere.⁴⁴

In early 1917, the prime minister, ignoring grumbling from the SR, strengthened the powers of the Sûreté over revolutionary propaganda and subversion. The Sûreté enlarged its human intelligence staff and its monitoring of telephones, telegraph, and mail. It ferreted out a certain number of small-bore spies, as well as exposing politicians such as Joseph Caillaux (and even ex-premier Aristide Briand) who had carried out negotiations behind the backs of their ministerial colleagues. All the same, one has the impression that the Sûreté wasted resources by continuing to trail politicians and other subjects of wartime interest right through the Depression. The Interior Ministry archives hold stacks of rotting folders attesting to that effort. The files reveal, for example, that Georges Mandel (a.k.a. Jérôme Rothschild) patronized a newspaper kiosk, visited his mother, and took a walk in the Bois de Boulogne, and that Édouard Herriot declaimed at a human-rights rally that peace was France and France was peace. According to rumors bandied about at the *Chambre des Députés* bar, the first act of every interior minister was to burn his own file.⁴⁵ To be sure, the Sûreté collected piles of scurrilous material, but the details reached public consciousness only when it served someone's interest to broadcast them in the course of a political scandal.⁴⁶

During the 1920s, the Interior Ministry sought to justify its "humint" budget by discovering a new domestic role. It found one by tracking the Soviet "menace." Several hundred thousand White Russian émigrés had settled in Paris, and both the OGPU (later NKVD and KGB) and the Comintern centered their West European activities in the city. Major Guy Schlessler of SR calls the capital the "paradise of spies."⁴⁷ At first the Soviet Union employed enthusiasts from the Parti communiste français (PCF) for industrial spying, although it sent in OGPU and Comintern professionals as well. The Interior Ministry failed to suppress most of this activity. Jacques Duclos, who masqueraded the PCF spying, remained exempt from prosecution thanks to his parliamentary immunity, and Soviet agents carried out kidnappings or assassinations of defectors and White Russian leaders without being brought to justice.⁴⁸

A shadowy Office of Nationalities, another hothouse product of the war, also sought to keep tabs on foreigners. That agency likewise proved relatively ineffective.⁴⁹ Outraged SR operatives believed that the Sûreté lost its focus on counterespionage because its agents had too many ancillary duties to fulfill. Until 1936, the 136 "special commissioners" reported to individual prefects around the country, who assigned them to all manner of police and political

work. The wide regional distribution of special commissioners made little sense. The German, Italian, and Soviet embassies and spy agencies naturally centered their efforts on Paris. The border regions remained underserved because 45 percent of the workers who built the fortifications came from outside the country.

During the late 1930s, despite the tightening of border controls under Daladier, the influx of tens of thousands of refugees, a certain proportion of them Communists or Nazi operatives, strained the capacities of the *Sûreté* and the Paris police to the breaking point. Between August 1937 and February 1939, the SR brought order out of chaos through a succession of administrative arrangements with the Interior Ministry. A central intelligence bureau (*Bureau de centralisation des renseignements*) took shape. But the SR's Major Schlessler recalls bitterly that he had embarked upon a labor of Sisyphus.⁵⁰ The Quai d'Orsay vetoed any oversight of foreign embassies or scrutiny of propaganda. Many spies were caught only after the fact. A stenographer who sold the minutes of the Senate Foreign Affairs Commission to the Germans, for example, was only unmasked when the damage was done. Édouard Pfeiffer, who doubled as a Soviet agent and Prime Minister Édouard Daladier's *chef de cabinet* (principal private secretary), remained undetected (despite his notorious friendship with fellow Homintern initiate Guy Burgess) until the Venona intercepts revealed his activities long after World War II.⁵¹

V

To judge from surviving indications, the French Foreign Ministry and Army both failed to sustain the trajectory of progress in refining intelligence capability that they had attained in World War I. Coming on top of the usual internecine rivalries, the chronic postwar budget deficit inclined policy-makers to make cuts where they could. Premier Raymond Poincaré stopped the distribution of diplomatic decrypts to the armed forces in 1922, with patently negative results.⁵² The valuable reports from agent "Daniel," for example, do not seem to have reached the military during the 1923 Ruhr occupation. One of the self-styled ministers in Hans Adam Dorten's Rhineland separatist movement served as an informer for the *Heimatdienst*, but the French discovered this only years later when the former "minister" went into business with Baden's counterintelligence chief.⁵³ Paul Tirard, president of the Rhineland High Commission, who reported to the Quai, appears to have been

completely blindsided in early 1924 by the operation mounted by the Bavarian government to murder the separatists in the Palatinate.⁵⁴

After years of suffering from the Quai d'Orsay's refusal to share information on a regular basis, the *zème* Bureau pressed for creation of an interministerial intelligence committee. That institution, however, which met for brief periods in 1937–1938, did not lead to much. Open-source reports from the military, naval, and air attachés passed through the Foreign Ministry, and the diplomats digested them, but analyses generated by the *zème* Bureau did not reach the Quai on a regular basis and were often discounted when they did. The Quai even put up bureaucratic resistance to the stationing of SR representatives at consulates in the Reich until 1938. And the next year, Alexis Léger, secretary-general of the Foreign Ministry, proposed to establish his own secret service, though the project was overtaken by events.⁵⁵

In contrast with the pre-1914 period, the Quai d'Orsay also neglected cipher security. Although the SR placed telephone taps on the German, Soviet, Italian, and British embassies in 1936, the Foreign Ministry failed to crack high-grade German diplomatic or military codes at any point before 1940.⁵⁶

It is puzzling that signals intelligence did not keep up with advances abroad. Not only could the British read French diplomatic ciphers freely from 1920 onward, but the French had so little consciousness of this that their ambassador in London, the comte de St. Aulaire, cabled the details of his plot to dislodge the British foreign secretary in 1923, quite unaware that the decrypt would reach Lord Curzon's red box the following morning.⁵⁷ By the mid-1930s, Hermann Göring's Forschungsamt was also reading French diplomatic traffic freely. By the time World War II broke out, code security had been breached at a minimum of fifteen French embassies.⁵⁸

French military intelligence maintained better security than that, but like other parts of the military machine, it was hobbled by atomization and chronic budget constraints. The Navy and Air Force jealously guarded their own intelligence operations. The *zème* Bureau, which metamorphosed into the *5ème* Bureau upon the outbreak of war, comprised eight sections. The two lead sections, SR (the *Service de renseignements*) and SCR (*Counterespionage*) handled covert intelligence gathering. The latter unit also supervised agents abroad. Section D held responsibility for codes and ciphers. Other sections dealt with wiretaps, radio and chemicals, sabotage, and administration. The whole operation ran on a shoestring, however, and the score of officers assigned to it perceived it as a professional dead end. Between 1934 and 1939,

Colonel Rivet, the head of the SR-SCR, was summoned to advise the prime minister only four times, and to brief Gamelin on a mere handful of additional occasions before late March 1940.⁵⁹

SCR reached cooperative arrangements with the *Surveillance du territoire* at the Interior Ministry and the Paris police between 1937 and 1939. Nevertheless, all three agencies continued to suffer from political interference. Even though the German and Soviet embassies ran many spies directly, the Quai d'Orsay shied away from confrontation. At one point, Premier Daladier threatened to fire the entire SCR staff when they sought to expel Otto Abetz, later ambassador to Vichy, who masterminded Nazi propaganda in Paris. The SCR maintained a chain of border listening posts at Lille, Metz, Belfort, and Marseille (as well as in North Africa to detect colonial subversion). Each major border post was staffed by fifteen to twenty officers. Those branches in turn recruited some 1,500 paid agents who monitored Wehrmacht movements and penetrated Abwehr substations. They also debriefed thousands of French travelers, called "honorable correspondents," who had spent some time in the Reich. Yet the size of this apparatus caused problems of its own. The difficulty lay in picking out the crucial nugget from a profusion of contradictory reports and catching the attention of the High Command despite several intermediate layers of bureaucracy.

The chief flaw in French intelligence derived from an organizational schema that rendered decision-makers skeptical of its work product. Above the SR-SCE operation on the avenue de Tourville stood the *zème Bureau* on the rue de l'Université, headed successively by Colonels Louis Koeltz and Maurice Gauché, and attached directly to the General Staff. The most important unit there, the *Section des armées étrangères*, synthesized the information coming from the SR-SCR, its naval equivalent, the military and air attachés, and allied intelligence agencies insofar as they would cooperate. It produced daily, weekly, and triennial intelligence briefs that went to the general staff, the service ministers, and the secretariat of the highest-level defense committee (the *Conseil supérieur de la défense nationale* and successor organizations). Unfortunately, the daily bulletins lacked context. The larger synthetic reports, while broadly accurate, homogenized information to the level of cliché. No wonder that the self-satisfied General Gamelin, as well as civilian ministers—even Daladier, who had served in intelligence himself during World War I—gave more credence to private sources and rumors than to papers coming up the chain of command.

In addition, some representatives abroad proved more insightful than did others. Pierre de Margerie, ambassador to Berlin up to 1931, reported too hopefully, and his successor, the able but lubricious André François-Poncet, believed for several years that France might somehow reach a *modus vivendi* with the Nazi regime through cleverness. General Georges Renondeau, the percipient military attaché from August 1932 to November 1938, crafted dispatches that always hit the target, and the assistant air attaché, Captain Paul Stehlin, produced astonishingly good information by dint of personal contacts in the Luftwaffe. However, Renondeau's fatuous successor, General Henri Didelet, told Gamelin and his other pals at GHQ what they wanted to hear, namely, that the Germans would not be ready for war until 1942.⁶⁰

Admittedly, the intelligence establishment did not contain economists, scientists, or industrial experts. For cultural reasons, the limited number of able specialists in those fields did not choose military careers. Lack of technical expertise reinforced the tendency to underestimate how long it would take German war industries to ramp up production. During the Weygand era (1930–1934), the intelligence staff produced alarming reports on how fast the Reich could rearm, partly because the commander in chief needed documentation to persuade insouciant war ministers and pusillanimous parliamentarians not to slash the budgets even more drastically than they did. During the Gamelin years (1935–1940), intelligence reports overstated Wehrmacht readiness by counting reserves and auxiliaries as almost equivalent to fully trained troops, a venial error perhaps given the historical aptitude of the German soldier for combat. The French, like the British, were impressed by the artfully staged Nazi demonstrations of air supremacy and exaggerated the number of first-line planes that the Reich could bring to bear. However, it is a myth that General Joseph Vuillemin warned against action during the Munich crisis and expressed anxiety about going to war in August 1939 because he overestimated the Luftwaffe. His fears stemmed rather from all-too-accurate appraisal of catastrophic weakness in the *Armée de l'Air*.⁶¹ One can identify no specific point from 1936 onward when clearer appreciation of *enemy* capabilities on the ground or in the air would have broadened the realistic options open to French policy-makers.

Of the hundreds of agents inside Germany, only three provided truly decisive information. Chief among them stood Hans-Frillo Schmidt, the disgruntled brother of a general, who held a job in air signals intelligence (Götting's *Forschungsamt*). Schmidt, known to the SR as Asché, turned over blueprints

for a prototype Enigma machine in 1932. Ironically, success in obtaining the Enigma blueprints, although later crucial for the Anglo-American war effort, did not do the French much good. Major Bertrand of D-Section turned the plans over to Polish cryptologists, and a group of Polish mathematicians figured out how to read the increasingly complex German codes between 1933 and 1939. Polish intelligence, however, withheld news of this accomplishment from the French and British until July 1939, presumably because the War-saw governing authorities, obsessed by their “two enemies” theory, were not sure for a long time where their political interests lay. Bertrand’s Polish team decoded more than 8,000 intercepts between October 1939 and April 1940, and, as noted above, Gamelin belatedly recognized their value. But Enigma failed the code-breakers when the Germans added an extra key, making the messages unintelligible, during the three-week period surrounding the May 1940 blitzkrieg.⁶²

VI

Today the leading textbooks put intelligence failure front and center as the principal explanation for the fall of France. “The failure of the French to predict the locus of the German invasion,” students learn, “must rank as a failure of intelligence as dramatic as the American failure to predict Pearl Harbor or the Israeli failure to predict the Egyptian attack in 1973.”⁶³ The diffusion of this interpretation marks a true historiographical revolution. But the latest interpretations are not necessarily the best. For the first several decades after World War II, most analysts looked elsewhere for the essential factors contributing to the debacle.⁶⁴ Marc Bloch set the tone in his classic *L'étrange défaite* (*Strange Defeat*), based on personal observations during the 1940 collapse. The traditional debate focused on the respective importance of outdated military doctrine and inadequate rearmament on the one hand, and institutional decadence on the other. Bloch found himself torn between fury at the “utter incompetence of the High Command” and his sense that an entire generation had failed.⁶⁵

Historians who blame the military fault particularly the doctrine of the “continuous front.” In World War I, the defense held the advantage. It could bring up reserves to plug, or *colmater*, gaps in the trenches. That doctrine lost its logic once the adversary could combine air superiority and tank mobility as a force multiplier to concentrate strength and punch through the weakest

point in the defense line. The geriatric composition of the French officer corps, with generals well along in their sixties and colonels ten years senior to their Wehrmacht counterparts, militated against strategic adaptability and tactical flexibility. In any event, the continuous front was doomed in May 1940 when Gamelin unilaterally denuded the reserve to send the cream of his army streaking north toward Breda in the Netherlands.⁶⁶

As Bradford Lee demonstrates, one cannot properly analyze strategy and armaments in separate compartments. Each ineluctably shapes the requirements of the other.⁶⁷ Owing to the late but severe Depression and the compression of its military budget, France fell behind Germany in the production not merely of modern bombers and fighters, but also of tanks, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, mobile artillery, and all manner of other war matériel. When Daladier’s cabinet abandoned the comfortable illusions of the Popular Front in autumn 1938 and launched a substantial rearmament program, the country’s atomized war industries, hobbled by an antediluvian machine-tool park and insufficient capital to introduce assembly-line techniques, could not ramp up high-quality production without what turned out to be a fateful lag.⁶⁸

Those who support the deliquescence theory hold that in the 1930s, French political and social institutions became increasingly dysfunctional.⁶⁹ The political class in the Third Republic nurtured a visceral suspicion, amounting almost to paranoia, of the “man on horseback.” Following the dictum of the Radical-Socialist philosopher Alain, the proper latter-day Jacobin favored parliamentary supremacy as the best guarantee of democracy. This doctrine did not change when other advanced nations strengthened governance from the center to meet the requirements of a complex industrial society. The Third Republic operated through a series of weak coalition cabinets including ministers from antagonistic political parties. Reshuffles took place with kaleidoscopic frequency. The president of the Republic enjoyed little more than ceremonial powers, and those who sought to vest greater power in the executive—for example, Alexandre Millerand in 1924 and André Tardieu in the early 1930s—met with frustration and ostracism.⁷⁰ Stanley Hoffmann has described France during this era as a “stalemate society.” The Chamber of Deputies could always muster a negative majority against change. Yet only in extremis (and often not even then) could it unite for structural reform.⁷¹

The deputies played an important linking role between the administration and their constituencies, but they received such paltry salaries that a startling

number felt compelled to mount fiddles on the side. Corruption ran rampant. Frequent scandals, although usually begun for reasons of political intrigue, undermined public trust.⁷² Backbenchers retained a local focus and rarely enjoyed the luxury of concentrating on national issues. The same national politicians frequently turned up in succeeding ministries, leading some political scientists to dispute the theory of ministerial instability.⁷³ Nevertheless, the cabinet rarely functioned effectively as a coordinating body. No one had rationalized French government in the way that Sir Maurice Hankey had imposed orderly management on Whitehall during and after World War I. Except in times of emergency or under strong personalities such as Poincaré, Tardieu, or Doumergue, prime ministers had to negotiate almost as equals with other ministers. Each ministry thus ran semi-autonomously. Owing to the characteristic social institution of *la brouille*—life-long estrangements that often derived from obscure schoolboy or professional quarrels—high civil servants in rival ministries or generals with different patrons cooperated only under compulsion. The foppish culture of the governing elite found expression in the intelligence community, of course, but also right through the military establishment.

The Vichy regime staged the Riom trial in 1942–1943 in order to discredit the Third Republic. Many of those who testified, hoping to save their own skins, indulged in exaggeration and caricature. Still, the representation of class conflict in the 1930s, and of the verbal violence that accompanied it, rested on a fundament of truth. In the undeclared civil war that raged during the Popular Front years, public opinion suffered from what the later Resistance leader Georges Bidault called “an atomized, incoherent, and fanatized press.” Left-wing newspapers routinely described conservatives as “fascist,” while bourgeois publications voiced apprehension that wildcat strikes and limited nationalizations would pave the way for genuine insurrection. Lacking adequate revenue from advertising and subscriptions, some 80 percent of the newspapers, according to Daladier’s estimate, received under-the-table subventions from someone.⁷⁴ The Soviet, Italian, and German governments distributed funds most lavishly. The German embassy, the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop*, and Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry suborned complaisant journalists to create an image of Nazi Germany as an unstoppable dynamo.⁷⁵ Prudent readers did not always credit the propaganda, but they grew skeptical of what their own leaders said. Reestablishing national solidarity on the 1914 model became a daunting task once the war broke out.

Social cohesion is a multifaceted phenomenon that defies exact measurement. The World War I bloodletting continued to wreak psychological havoc, not only on the survivors, but also on the younger generation. France’s public school teachers drove home the lesson that true patriotism rested not on old-fashioned values, but on a commitment to international solidarity and peace. In the 1930s, some 82 percent of French schoolteachers held membership in the pro-pacifist, Socialist-affiliated *Syndicat national des instituteurs*.⁷⁶ Doubtless most conscripts in the “B-Series” reserve divisions fought bravely by their own lights in 1940. The question remains whether an anti-militarist current in the wider society shaped the attitude with which they had approached one-year basic training in earlier years. Gamelin, for one, thought that it had. After the Sedan front collapsed, he complained that the citizen-soldiers did not believe in the war: “Inclined to criticize incessantly all those holding a smidgen of authority, encouraged to enjoy the easy life as a mark of civilization, today’s conscript never received between the wars the moral and patriotic education that would have prepared him for the main show.”⁷⁷

VII

Strategy, armaments, economic mobilization, and morale of the nation in arms are interrelated in complex ways. The point to observe is that the purely military and the wider structural explanations of France’s deliquescence are not contradictory, but complementary. Clausewitz famously observed that success in warfare depends upon a “wondrous trinity”—the persistent and creative interplay among the government, the army, and the people.⁷⁸ The theorist of war Martin van Creveld contends that this trinitarian analysis no longer applies in the dawning era of counterinsurgency and low-intensity warfare.⁷⁹ But military professionals unanimously hold that it provides a serviceable framework for analysis in the period, roughly from 1920 to 1945, when organized nations, armies, and peoples contended against each other.

Where does intelligence fit in the Clausewitzian equation? Intelligence can serve as one force multiplier among others, particularly in determining tactical outcomes. During World War II, the information that the Allies obtained from “Ultra” and “Magic” also made a difference on the strategic level. Still, academic specialists caution against the illusion that intelligence professionals can ever wield thaumaturgical powers. Richard Betts, for example, stresses that intelligence failures are inevitable. Perfecting norms and procedures

for analysis cannot prevent them. Breakdowns can occur in amassing data, resolving ambiguities, communicating conclusions to decision-makers operating within a political context, and persuading them of its relevance. Indeed, the consumers of intelligence are more likely to err than collectors of raw information or those who generate finished analysis.⁸⁰

The nub of the difficulty, as Michael Handel observes in his classic study of the politics of intelligence, is that even in those rare cases where the data point in a single direction, facts do not speak for themselves. They must win acceptance among government actors with a range of ideological preferences, biases deriving from temperament or experience, conflicting bureaucratic agendas, and loyalties to diverse domestic constituencies. In other words, when intelligence assessments are applied to operational decisions in the real world, they habitually become politicized. Leaders scrutinize intelligence data for whatever proves politically or bureaucratically useful. As an added complication, decision-makers atop large bureaucracies, whether military or civilian, operate under tight time constraints. They do not have the leisure to dispassionately assess reports that run counter to what they think they know. Hence, as Robert Jervis notes, decision-makers hardly ever accept unwelcome news without agonizing inner struggle.⁸¹

These generalizations, while not crafted with the 1940 debacle in mind, help to situate the problems of the SR and the *zème* Bureau between the wars within a larger context. They illuminate why those agencies, aside from the difficulties of gathering and correlating evidence without robust input from signals intelligence, experienced such difficulty in obtaining a regular hearing at the highest levels. Whatever the flaws of the atomized intelligence services during those decades, they reflected a larger absence of coordination—*incoherence* is not too strong a word—within labile coalition governments and in the military establishment. The governing elite, moreover, confronted such overwhelming problems of demography, military defense, and foreign policy after World War I that net assessment of enemy capabilities, at least until a new conflict became imminent, featured as a second-order problem. Small countries adjacent to powerful, ideologically alien, and irremediably hostile powers sometimes face such circumstances. Individuals can choose suicide, “internal emigration,” or territorial emigration. Nation-states cannot. The public in such conditions may embrace magical thinking or resort to psychological denial. Leaders preoccupied with managing a parliamentary

coalition necessarily employ the intelligence product within a larger political environment.

VIII

France's strategic dilemmas remained insoluble no matter how fine the foreign reporting. This is a thrice-told tale, but fundamental nonetheless. The French people emerged from World War I with a widespread conviction that a second such experience would finish the country off. The demographic facts were grim. Owing to the nation's low birthrate during the previous half-century, France already had a skewed population distribution in 1914.⁸² The million and a half men who died or emerged horribly disabled from the war left a hole in the labor force and the marriage market greater than those in Germany or in England. In 1921, France had 37,000,000 inhabitants, Germany 64,000,000. The German population was growing three times faster proportionately than the French. By 1938, after incorporating Austria and the Sudetenland, Germany would have twice the population of France. And France could scarcely aspire to match the potential industrial power of the Reich once that country, drawing on the superiority of its scientific and technical education, reconstituted its manufacturing base.

Notwithstanding reasonable economic growth in the 1920s, France remained an inward-looking, predominantly agricultural society. The United States and Great Britain had provided the margin of victory in 1918. Many who cherished the heritage of *la grande nation* deplored this inconvenient truth. Behind the bunting and the blather, the French did not much like the Anglo-Saxons. Aside from economically backward allies in Eastern Europe, in fact, France effectively stood alone to contend with the erstwhile foe. A great many Germans thought of the Weimar Republic, in the words of Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, as a type of “mandate or colonial regime,” showed down their throats by the victors. The “fulfillment” chancellor, Joseph Wirth, saw eye to eye with General von Seeckt that “Poland must be finished off.” Even Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, the purported apostle of reconciliation, nurtured the most expansive revisionist aims.⁸³ Moreover, the unambiguously pro-republican parties never enjoyed a working majority in the Reichstag after 1920. When a bitter and revanchist Germany recovered, France could never hope to contain the Reich through its own resources alone. That perception

was a fact of life, an element in the miasma suffusing every security debate in the Chamber of Deputies for twenty years.

At the 1919 Paris peace conference, Clemenceau traded a permanent occupation of the Rhineland for a fifteen-year, three-stage occupation that would end in 1935, precisely when the annual army draftee intake would fall by half owing to the low birthrate during the war. In exchange, Clemenceau hoped to obtain an Anglo-American guarantee pact. President Woodrow Wilson did not submit the pact to the U.S. Senate, however, after that body rejected the Versailles treaty. France negotiated for a substitute guarantee pact with Britain under various rubrics from 1921 to 1924; but the British refused to be drawn. France tried to narrow the gap with Germany industrially by obtaining coal, coke, and capital on reparation account; the Germans refused to pay in a meaningful way. The French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 failed to coerce the Germans into compliance. Some French generals wanted to separate the Rhineland by force from the Reich, but that would alienate Britain further and require a permanent occupation that would worsen the chronic labor shortage. The treaty required the Reich to disarm, yet the Germans fulfilled the disarmament stipulations grudgingly, if at all. The SR kept close track of German violations, but had no influence on the outcome. In 1927, the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission, having lost British support, withdrew without completing its mission.⁸⁴ Franco-British intelligence cooperation did not resume for eleven years once the Control Commission had folded its tents.⁸⁵

In 1925, Britain at length consented to a mutual guarantee of the Rhineland at Locarno. The Cartel des Gauches government of the day, overwhelmed by pacifist sentiment and pressure for a reduction to one-year military service, agreed with “eyes wide shut” because it perceived no other option. The fine print of the pact made clear that, if Germany attacked its neighbors to the east, France could not assist them and retain the promise of British intervention on its side. Therefore, while the mass media continued to play up France’s Eastern alliances with Poland and the Little Entente, the French high command gradually ceased to consider them a central element in planning.⁸⁶

Aristide Briand, French foreign minister from 1925 to 1932, read neither diplomatic dispatches nor intelligence reports. Still, he had a golden tongue, a conciliatory temperament, and a gift for self-deception. He imagined that he could gradually reconcile Germany to a less revisionist course. He came to feel a quasi-religious mission to establish international peace, “Gesta Dei

per Francos,” as he explained the concept to his staff.⁸⁷ The majority of the traumatized French public joined him in praying that wishing could make it so. When the world monetary regime broke down in 1931, however, it became apparent that Briand’s policy had failed. Prime Minister James Ramsay MacDonald of England now opined that France had caused the war, and the American secretary of state sought to intimidate Pierre Laval into forcing reversion of the Polish Corridor to the Reich as a contribution to peace.⁸⁸

The French army had to decide in 1927–1928 how to dispose its forces as the Rhineland occupation neared its end. With the franc stabilized after fourteen years of monetary disruption, the authorities anticipated having more money than men during the “hollow years” to come. They decided to build the Maginot Line, a string of forts that would allow a continuous field of fire from the Swiss border to the hinge of Luxembourg. If one proceeds from the French shibboleth of the “nation in arms,” the decision embodied a perverse logic. The small standing army could provide cover, *couverture*, in the Maginot Line while the reserves had time to mobilize. At first, planners expected to prepare a defense in depth within fortified regions, but that concept eventually fell by the wayside. The expectation that Belgium would coordinate the line north of Montmédy with its own fortifications went glimmering when the Brussels government returned to neutrality.⁸⁹ In any event, the choice to build a concrete barrier excluded any role for a rapid deployment force. It committed France irrevocably to a defensive strategy. In 1936, Defense Minister Daladier reminded the planning body tasked with organizing the nation in wartime: “France has a defensive policy commanded by ethnological, political, and psychological considerations.”⁹⁰

To complicate the conundrum, France sought to uphold the gold standard after Britain and the United States abandoned it during the years 1931–1933. That required deflation, fiscal stringency, and compression of the military budget. Despite the best efforts of General Weygand, the left-wing ministries in power from 1932 to 1934 (most notoriously, those of Herriot, Joseph Paul-Boncour, and Daladier himself) cut funds for the military by almost one-quarter. One could hardly economize on food, uniforms, and barracks for the draftees. The Army had already made a commitment to build the Maginot Line, even though the high water table made it prohibitively expensive to extend the line from Montmédy west to the sea. A single practical solution emerged: to cancel field maneuvers and to slash the budget for new equipment to the vanishing point, just as the Reich pushed rearmament into high gear.⁹¹

Open sources allowed anyone who paid close attention to follow the progression of events. The French intelligence community paid close attention to the course of rearmament in the Reich from 1930 until Hitler openly threw off the strictures of Versailles five years later. Yet even the casual newspaper reader at the time of the Geneva Disarmament Conference of 1932–1933 could hardly escape the conclusion that Britain and America would do nothing. France effectively stood alone.⁹²

The *zème* Bureau marshaled the evidence perfectly well. Once the 1932 elections gave the Left a strong majority in the Chamber, the political class did not think it feasible to react. A subtle combination of political and psychological impulses—parliamentary stalemate, pacifist sentiment, financial penury, the voters' wish to defend the franc, perceived threats to regime stability from both the Right and the Left—produced creeping paralysis.

Some observers began to use the word “decadence”; others thought that the term lacked precision. The Popular Front that came to power under Léon Blum in 1936 privileged domestic reform over everything else. Daladier, who took over the defense portfolio again, slowly began to promote rearmament to the extent compatible with the social and economic goals of the Popular Front coalition. He apparently felt twinges of guilt for letting the Army run down too far during his earlier incumbency at the rue St.-Dominique. He shortly instructed his staff to start compiling a record of what he had done to promote the national defense.⁹³ Despite the statistical labors of Robert Frankenstein, the details of credits voted, actual expenditures, and tangible results remain shrouded in obscurity. It is certain that the Reich spent almost twice as great a percentage of a much larger national income on the military in 1936–1938, and that France fell ever further behind in almost every category of weaponry in 1939.⁹⁴

IX

General Gamelin accurately informed the cabinet in November 1935 that Hitler planned to remilitarize the Rhineland and that without general mobilization and allied support—neither realistic possibilities—France could do nothing to stop him. That judgment followed quite logically from the fine print of Mobilization Plan D-bis, adopted seven months earlier. Shortly afterward, the political leadership abandoned the notion of a Franco-Italian alliance that Foreign Minister Pierre Laval and General Gamelin had earlier

pursued. Given the frenetic character of British opposition to Mussolini's attack on Abyssinia in fall 1935, risk-averse logic made it necessary to privilege good relations with England over the will-o'-the-wisp of rapprochement with the mercurial Italian dictator.⁹⁵

All the same, this Hobson's choice marked the last possible moment when France, on strictly geographical grounds, could have gone to the aid of its eastern allies, even if the mobilization plan had not already excluded the idea. French intelligence could read Austrian diplomatic traffic and gave precise advance warning of the *Anschluss* in February 1938; Daladier and the High Command pondered the matter and decided not to react. When the Czech president Edward Beneš came to Paris in May 1938 to discuss the forthcoming German demand for the Sudetenland, Daladier warned him plainly that France could do very little for Czechoslovakia. The Czech intelligence chief, General František Moravec, subsequently alleged that he had passed on information suggesting that France could assault the Siegfried Line successfully. Such a claim shows just how out of touch the Czechs were with reality. The French partial mobilization of September 1938 resulted, as expected, in chaos. Moreover, as General Vuillemin pointed out, France possessed no more than fifty first-line aircraft at the time, and hardly any anti-aircraft guns.⁹⁶

Once the Munich conference exposed the country's military weakness, France could not conjure up any coherent policy in Eastern Europe. After several years of indecision, some politicians persuaded themselves that they could turn the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1935 into a military convention. In August 1939, the High Command dispatched General Doumenc along with a British mission to negotiate.⁹⁷ This was always a fool's errand, not only because Poland would never admit Russian troops, but also because Stalin had already striven for months to conclude a Nazi-Soviet entente. A German diplomat in Moscow had kept the U.S. embassy secretly apprised of developments, but the Americans could not tell the French because of the Quai d'Orsay's well-known “sieve-like qualities.”⁹⁸ The *zème* Bureau did not learn in real time of Stalin's explanation that Russia's interest lay in pushing the Nazis and the Western capitalists into a mutually destructive conflict in order to pave the way for world revolution.⁹⁹ But, to its credit, French Intelligence had expressed skepticism since 1935 about the Kremlin's real designs. Characteristically, the politicians did not consider this an intelligence function. Daladier told Gamelin pointedly “that the Deuxième would do better to devote itself to gathering military information.”¹⁰⁰

X

In a nutshell, German effective military superiority over France loomed so large from 1936 onward that no improvement in net assessment of German capabilities or intentions by the intelligence staff could have reversed the tide. The “gravediggers of France,” as the journalist “Perinax” (André Gérard) called them, operated at higher levels. French deficiencies included a pitifully inadequate air force, defective doctrine in the use of tanks, primitive military communications, the breakdown of industrial mobilization, a command structure that made strategy turn on political influence, and, most important of all, incoherence in governance. Space allows only brief synthesis of the literature on each of those subjects.

France did not start to design a competitive air force until late 1938. We do not know whether Pierre Cot, air minister in 1933–1934 and again from 1936–1938, enrolled as a Soviet agent during his tenure at the Boulevard Vic-tor or signed up with the KGB afterward. His policies, at any rate, set air-craft construction so far back that the country could never catch up.¹⁰¹ Cot placed primary emphasis on creating a strategic bomber fleet of manifestly obsolescent design that he imagined could take part in an “anti-fascist” coalition. His scheme to build multiple-mission “BCR” aircraft produced lumbering machines that did nothing well. The atomized French airframe industry required consolidation before it could adopt mass production, but Cot wreaked havoc through a high-handed nationalization program. He also refused to shut down the assembly lines for the introduction of new proto-types, purportedly because he feared unemployment. Finally, in the name of democratization, he purged the officer corps and packed the civilian ranks of the Air Ministry with Communists. Many would later turn up in the Resistance—but only after the USSR switched sides in 1941.¹⁰²

When Guy La Chambre succeeded Cot, he valiantly tried to stop the rot. Cot had fudged production figures so grotesquely that British had described him as “a remarkable liar.” La Chambre could not admit the full truth, how-ever, without undermining the credibility of France as an ally.¹⁰³ Very slowly, the ministry licensed manufacturers to fabricate aircraft capable of infan-try support and reconnaissance under modern conditions. Still, the indus-try lacked the mass-production facilities, skilled workers, aluminum, and other raw materials needed to turn out sophisticated bombers. La Chambre and Daladier realized that they could only make good those deficiencies by

obtaining help from the United States. Ambassador William Bullitt thought that the Allies needed a minimum of 10,000 aircraft to win the war. Daladier agreed. Eventually, the Allies contracted for 1,600 planes. Alas, less than 200 reached the front before the end of the Battle of France, although the few that arrived indeed outperformed domestic models.¹⁰⁴

On 10 May 1940, France could theoretically boast 1,368 first-line aircraft in the *Métropole*, compared with 3,500 Luftwaffe planes. But the disproportion (disregarding the superior speed, payload, robustness, and maneuverability of German machines in almost every category) loomed larger than those figures suggest. The buildup came too late for the Armée de l’Air to elaborate an effec-tive strategic doctrine. And it had to divide its 1,000 modern planes among four zones of operation as well as to divert several fighter squadrons for the defense of cities and airfields that lacked anti-aircraft protection. Moreover, the German air fleet included a greater number of fighters and bombers; almost all mod-ern French bombers were still undergoing shake-down training in the southeast. Finally, while French factories churned out another 1,000 planes to replace losses over the next month, just half were ready to fly when delivered. After the first week in June, French aircraft effectively disappeared from the skies.¹⁰⁵

French inferiority in tank warfare derived more from doctrine than equip-ment, yet also played a noteworthy role in the defeat. Admittedly, the French Army as an institution did not encourage thinking “outside the box.” Yet the decision to award priority to motorization of the combat-ready infantry and light cavalry units and to postpone creation of independently maneuverable tank divisions on the German model represented a justifiable, indeed logi-cal, political choice in the middle 1930s. The intelligence services charted the progress of German tank development accurately. Major Schlessler of SCR arranged to translate General Heinz Guderian’s 1937 book *Achtung – Panzer!* into French and directed that copies be placed in regimental libraries. When Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Gaulle authored a comparable scheme, Gen-eral Julien Dufieux, the leading tank expert, calculated that implementing it would require doubling the army budget, as well as a shift to a long-service army that ran counter to French republican tradition. In addition, a defensive army could use heavy tanks only for a hypothetical counterattack. Charac-teristically, de Gaulle made light of logistic and cost constraints. Yet without expensive reinforcement, most French bridges could not hold heavy tanks. What’s more, France had no synthetic oil industry that could replace imports from the Caribbean were German submarines to dominate the Atlantic.¹⁰⁶

By dint of single-minded focus on tank production, France entered the lists with 3,020 tanks, slightly more than the first wave that the Wehrmacht could field. French tanks also boasted heavier armor, although they moved more slowly than their German equivalents. The achievement, however, came at grievous cost. Of 102 infantry divisions that took the field, only twenty-two received the requisite complement of anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, heavy machine guns, and armored tractors. What's more, the three light mechanized divisions (DLMs) and the three heavy reserve armored divisions (DCRs) existing at the outbreak of hostilities comprised together only 960 tanks. The other tanks were scattered about the infantry in battalion-sized units and largely wasted. While the DLMs performed brilliantly in screening and reconnaissance missions at the Gembloux Gap in Belgium, the DCRs, which were supposed to await an opportunity to counterattack, dissolved instead. The hastily formed DCRs had not received sufficient training to coordinate their logistic and repair functions. The B-1 bis and the H-39 tanks in the DCRs had sacrificed cruising range for thicker armor, and they could not refuel under air attack. When they ran dry, the crews of those superb fighting machines had to abandon them.¹⁰⁷

Communications figured as a third area in which the military machine broke down. The lack of scale and scope may perhaps explain why technical innovation stagnated in so many branches of French industry during the prewar decade. The French radio industry notoriously failed to keep up with advances elsewhere, and few engineering officers underwent training in that specialty. Tank designers in the 1930s did not originally plan for radios, and retrofitting, when it began in 1939, proved awkward. For example, on the most advanced cavalry tank, the Somua S-35, the after-market radio stood atop the shell casing ejection port and therefore failed as soon as the tank went into battle. The absence of short-range radios linking tank units and supporting aircraft made their coordination on the blitzkrieg model impossible. An antediluvian transmission system also hindered command and control on a higher level. Skeptical of newfangled radio telephones and assuming that the continuous front would hold, French technicians laid overland telephone wires to connect headquarters staffs with the front. Once Panzer units overwhelmed forward defenses and cut the wires, senior commanders could no longer control the battlefield in real time.¹⁰⁸

Backwardness in telecommunications stands as a synecdoche for the larger inability of the French economy to sustain a modern war. Third Republic

politicians, mostly products of the standard literary education of the day, lacked the intellectual framework for understanding industrial organization. With utmost reluctance, Daladier agreed at the start of the war to appoint the eminent efficiency expert Raoul Dautry as minister of armaments and scientific research. Dautry surrounded himself with a galaxy of Polytechnic graduates, who labored night and day to stimulate industrial mobilization. They encountered steady obstruction both from the military, who did not grasp the need to funnel the necessary engineers and skilled workers, and from the premier himself, who gave deceptive production reports to parliament and demanded that the armaments minister cover his misstatements. By mid-December 1939, Dautry confided to intimates that the effort had been "completely bungled" and that France would lose the war.¹⁰⁹ Faced with stagnating output, missing components, and a horrifying percentage of defects in material, both the politicians and the High Command looked for scapegoats. They convinced themselves that the Communists were sabotaging production. Admittedly, the surly and belligerent metal workers, angered by frozen wages and longer hours, did not display the same dedication that British labor mustered in the national crisis. Yet only a few incidents of organized sabotage took place. The governing elites did not wish to face the unpalatable truth. Atomized and undercapitalized industries, handicapped by old production techniques and bereft of a rational scheme for allocating raw materials, simply could not mobilize sufficiently to sustain a modern war.¹¹⁰

A mountain of evidence contradicts the legend that no one thought the Wehrmacht could get through the Ardennes. Every graduate of Saint-Cyr, the French military academy, knew Marshal Foch's dictum by heart: all terrains are penetrable if not vigorously defended. The northern Ardennes, unlike the thickly wooded areas further south, contains several valleys that facilitate passage by armored units with bridging equipment. In the 1937 and 1938 war games, the side playing the enemy reached the slow-flowing Meuse River more quickly than the defending infantry, lacking trucks, could bring up reinforcements. General André Corap, head of the 9th Army, called it "idiocy" to think that the Germans could not get through. Even General Gannein confessed to the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), soon after the war started, that Hitler might attack there, although he did nothing to prepare for such an eventuality.¹¹¹ General André-Gaston Pretelat, who surveyed the area for the Conseil supérieur de la guerre following the Munich crisis, found no anti-tank obstacles, no barbed wire, and scattered bunkers that would never

withstand serious assault, even when complete. A parliamentary commission headed by Pierre Taittinger again reconnoitered the border from Montmédy to Valenciennes in March 1940, and the junior officers from Georges's Operations Bureau who drafted its report emphasized the "terrifying flimsiness" of the defenses. Gamelin's camarilla brushed this report aside, however, and the well-connected General Charles Huntziger, who headed the 2nd Army west of Sedan, replied ironically that he needed no lessons from a former corporal.

Yet other senior officers took the situation more seriously. Many experts had warned against expecting good performance from the Army's least-trained and worst equipped "B-Series" inactive reserve divisions, five of which happened to hold the Sedan salient at the juncture of the 2nd and 9th armies. The twenty-one B divisions had originally taken shape as a type of regional guard. The older reservists barely remembered basic training, and their morale had deteriorated badly when separated from their families during the *drôle de guerre*. Even better-led troops learned to keep their heads down and just went through the motions. Corap begged repeatedly for more resources, but he lacked political clout. Thus his sector remained the Army's "poor relation"—last in line for seasoned formations, money for obstacles, and new equipment right down to the day of the German attack. In the first week of May, a former École de Guerre professor told Georges that the failure to strengthen the central front seemed illogical. Georges agreed, but threw up his hands: given Gamelin's perverse insistence on sending the motorized forces north to Breda and the power of Prételat's Paris friends to warehouse superfluous divisions behind the Maginot Line in the east, he could do "very little."¹¹² When political influence shapes the disposition of forces, even in part, optimal strategy suffers.¹¹³

Incoherent leadership at the top intensified all the other problems. Colonel Paul de Villelume, chief liaison officer between the General Staff and the Quai d'Orsay between 1935 and March 1940, and afterward director of Paul Reynaud's military cabinet, paints a horrifying picture in his diary of the paralyzing fears, administrative chaos, frivolous rivalries, and disregard of elementary logic at the highest levels of French government during the "phony war." Both Raymond de Sainte-Suzanne and Roland de Margerie provide concordant eyewitness accounts of chicanery and intrigue at the Quai d'Orsay that reinforce the impression of a government spiraling out of control.¹¹⁴

The two main figures in the cabinet, Daladier and Paul Reynaud, the man who replaced him as premier in March 1940, hated each other with a

passion. The American ambassador ruled out reconciliation: "The difference in their policies is slight and they are both able men, but the lady love of each hates the lady love of the other, and . . . venom distilled in a horizontal position is always fatal."¹¹⁵ The respective mistresses drew the subordinates of both men into their cabals so that the conduct of public business came to revolve around personalities. No one thought that France could help Poland in August 1939, but the War Committee saw no point in waiting passively for a German attack. Thereafter, however, the cabinet deadlocked bitterly on whether to pursue vigorous action or to seek a compromise peace. Formal coordination of policy and strategy became impossible, and Daladier made key decisions at informal late-night gabfests with a few subordinates at which no minutes were kept.¹¹⁶

Daladier stood between the political camps, and his own mood oscillated wildly. Always a weaker character than he affected to be in public, the premier told his staff following the Polish defeat that if the Germans invaded France he would "blow his brains out." To Ambassador Bullitt he offered a variant: the bombardment of France would be so terrible that the people would "drive him from office and probably kill him."¹¹⁷ Secretary-general Alexis Léger of the Quai d'Orsay had also abandoned hope; he confessed to Bullitt on 30 September 1939 that "the game was lost."¹¹⁸ One could not, of course, make such admissions publicly and hope to sustain the trust of a fractious and disoriented parliament. The right-wing parties longed for a display of energy—at least against the Soviet Union. The need to manage parliamentary sentiment partly explains why phantasmagoric stratagems for peripheral actions received such public attention. Schemes for a landing at Salonika in Greece to create a Balkan front, an attack on Russia by way of Scandinavia to assist Finland, or an air strike into the Caucasus to bomb the oil fields and raise the tribes were successively aired and discarded.¹¹⁹ Oddly enough, no one thought to revise the plan that would send millions of citizens fleeing south to "sister cities," clogging the roads of northern France in the event of a Nazi attack.

Daladier's cabinet lost its footing in mid-March 1940 after Finland signed a humiliating armistice with the Soviet Union. Yet Paul Reynaud, who succeeded him as premier, won the Chamber's approval by a single vote, with his own party voting against him. Reynaud aimed to refashion national union by constructing a monster cabinet of thirty-five ministers and undersecretaries. In fact, bringing together so many people with diametrically opposing views proved a recipe for immobility. Seeking to model himself on Clemenceau,

Reynaud imagined that he could boost efficiency through a seven-member war cabinet. That inner group also remained irremediably split, however, with Paul Baudouin, secretary of the war cabinet, numbering from the outset among the greatest pessimists.¹²⁰

Gamelin had always maintained that he had no obligation to reveal the details of operations to his civilian superiors, but he flatly declined to cooperate with Reynaud, whom he denounced as “a swine . . . utterly unworthy of confidence.”¹²¹ At length Reynaud resolved to dismiss Gamelin, but Daladier, who retained the war ministry, blocked him. Deeply frustrated, Reynaud sought to resign on the very eve of the German attack. He agreed to reshuffle the cabinet instead only after a fervent appeal by the president of the Republic. Still, interministerial conflicts did not abate once the shooting war began. Under the pressure of events, Reynaud engineered a more successful shuffle of personnel on 18 May. He took the War Ministry himself and relegated Daladier to the Foreign Ministry, recalled General Weygand from Syria to replace the hapless Gamelin, and forced through the dismissal of the disloyal Léger at the Quai d’Orsay.¹²² But new men brought new quarrels. Reynaud had numerous talents, but even his admirers conceded that his courage sometimes wavered.¹²³ Within a couple of weeks, he had embarked on an unedifying dispute with Weygand on the respective responsibilities of the Army and political class for the debacle.¹²⁴

The question whether the SR had warned forcefully enough of a German strike through the Ardennes thus falls into a wider perspective. The strategists didn’t need to wait for confirmation from the SR that the center of gravity of the German attack ran through the Ardennes. Colonel de Villeneuve alerted Reynaud and Daladier within thirty-six hours to the fact that the Luftwaffe was not attacking French columns in Belgium seriously and rather seemed to be drawing them in, but he elicited no immediate reaction.¹²⁵ Forty-two days would elapse between the moment when the Wehrmacht crossed the borders and the date that the French government, from its bolt-hole in Bordeaux, threw in the towel. But the latter part of the battle involved much political play-acting. Five days on, troops of the B-divisions on the Meuse were running for their lives, and diplomats were burning archives in the Quai d’Orsay courtyard. The outcome did not reflect an intelligence failure, but rather the collapse of a nation. As the British liaison officer, Sir Edward Spears, observed, it was as though behind the façade France had been “eaten away by white ants.”¹²⁶

XI

Although the 2ème Bureau played no more than a walk-on part in the debacle, the institution of independent military intelligence paradoxically would not survive. The leading officers of the SR-SCR mounted secret resistance as part of Vichy’s Armistice Army. They fled to join General Henri Giraud in Algiers shortly after the Allied landings in November 1942. Yet they found themselves squeezed out in late 1943 when General de Gaulle’s minions, chief among them Jacques Soustelle, secured the upper hand in North Africa and imposed a strict loyalty test. In London, meanwhile, de Gaulle had set up a Bureau central de renseignement et d’action (BCRA) under André Dewavrin, an engineering officer with no intelligence background, who took the name Passy. The BCRA carried out several undifferentiated missions at once: intelligence gathering, subversive action, controlling the interior resistance, and propaganda. Gradually the BCRA came to privilege its political role.¹²⁷ Since de Gaulle had a single overriding objective—to seize control of the governmental machine after Liberation—other functions declined in importance.

After hard-fought turf wars, a politically dominated Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage (SDECE) emerged in late 1945. That organization, staffed principally by worthy resistance veterans, took root under the auspices of the president of the council. When a scandal erupted over the disappearance of public funds, the Constituent Assembly added supervision by an interministerial committee. A domestic political police, the Direction de la surveillance du territoire (DST), survived at the Interior Ministry. The armed forces did not obtain permission to reconstitute professional military intelligence on the Third Republic model until 1966. The tradition of politicized intelligence remains embedded in French culture. Several demons of the Elysée Palace under the Fifth Republic have maintained their own *secret du roi*.¹²⁸

Notes

1. General Maurice-Henri Gauché, *Le Deuxième Bureau au travail, 1935–1940* (Paris: Amiot-Dumont, 1953).
2. Paul Pallolle, *Services spéciaux, 1935–1945* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1975), trans. as *Fighting the Nazis: French Military Intelligence and Counterintelligence, 1935–1945* (New York: Enigma, 2003); Pallolle, *Notre espion chez Hitler* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1985); Pallolle, *L’homme des services secrets: Entretiens avec Alain-Gilles Minnella* (Paris: Julliard,

1995); General Henri Navarre et al., *Le Service des renseignements, 1871-1944* (Paris: Plon, 1978), esp. 15-122; Gustave Bertrand, *Enigma, ou, La plus grande énigme de la guerre 1939-1945* (Paris: Plon, 1973). Paillole also compiled a dozen cartons of testimony by fellow intelligence operatives, now located in Fonds privé Paillole, IK 545. Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes [SHAT], ably exploited in Olivier Forcade, "Le Renseignement face à l'Allemagne au printemps 1940 et au début de la campagne de France," in Christine Levisse-Touzé, ed., *La campagne de 1940: Actes du colloque, 16 au 18 novembre 2000* (Paris: Tallandier, 2001), 126-155.

3. General Louis Rivet, "Le camp allemand dans la fièvre des alertes (1939-1940)," *Revue de défense nationale* 5 (July 1949): 33-48; "Étions-nous renseignés en mai 1940?" pts. 1 and 2, *Revue de défense nationale* 6 (June 1950): 636-648 (July 1950): 24-39. Rivet's son-in-law, Georges Castellani, drawing on privileged access, adduced further evidence for that view in "La Wehrmacht vue de la France," pts. 1 and 2, *Revue historique de l'Armée* 5, no. 2 (1949): 35-48, no. 3 (1949): 39-56, and in *Le réarmement dandestin du Reich, 1930-1935, vu par le 2e Bureau de l'État-major français* (Paris: Plon, 1954).

4. Col. Ulrich Liss, "Die Tätigkeit des französischen 2. Bureau im Westfeldzug 1939/40," *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 10 (1960): 267-278; for Liss's praise of French intelligence culture compared with that of the Wehrmacht, see his "Erfahrungen und Gedanken zum 1c-Wesen," *ibid.*: 7 (1957): 616-627. For an early evaluation that cites 2ème Bureau mistakes but mainly emphasizes Gamelin's "inconceivable contempt" for their work, see Gerd Brausch, "Sedan 1940. Deuxième Bureau und strategischer Überraschung," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, no. 2 (1967): 13-92.

5. Liss, "Tätigkeit," 271.

6. Some dispute continues on when French intelligence located the German armored forces. Major Navarre of the SR German section claims that a Luxembourg gendarme reported before midnight on 9 May that Panzer Group von Kleist had crossed the frontier. Evidently Major Baril of Georges's Northeast Front GHQ became convinced on 11 May that the German center of gravity would roll through the Ardennes. Those bulletins reached decision-makers only with a lag. A subsidiary difficulty derived from the fact that the 2ème Bureau suspected the existence of twelve rather than ten Panzer divisions. The latter two were still embryonic, however, and the tanks designated for them ended up as reserves for the other ten, most of which failed to attain full complement. See Navarre, *Le Service*, 110-13, and François Delpla, ed., *Les papiers secrets du Général Doumenc, 1939-1940* (Paris: Orban, 1991), 200-201.

7. See M.I.3 report to deputy director of military intelligence on conversation with Gauché, "Estimated Strength of the German Army," 15 June 1938, WO 190/634, National Archives of Great Britain (hereafter PRO). The M.I.3 skeptics could not believe that the Germans could field in excess of 49 regular divisions four years hence, with no more in the reserve and the Landwehr. As it turned out, the Germans had 259 divisions under arms at the end of 1942 and 280 in February 1943—just slightly fewer than Gauché had prophesied.

8. For specifics, see Bradford A. Lee, "Strategy, Arms, and the Collapse of France," in Richard Langhorne, ed., *Diplomacy and Intelligence during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 59.

9. On the development of Gamelin's preoccupations as he wrestled with the strategic issues after the Belgians returned to neutrality in 1936, see *Les relations militaires franco-belges, de mars 1936 au 10 mai 1940*, ed. Jean Vanwelkenhuyzen et al. (Paris: CNRS, 1968); also Martin S. Alexander, *The Republic in Danger: General Maurice Gamelin and the Politics of French Defence, 1933-1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). WO 106/1685 (General Strategy); WO 106/1687 (prewar discussions with Gamelin); WO 106/1776 (conversations with Daladier and Gamelin), all Directorate of Military Operations files at PRO, provide a useful sequence of documents.

10. On the horror of the World War I experience in the devastated districts, see Richard Cobb, *French and Germans, Germans and French: A Personal Interpretation of France Under Two Occupations* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983). Judith M. Hughes, *To the Maginot Line: The Politics of French Military Preparation in the 1920's* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), demonstrates that the military's adoption of a defensive strategy reflected the deepest yearnings of the French people after the demographic holocaust. Gamelin justifies the logic of a prepared defense on the Namur-Anwerp line in *Servir*, vol. 1: *Les armées françaises de 1940* (Paris: Plon, 1946), 83-111.

11. Paillole, *Notre espion chez Hitler*. J. Vanwelkenhuyzen, "Die Niederlande und der Alarm" im Januar 1940," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 8, no. 1 (1960): 17-36; Vanwelkenhuyzen, "Die Krise vom Januar 1940," *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* 9 (1955): 66-90.

12. *Les relations militaires Franco-Belges*, 102-106; Karl-Heinz Frieser, *Blitzkrieg-Legende. Der Westfeldzug* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), 75-76, 102-103. Neither General Raoul van Overstraten nor King Leopold III had ever looked on France with benevolence: see the former's *Au service de la Belgique: Dans l'état* (Paris: Plon, 1960); and Jean Stengers, *Léopold III et le gouvernement: Les deux politiques belges de 1940* (Brussels: Racine, 2002).

13. Gauché, *Deuxième Bureau*, 232. The best air reconnaissance about the Siegfried Line came from a volunteer recruited by the SR field office in Belfort who flew civilian monoplanes. See Pierre Crossant, *L'espion de la ligne Siegfried: Armand Chouffier, photographe aérien. Le renseignement français en Suisse* (Paris: Lavauzelle, 2005).

14. Frieser, *Blitzkrieg-Legende*, 71-135.

15. Liss, "Tätigkeit," 278.

16. Martin Alexander, "Did the Deuxième Bureau Work? The Role of Intelligence in French Defense Policy and Strategy, 1919-1939," *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (1991): 293-333, esp. 303, 311; further elucidation in Alexander, *Republic in Danger*.

17. Douglas Porch, "French Military Intelligence and the Fall of France," *Intelligence and National Security* 4 (1989): 28-58; Porch, *The French Secret Services* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995), 163-173.

18. Forcade, "Le Renseignement face à l'Allemagne," esp. 132-134, 137-140.

19. Peter Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace: Intelligence and Policy Making, 1934–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
20. *Ibid.*, 388.
21. Admittedly, controversy on this question persists. Adam Tooze's highly regarded recent synthesis delineates the disjointed nature of the German armaments buildup, but does not place its weaknesses in comparative perspective. See *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 326–395.
22. Ernest R. May, *Strange Victory: Hitler's Conquest of France* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000), quotations from 448–464.
23. *Ibid.*, 20–21, 240–253. Toppelkirch's later recollection that the French masses felt "saved" (*erlöst*) by the rapid victory of "Monsieur le soldat allemand" prompts doubt whether he had the skeptical temperament and cultural awareness that an intelligence chief should possess. Still, biography is beside the point. Kurt von Toppelkirch, *Der Weltkrieg* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1954), 94.
24. Porch, *French Secret Service*, 158–162; Alexander Gamelin, 99–100. Gamelin evidently split GHQ because he and Daladier did not want Georges, who stood higher in the estimation of Finance Minister Reynaud, controlling promotions. Georges complained that influence determined advancement in the higher ranks. "If all these politicians would just f*** off," he said disgustedly, "things would go along much better." Élisabeth du Réau, "Haut commandant et pouvoir politique," in *Les armées françaises pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale, 1939–1945* (Paris: École nationale supérieure de techniques avancées, 1985), 67–82, scatological quotation on 78; also Paul de Villelume, *Journal d'une défaite, août 1939–juin 1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1976), 192 (16 February 1940).
25. Réau, "Haut commandant," 78–82.
26. Note Roland de Margerie's unflattering description of the daily routine at General Headquarters during the *drôle de guerre* in Margerie, *Journal 1939–1940* (Paris: Grasset, 2010), 64–65.
27. Forcade, "Le Renseignement face à l'Allemagne," citing numerous sources; further details in Paillolle, *Services spéciaux*, 173–199; Gauché, *Deuxième Bureau*, 214–228; Porch, *French Secret Services*, 171–173; Navarre, *Service de renseignements*, 113; Bertrand, *Enigma*, 79–80.
28. "Note concernant la conduite générale de la guerre," 8 September 1939, *Documents diplomatiques français* (3 sept.–31 déc. 1939) (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2002), no. 26. Gamelin had begun pushing this theory fifteen months earlier: see Ambassador Bullitt to President Roosevelt, 13 June 1938, in William C. Bullitt Papers, Yale University, box 71/1794.
29. Martin van Crefeld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939–1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982), 3–41, 163–175; van Crefeld, *The Culture of War* (New York: Presidio, 2008), 353–374; Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807–1945* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977). Even the BEF commander, General Lord Gort, reporting to the cabinet after the Dunkirk evacuation, ruefully called German generalship "extremely good," junior leadership

"first rate," and the foe's individual battlefield performance "remarkable." W.M. (40) 151, Conf. Annex, 1 June 1940, PRO.

30. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1900–2050* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 169, 185, cite the Duke of Wellington's dictum. On the heinous consequences of militarism, see Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

31. Pierre Lacombe, ed., *Le renseignement à la française* (Paris: Economica, 1998).

32. Eugène Vaillé, *Le cabinet noir* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950); Gilles Perrault, *Le Secret du roi*, 3 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1992–96); Olivier Forcade, "Considération sur le renseignement, la défense nationale et l'État secret en France aux XIXe et XXe siècles," *Revue historique des armées* 247 (2007): 4–12; Christopher Andrew, "France and the German Menace," in Ernest R. May, ed., *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 127–149; Andrew, "Déchiffrement et diplomatie. Le Cabinet noir du Quai d'Orsay sous la IIIe République," *Relations internationales* 5 (1976), 37–64.

33. Jean-Jacques Becker, *Le Carnet B. Les pouvoirs publics et l'antimilitarisme avant la guerre de 1914* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973).

34. Maurice Vaïsse, "L'évolution de la fonction d'attaché militaire en France au XXe siècle," *Relations internationales* 32 (1982): 507–554.

35. A. Raffalovitich, ed., *Labominable vénalité de la presse* (Paris: Librairie du travail, 1931).

36. David Paul Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

37. Géraud Arboit, "L'émergence d'une cryptographie militaire en France," Centre français de recherche sur le renseignement, Note historique no. 15, <http://www.cfrzr.org/fr/notes-historiques/lemergence-dune-cryptographie-militaire-en-france.php>.

38. Andrew, "France and the German Menace," in May, *Knowing One's Enemies*, 127–149.

39. Admittedly, to speak of a unique Schlieffen Plan involves simplification. German strategy continued to evolve between 1905 and 1914, posing ongoing problems for French intelligence. See Terence Zuber, *Inventing the Schlieffen Plan: German War Planning, 1871–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

40. Jan Karl Tanenbaum, "French Estimates of Germany's Operational War Plans," in May, *Knowing One's Enemies*, 150–171.

41. Paul Paillolle, "Les Services spéciaux de la Défense nationale pendant la guerre 1914–1918," Anciens des Services spéciaux de la Défense nationale, Bulletin no. 59 (1968), <http://www.aassdn.org/hsvEXH1502.html>; Sophie de Lastours, 1914–1918: *La France gagne la guerre des codes secrets* (Paris: Tallandier, 1998).

42. Andrew, "France and the German Menace," 130, 144–145; Porch, *French Secret Services*, 55–114; David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), esp. 299–347; Edward Berenson, *The Trial of Madame Caillaux*

- (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Raphaële Ulrich-Pier, *René Massigli: Une vie de diplomate* (Paris: Peter Lang, 2006), 1: 37–53.
43. Malvy successfully fought a treason charge in a highly politicized trial in 1918, but he was convicted of criminal negligence. Jean-Yves Le Naour, *L'affaire Malvy: Le Dreyfus de la Grande guerre* (Paris: Hachette, 2007).
44. Michael B. Miller, *Shanghai on the Metro: Spies, Intrigue, and the French Between the Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
45. Direction de la sûreté générale, "Notes Jean, 1918–1936," F⁷12951–12961, Archives nationales.
46. Paul Jankowski, *Shades of Indignation: Political Scandals in France, Past and Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2008).
47. Guy Schlessler, "Le Contre-Espionnage entre 1936 et 1940," Anciens des Services spéciaux de la Défense nationale, Bulletin no. 9, <http://www.aassdn.org/lda009r.htm>.
48. See extensive treatment based on French materials repatriated from Russia in Forcade, *La République secrète*, chaps. 5 and 7; also Annie Kriegel and Stéphane Courtois, *Eugen Fried: Le grand secret du PCF* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), esp. 118–287, and Thierry Wolton, *Le grand recrutement* (Paris: Grasset, 1993), who have used Soviet archives. Wolton shows in *La France sous influence* (Paris: Grasset, 1997) that the USSR built upon the Communist Party role in the post-1941 Resistance to increase its penetration of the state apparatus after the Liberation.
49. Georges-Henri Soutou, ed., *Recherches sur la France et le problème des nationalités pendant la Première guerre mondiale* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1995); Soutou, "Un exemple d'influence. Le renseignement français et le problème des nationalités: Le cas de l'Office central des Nationalités," in Lacoste, *Le renseignement*, 127–138.
50. Schlessler, "Le Contre-Espionnage entre 1936 et 1940."
51. Wolton, *Le grand recrutement*, 209; Wolton, *La France sous influence*, 165; Porch, *French Secret Service*, 134; also Roger Faligot and Rémi Kauffer, *Histoire mondiale du renseignement, 1870–1939* (Paris: Laffont, 1993). Goronwy Rees, who had fallen under Burgess's spell, provides a lurid description of Peffer's "hair-raising" exploits, but the French security services remained indifferent. See Rees's *Sketches in Autobiography*, ed. John Harris (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 248, 256–57.
52. Anthony Adamthwaite, "French Military Intelligence and the Coming of War, 1935–1939," in Christopher Andrew and Jeremy Noakes, eds., *Intelligence and International Relations, 1900–1945* (Exeter, UK: Exeter University, 1987), 202.
53. "Note du Département a/s Dr. Liebing," 30 March 1931, Ministère des affaires étrangères, Paris, série Z (Europe) — Rive Gauche du Rhin 45.
54. Stephen A. Schuker, "Bayern und der rheinische Separatismus 1923–1924," *Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs 1997* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), 75–111.
55. Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace*, 30–32, 39, 368.
56. *Ibid.*, 21.
57. Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 17; Keith Jeffery and Alan Sharp, "Lord

- Curzon and Secret Intelligence," in Andrew and Noakes, *Intelligence and International Relations*, 120–121. Astonishingly, British code breakers decrypted some fifty important French embassy telegrams per month for twenty years without the French catching on. See Government Code and Cypher School, "Decrypts of Intercepted Diplomatic Communications," HW 12/4–259, PRO.
58. Porch, *French Secret Service*, 153.
59. Extensive discussion in Paillote, *Services spéciaux*; Navarre, *Le Service*; also Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace*, 21; Adamthwaite, "French Military Intelligence," 203.
60. Gauché, *Deuxième Bureau*, 96–97, 180–182.
61. Arnaud Tessier, "Le général Vuillemin. Un haut responsable militaire face au danger allemand," *Revue historique des armées* 2 (1987): 105–126; transcripts of Comité de guerre meetings in Thierry Sarraut and Ségolène Garçon, eds., *Gouvernement et haut commandement au déclin de la IIIe République* (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 2009); see also Vuillemin's memoranda between 26 September 1938 and 26 August 1939 in Fonds Édouard Daladier, 4DAs Dr 7 sdr b, Fondation nationale des sciences politiques.
62. Jean Stengers, "Enigma, the French, the Poles and the British, 1931–1940," in Christopher Andrew and David Dilks, eds., *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 126–137; Jan S. Ciechanowski and Jacek Tebinka, "Cryptographic Cooperation—Enigma," in Tessa Stirling et al., *Intelligence Cooperation Between Poland and Great Britain During World War II* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2005), 1:443–462.
63. Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 219.
64. For recapitulation of the literature, see John Cairns, "Recent Historians and the 'Strange Defeat' of 1940," *Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 1 (March 1974): 60–85; Peter Jackson, "Recent Journeys Along the Road Back to France, 1940," *Historical Journal* 39, no. 2 (June 1996), 497–510; and Joel Blatt, ed., *The French Defeat of 1940: Reassessments* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1998).
65. Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence Written in 1940* (New York: Norton, 1968), 25, 126–176.
66. Henry Dutaillay carries the criticism a step farther. He contends that building the Maginot line up to the hinge of the Meuse only made sense within a defensive-offensive strategy. It could provide shelter for mobilization, but implicitly required that France take the offensive in Belgium. See his "Faiblesses et potentialités de l'armée de terre (1939–1940)," in *Les armées françaises pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale* (cited n. 24 above), 23–35.
67. Lee, "Strategy Arms," 43–65.
68. Robert Frank (Frankenstein), *Le prix du réarmement français (1935–1939)* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1982). Frank demonstrates that in 1939, Germany devoted 30 percent of national income to military expenses, compared with 23 percent in France (35). Daladier and Finance Minister Paul Reynaud balanced on the horns of an unenviable

dilemma: they needed a "liberal mobilization" to reassure businessmen, yet that ruled out creation of state-sponsored industry with the scale and scope to introduce transatlantic methods of mass production (71–88).

69. For contrasting approaches to this phenomenon, one emphasizing failed governance, the other social disintegration, see J.-B. Duroselle, *La décadence, 1932–1939* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1979), and Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: Norton, 1994).

70. Rudolph Binion, *Defeated Leaders: The Political Fate of Caillaux, Jouvenel, and Tardieu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); François Monnet, *Réfaire la République: André Tardieu, une dérive réactionnaire, 1876–1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

71. See Stanley Hoffmann, ed., *In Search of France: The Economy, Society, and Political System in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 1–17; Georges Gurwicz, "Social Structure of Pre-War France," *American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 5 (March 1943): 535–554.

72. Paul Jankowski, *Stavisky: A Confidence Man in the Republic of Virtue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Jankowski, *Shades of Indignation*. During the 1934 Stavisky scandal, 160 deputies were said to have taken bribes, a not implausible estimate given the absence of other income streams. Neville to Hilda Chamberlain, 3 February 1934, in *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters*, ed. Robert Self (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 4: 52.

73. Auguste Soulier, *L'instabilité ministérielle sous la Troisième République, 1871–1938* (Paris: Sirey, 1939); Jacques Ollé-Laprunne, *La stabilité des ministres sous la Troisième République, 1879–1940* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1962).

74. Duroselle, *La Décadence*, 203–209; quotations from 204–205; Weber, *Hollow Years*, 127–138.

75. Alfred Kupferman, "Diplomatie parallèle: Le rôle de la Ribbentrop-Dienststelle dans les tentatives d'action sur l'opinion française, 1934–1939," *Relations internationales*, no. 3 (1974), 72–95. Journalists who took handouts from the Nazis did not prosper after 1944, but those who cultivated Soviet sources did. See, e.g., Denis Marchal, *Geneviève Tabouis: Les dernières nouvelles de demain* (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2003).

76. Mona L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Norman Ingram, *The Politics of Dissent: Pacifism in France 1919–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

77. Gamelin to minister of national defense, 18 May 1940, in his memoirs, *Service*, vol. 3: *La Guerre (septembre 1939–19 mai 1940)* (Paris: Plon, 1947), 421–426; for the context, see Pierre Le Goyet, *Le mystère Gamelin* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1957), 332–337, 350–351.

78. Claus von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 89. Perhaps lexicographers can determine why the editors translate *wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit* as "fascinating trinity."

79. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

80. Richard K. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), esp. 19–52.

81. Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy, and Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 1989); Robert Jervis, "Strategic Intelligence and Effective Policy," in Stuart Farnson, David Stafford, and Wesley Wark, eds., *Security and Intelligence: New Perspectives for the 1990s* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 165–181.

82. Colin L. Dyer, *Population and Society in Twentieth Century France* (Sevonoaks, Kent, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978).

83. Stephen A. Schuker, "Ambivalent Exile: Heinrich Brüning and America's Good War," in Christoph Buchheim et al., eds., *Zerrissene Zwischenkriegszeit. Wirtschaftshistorische Beiträge* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1994), 350; Heinrich August Winkler, *Weimar, 1918–1933: Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1993), 169–170; Hans W. Gatzke, *Stressemann and the Rearmament of Germany* (Baltimore, 1954), 13–15.

84. General Charles Nollet, *Une expérience de désarmement. Cinq ans de contrôle militaire en Allemagne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1932); Forcade, *La République secrète*, chap. 4; J. H. Morgan, *Assize of Arms: The Disarmament of Germany and her Rearmament 1919–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946); Michael Salewski, *Entwaffnung und Militärkontrolle in Deutschland 1919–1927* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1966). Cf. Richard J. Shuster, *German Disarmament after World War I: The Diplomacy of International Arms Inspection, 1920–1931* (London: Routledge, 2006), who sees the operation as successful.

85. Peter Jackson and Joseph Maiolo, "Strategic Intelligence, Counter-Intelligence, and Alliance Diplomacy in Anglo-French Relations before the Second World War," *Militär-geschichtliche Zeitschrift* 65, no. 2 (2006): 426.

86. Officers assigned to train the eastern allies naturally took their mission seriously. See, e.g., Richard F. Crane, *A French Consistence in Prague: Louis Eugène Faucher and the Abandonment of Czechoslovakia* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, 1996).

87. Laurence Badel, "Les réalisations concrètes," in Jacques Bariéty, ed., *Aristide Briand, la Société des nations et l'Europe, 1919–1932* (Straasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2007), 298–99; for Briand's working habits, consult Jules Laroche, *Au Quai-d'Orsay avec Briand et Poincaré 1919–1926* (Paris: Hachette, 1957).

88. Stephen Schuker, "Les États-Unis, la France, et l'Europe, 1919–1932," in Bariéty, ed., *Briand*, 383–396.

89. J. E. Kaufmann and H. W. Kaufmann, *Fortress France: The Maginot Line and French Defenses in World War II* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006).

90. Daladier before the Comité permanent de la défense nationale, 26 June 1936, cited by du Réau, "Haut commandant," 68.

91. Stephen A. Schuker, "France and the Remilitarization of the Rhineland, 1936," *French Historical Studies* 14 (Spring 1986): 299–338; Lee, "Strategy, Arms," 63–67; Frédéric Guélon, ed., *Le "journal" du général Weygand, 1929–1935* (Montpellier: Université Montpellier III, 1998).

92. Castellan, *Le réarmement clandestin du Reich*; Edward W. Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).
93. "Principales réalisations du président. Étude demandée par le secrétariat particulier de M. Daladier," 5 February 1937, 5N 581 Dr. 3, SHAT.
94. Frank, *Le prix du réarmement*, 34-36.
95. Schuker, "Remilitarization"; Henry Dutailly, *Les problèmes de l'armée de terre française, 1939-1940* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1980), 93-100; General P.-É. Tournoux, *Haut commandement, gouvernement et défense des frontières du Nord et de l'Est, 1919-1939* (Paris: Nouvelle éditions latines, 1960), 337; Robert J. Young, *In Command of France: French Foreign Policy and Military Planning, 1933-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 76-129.
96. Jackson, *France and the Nazi Menace*, 245-297; Porch, *French Secret Service*, 146; also Daladier's "notes manuscrites" in IDA7 Dr 6 sdr a, and "Documents généraux, Munich," in 2DA1 Dr 3, Fonds Daladier.
97. Patrice Buffotot, "The French High Command and the Franco-Soviet Alliance, 1933-1939," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 5 (December 1982): 46-59; Dutailly, *Les problèmes*, 45-50, 56-58; Delpla, ed., *Les papiers secrets du Général Doumenc*, 35-133.
98. Charles Bohlen to Ambassador Bullitt, n.d. [August 1939], William C. Bullitt Papers, Yale University, box 114/464.
99. Experts don't agree whether Stalin first gave this explanation at a secret Politburo meeting on 19 August 1939, before signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The latest evidence suggests that the copy of the speech found in the Russian archives may be authentic. In any event, Stalin said much the same thing to the Comintern chief Georgii Dimitrov on 7 September, and a Commissariat for Foreign Affairs official echoed the line when briefing a Czech delegation on 26 October 1939. See Albert Weeks, *Stalin's Other War, 1939-1941* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 17-173; Ivo Banac, ed., *The Diary of Georgii Dimitrov* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 115-116; V. I. Doroshenko et al., "Ne mif: Reči" Stalina 19 avgusta 1939 goda," *Voprosy istorii*, 2005, no. 8: 3-20; and *Pravda Viktora Suvorova* 3, ed. Dmitri Khamel'nikskii (Moscow: Lauza, 2007), 375-379.
100. Buffotot, "Franco-Soviet Alliance," 549; Elisabeth du Réau, "Le renseignement et l'élaboration de la décision diplomatique et militaire: Le cas de la France, 1933-1940," *Relations internationales*, no. 78 (1994): 241-260, esp. 254-256.
101. Fear and discouragement penetrated so far down the ranks that in late 1936 the head of Air Force intelligence said plaintively to a German embassy air adviser, "Do what you want in the East, but just leave us alone." Hans Ritter memorandum, forwarded by Capt. Malcolm Christie to Robert Vanstarrat, 9 August 1940, FO 371/24312, PRO.
102. Sabine Jansen, *Pierre Cot: Un antifasciste radical* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 138-346; Thierry Vivier, *La politique aéronautique militaire de la France, 1933-1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 105-43; Pierre Pèan, *Vie et morts de Jean Moulin* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), 51-390; Herrick Chapman, *State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 71-147.

103. See the many distressing encounters of Foreign Office and Air Ministry officials with the French over the period from 1937 to 1939 in FO 371/200694, 21621, 22915-916; also Secretary of State for Air Sir Kingsley Wood's frustrating showdown with La Chambre on 4 March 1939, AIR 19/159, PRO.

104. John McVickar Haight, *American Aid to France, 1938-1940* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

105. The Armée de l'Air became so disorganized that it stopped keeping records in early June; hence minor discrepancies occur in the numbers. I follow Pierre Buffotot and Jacques Ogier, "L'Armée de l'Air pendant la bataille de France: Essai de bilan numérique," *Revue historique des armées*, no. 3 (1975): 88-117. See Patrick Facon, *L'Armée de l'Air dans la tourmente: La bataille de France, 1939-1940* (Paris: Economica, 1997); Charles Christienne and Pierre Lissarrague, *A History of French Military Aviation* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986), 267-344; Vivier, *Politique aéronautique*, 597-617.

106. Lee, "Arms, Strategy," 60-63; Robert Nayer, "La problématique du ravitaillement de la France en carburant dans l'Entre-deux-guerres," *Revue historique des armées*, no. 4 (1979): 5-23; Gérard Saint-Martin, *L'armée blindée française, mai-juin 1940* (Paris: Economica 1998), 1-108. Porch, *French Secret Service*, 146, discusses translation of Guderian's book *Achtung - Panzer!* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1937).

107. See quantitative comparisons of the respective forces in Saint-Martin, *L'armée blindée*, 317-333.

108. Pascal Griset, "Les industries d'armement: L'exemple des transmissions," in Levisse-Touzé, ed., *La campagne de 1940*, 330-345.

109. Rémi Baudouin, *Raoul Dautry: Le technocrate de la République* (Paris: Balland, 1992), 187-220.

110. Talbot Imlay, "Mind the Gap: The Perception and Reality of Communist Sabotage of French War Production during the Phoney War, 1939-1940," *Past & Present* 189 (2005): 179-224; Philippe Buton, "Le Parti, la guerre et la révolution, 1939-40," *Communiste* 32-34 (1993): 41-68.

111. Gamelin conversation with the British CIGS, 6 October 1939, in WO 106/1684, PRO.

112. Bruno Chaix, "Les Ardennes en mai 1940: Mythes et réalités," *Revue historique des Armées*, no. 2 (2000): 3-12; Pierre Lye, *La bataille de France* (Paris: Payot, 1947); Lye, "Souvenirs et témoignages, 1939-1940," *Revue historique de l'Armée* 17, no. 1 (1961): 81-105; Lye, "À propos de Sedan 1940," *Revue historique de l'Armée* 18, no. 4 (1962): 89-109; Claude Pailhat, *Dossiers secrets de la France contemporaine*, vol. 4, pt. 2, *La guerre immobile* (Paris, 1984), 328-386; P.-É. Tournoux, "Pouvait-on prévoir l'attaque allemande des Ardennes de mai 1940?" *Revue historique de l'Armée*, no. 2 (1971), 130-141; Jean Vidalenc, "Les divisions de série 'B' dans l'armée française pendant la campagne de France 1939-1940," *Revue historique des armées*, no. 4 (1980): 106-126.

113. Gamelin never explained the logic behind sticking with the Breda plan, which required demurring his strategic reserve, after learning in mid-April that the Dutch

- planned to evacuate North Brabant. The idea of conserving a base for a counterattack against the Reich in the remote future hardly suffices. The Dutch forces he hoped to relieve amounted to little more than a militia. As Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery would later say, the Dutch had “no army of any sort that could begin to fight in the field even against naked savages” (Montgomery to CIGS, 13 August 1950, PREM 8/1954, PRO). On the vagaries of the decision-making process, see Don W. Alexander, “Repercussions of the Breda Variant,” *French Historical Studies* 8 (1974): 459–88.
114. Villelume, *Journal d'une défaite*; Raymond de Sainte-Suzanne, *Une politique étrangère: Le Quai d'Orsay et Saint-John Perse à l'épreuve d'un regard, novembre 1938–juin 1940* (Paris: Viviane Hamy, 2000); Margerie, *Journal 1939–1940*.
115. Bullitt to R. Walton Moore, 18 April 1940, William C. Bullitt Papers, Yale University, box 58/1442.
116. Élisabeth du Réau, *Édouard Daladier* (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 355–400; Jean-Pierre Guichard, *Paul Reynaud: Un homme d'État dans la tourmente, septembre 1939–juin 1940* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008).
117. Villelume, *Journal d'une défaite*, 47 (28 September 1939); Bullitt to Roosevelt, 16 September 1939, William C. Bullitt Papers, Yale University, box 72/1804.
118. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1950), 1: 460.
119. Georges-Henri Soutou, “Introduction,” in Levisse-Touzé, ed., *La campagne de 1940, 21–37*.
120. Édouard Bonnefous, *Histoire politique de la Troisième République*, vol. 7: *La course vers l'abîme: La fin de la IIIe République (1938–1940)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1967), 7: 148–155; *The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin: Undersecretary of State and Secretary of the War Cabinet in M. Paul Reynaud's Administration, April 1940 to May 1940: Foreign Minister Under Marshal Petain, June 1940 to January 1941*, trans. Sir Charles Petrie (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), chap. 3.
121. See Villelume, *Journal*, 196, 331 (17 February and 11 May 1940), on Gammelin's refusal to share operational details with the civilians; Delpia, ed., *Les papiers secrets du Général Doumenc*, 209–210, for Gammelin's comment on Reynaud.
122. For Reynaud's tortuous struggle to dislodge the sinuous Léger, see Renaud Metz, *Alexis Léger dit Saint-John Perse* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), 572–617.
123. See the many examples provided by Roland de Margerie, head of his civil cabinet from March through June, in Margerie, *Journal 1939–1940*, esp. 235–45.
124. Jacques Weygand, *Mon père Weygand* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970), 260–281, 340–573.
125. Villelume, *Journal*, 333 (12 May 1940); cf. Navarre, *Service de renseignements*, 113.
126. Hugh Dalton memorandum, 28 June 1940, CAB 127/204, PRO. Others also used the termite metaphor. See e.g., François de Mauriac, quoted July 1940 in FO 371/24312.
127. Colonel Passy [André Dewavrin], *Mémoires du chef des services secrets de la France Libre*, ed. J.-L. Crémieux-Brilhac (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2000).

128. Sébastien Laurent, “The Free French Intelligence Services: Intelligence and the Politics of Legitimacy,” *Intelligence and National Security* 15 (Winter 2000): 19–41; Pierre Péan, *L'homme de l'ombre: Éléments d'enquête autour de Jacques Foccart* (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Guy Birenbaum, *Le cabinet noir. Au cœur du système Yves Bertrand* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2008).