De Gaulle's Race to the Bottom: The Netherlands, France and the Interwoven Problems of British EEC Membership and European Political Union, 1958–1963

MATHIEU SEGERS

Abstract

Why did de Gaulle veto the United Kingdom's accession to the European Economic Community in 1963? This article addresses the interlinked struggles over British accession and European political union in the early 1960s. The focus is on the crucially conflicting relations between de Gaulle and the Netherlands, his main opponent on both issues. Who won the Franco-Dutch battle and why? This article assesses these questions on the basis of new multi-archival material and highlights a hitherto largely unnoticed rhetorical battle, which explains the course of events and reveals a previously largely unnoticed logic behind de Gaulle's manoeuvring in the intertwined negotiations over European political union, the Common Agricultural Policy and the UK membership bid.

During his press conference on 14 January 1963, President Charles de Gaulle of France effectively vetoed UK accession to the European Economic Community (EEC). Ever since the general dropped his 'bombshell',[1] scholars have been intrigued by the multilayered story behind this dramatic event. Why did he cause this 'enormous scandal'?[2] Almost fifty years later, we are still far from an unambiguous answer

Assistant Professor of European Integration, Department of History and Art History, Utrecht University. Drift 10, 3512 BS Utrecht, Netherlands; m.l.l.segers@uu.nl. The author wishes to thank the Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam, Laurien Crump, Hanns Jürgen Küsters, Bob Lieshout, David Snyder, Bart Stol and three anonymous referees. All translations of quotations from untranslated sources are by the author.

[1] Maurice Couve de Murville, *Une politique etrangère 1958–1969* (Paris: Plon, 1971), 412.

[2] Alain Peyrefitte, *C'etait De Gaulle* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), I, 351.

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to this question.[3] Was de Gaulle primarily defending Europe's independence as a direct response to the US–UK nuclear deal struck at Nassau (Bahamas), as he himself suggested during his press conference?[4] Or was his warning of 'a colossal Atlantic Community' merely a pretext for the torpedo action he had planned from the very start in order to safeguard French privileges on the continent,[5] in particular with an eye to the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the making?[6] Or had London, in its arrogance, spoiled its own chances by the half-heartedness of its membership bid and by exploiting the 'special relationship' with the United States in the Bahamas?[7] Historians remain deeply split on these questions.

With the publication of more primary source research, it has become increasingly clear that the role of the negotiations on European political union (EPU) cannot be ignored if we are to gain a better understanding of the origins of the failed British bid for EEC accession. These negotiations were conducted within the so-called 'Fouchet Commission', in which the Six discussed the formation of an intergovernmental

[3] Scholarly discussions have focused on the traditionalist–revisionist debate centred on the question whether the underlying causes of de Gaulle's European policy were primarily of a geopolitical or a commercial–economic nature.

[4] Geopolitical explanations largely follow de Gaulle's own suggestion that the US–British nuclear deal reached at Nassau a few weeks earlier had been decisive for his veto. During the press conference de Gaulle added a second *Non* to the American proposal of the Multilateral Force (MLF), the linchpin of President John Kennedy's Grand Design for 'Atlantic partnership' and closely connected to the Nassau agreement. For recent reassertions of this 'Nassau argument' in the historiography, see, e.g., Oliver Bange, *The EEC Crisis of 1963* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000), and Frédéric Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance* (Boston, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 93. Against the 'Nassau argument': Wolfram Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996), 193.

[5] National Archives, London (NA), FO371/169122, 'Why Did De Gaulle Do It?', unsigned, undated, and Caccia, 3 April 1963.

[6] Revisionists mainly point to the structural commercial–economic interests of the French (agricultural sector) as the real cause of the veto. According to these accounts the veto was part of a carefully planned strategy to safeguard the CAP. During the press conference, de Gaulle deemed CAP 'essential' for France. Moreover, with the essentials of the CAP secure since January 1962, the general could easily put the onus on London. See Maurice Vaïsse, 'De Gaulle and the British "Application" to Join the Common Market', in George Wilkes, ed., *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community 1961–63* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 65. For an extensive exposition of the leading revisionist claim see Andrew Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958–1970' (parts I and II), *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2, 2 and 3 (2000), 3–43 and 4–68, and Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 176–97. For critical reviews of Moravcsik's explanation, see Craig Parsons, *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2003), 128; Robert H. Lieshout et al., 'De Gaulle, Moravcsik and The Choice for Europe', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 6, 4 (2004), 89–139. Insightful on the CAP is N. Piers Ludlow, 'The Making of the CAP: Towards a Historical Analysis of the EU's First Major Policy', *Contemporary European History*, 14, 3 (2005), 347–71.

[7] The British membership bid had merely been a decision to establish whether satisfactory (agricultural) terms for joining could be negotiated. London's dubious position had aroused suspicious irritation in the Community institutions. See Nora Beloff, *The General Says No* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963); Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1998), 99–145.

organisation to co-ordinate their foreign and defence policy.[8] Yet, although the issue-linkage between Fouchet and the 'veto' is generally acknowledged as fundamentally important,[9] there have been very few analyses of this interplay based on declassified sources from the relevant archives.[10]

This article addresses the interlinked struggles over British accession and EPU in the early 1960s. The focus is on the crucially conflicting relations between de Gaulle and the Netherlands, his sole and tenacious opponent on both issues. Although it is generally acknowledged that the Netherlands played a central role in the parallel negotiations, The Hague's position is usually portrayed either in caricature or strictly from a Dutch perspective.[11] Multi-archival research on the Dutch position is still limited, which is a pity, because the feverish diplomacy among the Six in this crucial episode in the history of European integration sprang largely from the Franco-Dutch antagonism.[12]

Historiography and outline

In order to fill this gap in the literature, Jeffrey Vanke published, in 2001, a valuable contribution on the Dutch position in the Fouchet negotiations.[13] He concludes that the irreconcilable (pro-Atlantic) Dutch and (pro-continental) French positions doomed the negotiations from the start. Furthermore, Vanke firmly rejects the widely accepted interpretation of Georges-Henri Soutou,[14] which, according to

[8] The issue linkage is addressed explicitly in Parsons, *Idea*, 117–43; Moravcsik, 'Grain', and idem, *Choice*, 176–97; Bange, *Crisis,* 25–29; Gabriele Clemens, '"A delicate matter". Großbritannien und die Fouchet-Verhandlungen 1960–1962', *Journal of European Integration History*, 11, 1 (2005), 103–24.

[9] Georges-Henri Soutou, 'Le général De Gaulle et le plan Fouchet', and Françoise de La Serre, 'De Gaulle et la candidature britannique aux communautés européennes', both in Institut Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle en son siècle*, vol. 5 (Paris: Plon, 1992), 126–43 and 192–202.

[10] Illustrative is that in many aspects two 1967 publications and an account of a close adviser to de Gaulle's are still the leading works: Alessandro Silj, *Europe's Political Puzzle: A Study of the Fouchet Negotiations and the 1963 Veto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Edmond Jouve, *Le général de Gaulle et la construction de l'Europe* (Paris: Librairie général de droit et de jurisprudence, 1967); and Pierre Maillard, *De Gaulle und Deutschland* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1991), 213–54. Cf. Lieshout et al., 'Moravcsik', 99–100; Bange, *Crisis*, 25–9; Anjo G. Harryvan, 'In Pursuit of Influence. Aspects of the Netherlands's European Policy during the Formative Years of the EEC, 1952–1973', Ph.D. thesis, EUI, Florence, 2007, 138 f.

[11] See Joris Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy* (Leyden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 169; Silj, *Puzzle*, 64.

[12] Next to Vanke's article (see note 13), the following works deal (partly) with the Dutch position regarding enlargement and/or Fouchet on the basis of archival research: N. Piers Ludlow, 'Too Close a Friend? The Netherlands and the First British Application to the EEC, 1961–1963', in Nigel Ashton and Duco Hellema, eds., *Anglo-Dutch Relations since 1780* (Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 223–39; Bernard Bouwman, 'The British Dimension of Dutch European Policy (1950–1963)', D. Phil thesis, Oxford University, 1995, 223–62; Harryvan, 'Pursuit', 137–62; Hans Nijenhuis, 'De Nederlandse tactiek in de onderhandelingen over een Europese politieke unie (1960–1962)', *Internationale Spectator*, 41 (1987), 41–9.

[13] Jeffrey Vanke, 'An Impossible Union: Dutch Objections to the Fouchet Plan', *Cold War History*, 2, (2001), 95–112.

[14] Soutou, 'Le général', 126–43; Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'Alliande incertaine. Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands 1954–1996* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 149–201.

Vanke, unjustly tends 'to lament an opportunity lost due to de Gaulle's ill-considered behaviour'. Vanke concludes that Soutou's account of the Fouchet episode 'conflict[s] with Dutch evidence' and 'confuses de Gaulle's purposes'. Contrary to most accounts, he claims that things were far more straightforward than most accounts suggest and that 'the outcome' of the Fouchet negotiations was never 'uncertain'. The question of British participation made EPU an impossible project from the outset. Whereas 'British participation remained paramount' for the Dutch, 'de Gaulle's vision for EPU . . . necessarily excluded Britain'. Since 'neither side would compromise', failure was inevitable.[15]

Apart from the fact that his interpretation of the Gaullist EPU vision is contentious,[16] Vanke's argument rests on the claim that his article would demonstrate 'the firmness of the Dutch position more clearly than most previous studies'.[17] However, the primary sources cited in the present article do not corroborate Vanke's account. Although Vanke is correct in asserting that the Dutch perspective is essential for understanding the subsequent events and the Gaullist manoeuvring in the EPU dossier, his explanation relies on a widely held myth about the Dutch opposition to Fouchet, namely that Dutch opposition was united, steadfast and successful.[18] The Dutch sources cited in this article make it clear that this was by no means the case. In fact, the Dutch cabinet, a coalition of Christian Democrats (both Catholic and Protestant) and Liberals, remained split throughout most of the Fouchet negotiations – a situation which led to repeated postponement of definite decisions on the issue and chaotic communication (both within the cabinet and between the cabinet and the Dutch representative in the Fouchet Commission). Thus, already in April 1961, a completely isolated and desperate Dutch delegation in the Fouchet Commission felt forced to make major concessions to the French. As we shall see below, it was a fortunate coincidence rather than steadfast opposition that eventually enabled the Dutch to escape from this disadvantageous position during summer 1961.

Moreover, Vanke fails to discuss two issues that are crucial to any understanding of why the Franco-Dutch conflict regarding EPU developed as it did. First, Vanke's account lacks an elaborate analysis of the interplay between Fouchet and the British membership negotiations. Given the above-mentioned key role of the 'British question' in his account, this omission is striking. In addition, Vanke's lack of attention to the interplay between Fouchet and the British question contrasts with the conclusions drawn by Piers Ludlow from his research in the British archives. According to Ludlow, the bluntly Francophobe diplomacy of The Hague in the Fouchet negotiations harmed rather than promoted the British bid for EEC

[15] Vanke, 'Impossible', 108–9.
[16] See, for instance, Maillard, *De Gaulle*, 240.
[17] Vanke, 'Impossible', 69.
[18] Voorhoeve, *Peace*, 169. A recent study of the Dutch European policy during the early 1960s has shown that the hostile Dutch position regarding Fouchet contrasted sharply with the close Franco-Dutch co-operation in the CAP and the Franco-Dutch agreement concerning the problem of decolonisation (Bart Stol, 'Nieuw licht op de Nederlands-Franse relatie. Mythe van de antithese', *Internationale Spectator*, 60 (2006), 646–49).

membership.[19] This is a finding which casts doubt on Vanke's conclusion that British participation remained paramount for the Dutch. If Ludlow's account implies that the supposed support for the United Kingdom's entry were merely a reflection of ad hoc tactics, that would not square with Vanke's account, which suggests that Franco-Dutch intransigency reflected contradictory principled beliefs regarding the United Kingdom's role in Europe. Second, Vanke does not assess the end result of the Franco-Dutch confrontation. He merely concludes that EPU was an 'impossible union' from the outset and neither poses nor answers the questions of who won the Franco-Dutch battle and why. Nevertheless, answers to these questions are essential if we are to gain insight into the goals pursued and the tactics followed in the Franco-Dutch conflict over EPU.

This article assesses these questions on the basis of (new) multi-archival material and hitherto unknown Dutch sources. The conclusions shed new light on the Dutch and Gaullist European policies and their interplay. It presents new insights into the failure of the Fouchet plan, contributes to a better understanding of the origins of de Gaulle's 'veto', and explains the linkage between the two issues. The article focuses on the ideational, strategic and tactical dynamic between The Hague and de Gaulle during the negotiations over the interwoven problems of UK EEC membership and EPU. The analysis highlights a hitherto largely unnoticed *rhetorical battle* among the Six, fuelled mainly by French and Dutch protagonists, among whom General de Gaulle and Joseph Luns, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs, were the most prominent. It is the development of this rhetorical battle – which was at the very heart of the EPU controversy – which explains much of the complex course of events in the Fouchet episode. Moreover, its connection to the question of British EEC membership reveals a previously largely unnoticed logic behind de Gaulle's manoeuvring in the intertwined negotiations over EPU, the CAP and British membership during the early sixties. As we shall see below, by September 1960 de Gaulle had raised the stakes in the rhetorical battle in an attempt to maximise the results of his European policy, thereby risking his own Gaullist EPU goals, as well as his European credibility.

The outline of the article is as follows. In the next section, I retrace the Franco-Dutch antagonism of the early 1960s to the aftermath of the *relance européenne* and the coming into force of the Rome Treaty. The state of European integration in 1958 was pleasing to neither de Gaulle nor the Netherlands. Although both Paris and The Hague advocated revisionist plans for the future of European integration, their respective plans were fundamentally opposed. Emphasis on this pre-history of the Fouchet episode is important, because much of what happened during the actual negotiations in the Fouchet Commission can only be adequately explained if the French and Dutch 'starting positions' of 1958 are taken into account. The section ends with a brief subsection on the developments in de Gaulle's vision on EPU during the first half of 1960, after his first attempts to launch such a project had failed. In the third section I describe how the Franco-Dutch clash of ideas eventually came

[19] Ludlow, *Too Close*.

to a head in a rhetorically manipulated battle over the pro-European image of the respective parties, a convoluted game which, in the beginning, was largely controlled by de Gaulle.

In the fourth and fifth sections I present a detailed analysis of the course of events in the negotiations regarding the British accession and the Fouchet plan from the perspective of the escalating Franco-Dutch conflict. Although The Hague was strikingly well informed on the (rhetorical) tactics pursued by de Gaulle, the Dutch appeared to have fathomed only partly the strategy the general was following in his European policy. In this, incidentally, The Hague was no different from other EEC members, as well as London and Washington. The Dutch were unable to escape from the defensive and isolated position among the Six into which de Gaulle manipulated them during the first half of 1961. As will become clear, however, from summer 1961 onwards de Gaulle gradually lost control over the process as a result of combined actions from Washington and London leading to a British bid for full EEC membership. This effectively thwarted the strategy that de Gaulle had pursued by raising the stakes in the above-mentioned rhetorical battle. Moreover, it was this development that urged the general abruptly to break off the rhetorical battle and to shift to a radical conservative European policy in an attempt to safeguard France's vital interests and to prevent the Anglo-Saxons from gaining control over the process. This shift in Gaullist policies was decided between January and May 1962, the period in which the Fouchet negotiations definitively ended in failure. It was effectively the general's unexpected policy shift which saved the Dutch from their rather hopeless position, although in the eyes of many this course of events made the Dutch stance vis-à-vis Fouchet look resolutely steadfast. In reality, however, Dutch positioning had been hesitant and severely hindered by a belated self-awareness of the position of the Netherlands in 'Little Europe'. In fact, throughout the whole process, the Netherlands had been, for the most part, a mere accessory to the interplay between Gaullist tactics and Anglo-US actions. In the final section I sum up the main conclusions.

Lost in 'Little Europe'

In autumn 1958, Ernst van der Beugel, the Dutch secretary of state for foreign affairs, visited the State Department in Washington. The topic of conversation was the impasse in the negotiations on a European free trade area (FTA), mainly due to the resistance of (protectionist) France. Van der Beugel felt that the US government 'should take cognisance of the fact that the friends of trade liberalism within the EEC were in rather desperate need of assistance'. Emphasising that it had become unmistakably clear that France did not share the Atlantic goal of an 'open' and 'outward-looking Common Market', Van der Beugel warned of 'a split between the EEC and the rest of the OEEC [Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, the precursor of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD] countries', which 'could endanger much of the accomplishments of the

post-war period, including NATO'.[20] But his efforts to save the FTA by rallying the Americans behind it were of no avail.

A few weeks later the negotiations were definitively bogged down, and in the months that followed, an alliance of French diplomats and the Brussels Commission managed to frustrate attempts to revitalise the FTA. Things got even worse after the summer of 1959. The EEC's booming economy and the first results of the Rueff reforms in France offered Paris the means successfully to adapt to the EEC's liberalisation schemes, and the trumps to call its partners' bluff.[21] To the astonishment of the other five EEC partners, London, and Washington, Paris issued a proposal for accelerating the EEC's liberalisation schemes. This was something the other five could not credibly oppose.[22] However, Paris combined its call for the lowering of intra-EEC trade tariffs with a demand for a common tariff exceeding the existing German and Benelux levels. The effect of the French package would thus be to drive a wedge between the EEC on the one hand and the FTA on the other. All this touched a raw nerve with the Dutch. Why?

As the French minister of foreign affairs, Maurice Couve de Murville, put it, the Dutch were 'not continental Europeans'.[23] Indeed, the essence of the Dutch European policy was to be found in the maritime (neutralist) desire to escape from continental constrictions and in the conviction that free trade was the classic instrument to pursue that. In other words, European integration was desirable as long as it served the ultimate goal of making European politics and Atlantic trade liberalism identical phenomena. As a consequence, the Dutch wished to keep European integration as de-politicised as possible, strongly preferring to keep the process of integration limited to technocracy in the service of free trade. (High) politics, on the other hand, should be kept within the Atlantic framework of NATO. To be sure, the Dutch goal of realising an Atlantic world was a deeply political one: commercial interests were subordinated to the political principle of Atlantic free trade as a means to this political end.[24]

Consequently, Dutch policy towards the EEC was a specific mix of revisionism and conservatism. As teaming up with the Atlantic friends of free trade represented an absolute priority, swift British accession to 'Little Europe' was essential. Subsequent Dutch governments thus remained strongly revisionist with regard to the size of the 'relatively small protectionist club', as Prime Minister Willem Drees had characterised the EEC.[25] On the other hand, the Dutch were anxious to deflate continental dreams of European political independence from US dominance. Crusading against

[20] Department of State Publications, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1958–60, vol. 7 (2) (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1993), 78–80 and cf. 150.

[21] Parsons, *Idea*, 122–3, 130.

[22] The first stage towards a common tariff and the second tariff reduction, both scheduled for 1 January 1962, would be brought forward to July 1960.

[23] Cited in Sebastian Reyn, 'Atlantis Lost: The American Experience with de Gaulle (1958–1969)', Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 2007), 351, n. 150.

[24] Ludlow, *Too Close*, 230; cf. Voorhoeve, *Peace*, 162–63, 191–92; Harryvan, 'Pursuit', 141, 157.

[25] Cited in Johan van Merriënboer, *Mansholt* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006), 234; cf. Archive of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague (BZ), 1965–74, 16196, de Koster to MP, 12 Dec. 1967.

the political entrenchment of 'Little Europe', the Dutch stubbornly pursued their aim of promoting the Atlantic friendship within European integration. If necessary, the Drees government was even prepared to oppose the policies of Washington and London for this cause.[26] Consequently, the Dutch stance became increasingly conservative in terms of European integration.

However, pragmatism was needed to survive in 'Little Europe'. After the definite failure of the FTA talks at the end of 1959, The Hague accepted the French acceleration proposals as a basis for negotiation.[27] Backed partly by the Germans (on the issue of the common tariff cut), and partly – though strongly conditionally – by the French (on the CAP), the Dutch negotiators managed to broker a successful deal for the Netherlands in the package of May 1960, which laid the groundwork for the completion of the EEC and the CAP (introducing the variable levy system).[28] But all this left the Dutch foreign policy elite smouldering with feelings of disillusion over the whole European project.[29] After all, The Hague had always envisaged a Europe rather different from the continental 'Little Europe' which the *relance européenne* had brought about. What had happened?

At the time of the negotiations over the Common Market (1956), most key players within the Dutch government, just like the influential pro-Atlantic *ordoliberals* in West Germany (led by the economics minister Ludwig Erhard), had long anticipated a British-initiated free-trade outcome of the protracted Common Market negotiations. To their astonishment, however, Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer thwarted the British initiative, when it finally came, and floated the 'Little Europe' vessel by making major concessions to the French following the Suez crisis. The British, Erhard and his supporters in Bonn, and the government in The Hague had in fact been taken by surprise.[30] After the signing of the treaties the Dutch initially perceived the FTA (the relic of the 1956 British initiative), as the lifeline out of 'Little Europe'. However, during 1959 it became painfully clear that this had been an illusion. With hindsight, the FTA's failure had been inherently one of the consequences of the historic Franco-German reconciliation, which saved the project of the EEC, excluded Britain and put France in the driving seat of Europe.

In summer 1959, de Gaulle tabled his first European proposal for political co-operation, in the form of a Franco-Italian plan for regular ministerial summits to discuss political affairs among the Six. The Dutch minister of foreign affairs, Joseph Luns, vehemently opposed the plan, describing any such new institution as superfluous. He explained his position further in internal dispatches: 'any form

[26] Dutch National Archives, The Hague (DNA), 2.05.118, 30162, Kymmell to de Vos, 8 Dec. 1961; Joseph Luns, *'Ik herinner mij . . .'. Memoirs* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1971), 182.

[27] The Dutch deemed the French proposals to be acceptable, but only when three preconditions were met: (i) acceleration had to be extended and linked to substantial progress towards the CAP, (ii) the 20 per cent tariff cut had to apply for both EEC and OEEC members; and (iii) the final common tariff had to be cut by 20 per cent as well.

[28] Parsons, *Idea*, 131; Ludlow, 'CAP', 368.

[29] Cf. DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, de Vos to Luns, 29 Nov. 1961.

[30] Max Kohnstamm, *De Europese dagboeken van Max Kohnstamm* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2008), 109 f.; Johan van Merriënboer, *Mansholt* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2006), 235.

of political bloc-formation against our Anglo-Saxon allies is insane. This would endanger NATO, and therewith our most vital interests.'[31] Eventually, West Germany remained reluctant and the Franco-Italian plan got nowhere.[32] However, it was far from certain whether Bonn would resist new plans from Paris, especially when these were linked to overtures of friendship within the realm of Franco-German reconciliation, the life work of Konrad Adenauer.

The Hague needed to arm itself. Pragmatically, the most obvious line of defence was to stick to the existing treaties as an ideal end point, which was consistent with the Dutch aversion to political integration among the Six. Ironically, this implied that the Dutch, who from 1950 onwards had consistently taken the most sceptical line among the Six on the issue of supra-nationalism, had to pose as the defenders of the unloved EEC but at the same time, and at greater risk, as the champions of supra-nationalism.[33] Yet, as Luns clearly saw, it was worth trying for at least two reasons. First, demanding supra-nationalism appeared to be a good way of keeping integration among the Six as technocratic and de-politicised as possible. Second, this stance gave Dutch European policy a positive image in the public eye. Crucially, it could therefore probably function as an effective instrument to frustrate France's future initiatives. After all, the general publicly detested supra-nationalism.

The refining of de Gaulle's vision of European political union

In January 1960, after the failed Franco-Italian initiative, de Gaulle went back to the drawing board.[34] In a private note written in July 1960, he set out the way in which France could put an end to supra-nationalism and 'the "American" integration' in the Atlantic alliance, both of which were evidently 'contradictory' to the 'non-American' Europe of states that he envisaged.[35] This did not mean that the general was on a quest to dismantle NATO altogether. On the contrary, de Gaulle was a supporter of the Treaty of Washington.[36] What he wanted was to organise the alliance on a more equal footing that reflected the new 'reality'; 'dependence' had to be transformed into 'interdependence'.[37] He concluded that only a Europe based on a Franco-German 'accord' could effectively counter 'supra-national entities' and take the initiative to 'base' the Western Alliance on 'new foundations'. In order to realise this plan, de Gaulle proposed regular summits among the Six prepared by permanent commissions of experts covering the domains of politics, economics, culture and defence.[38] Finally, this 'European Union' should be open to Britain,[39] but only if it

[31] Cited in Vanke, 'Impossible', 97.
[32] Ulrich Lappenküper, *Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1949–1963*, vol. 2 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001), 1455–57.
[33] DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, de Vos to Luns, 29 Nov. 1961, 5–6; cf. Harryvan, 'Pursuit', 145 and 156.
[34] Soutou, *L'Alliance*, 151–52.
[35] Peyrefitte, *C'etait*, 1, 61.
[36] Soutou, *L'Alliance*, 188.
[37] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 379 and 429, 16 Sept. and 20 Oct. 1960, cf. Beyen 397 and 477, 30 Sept. and 18 Nov. 1960.
[38] Charles de Gaulle, *Lettres, Notes et Carnets* (LNC), (Paris: Plon, 1985), VIII, 382–3.
[39] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 470 and 477, 15 and 18 Nov. 1960.

'succeeded in separating herself from the Commonwealth and the US',[40] which was probably a task for the mid- to long term.[41]

Pro-European spin

Not surprisingly, de Gaulle's strictly intergovernmental European vision aroused suspicion, with the popular federalist forces in the parliaments of the Six – not least in the French Assemblée – sticking to the existing treaties and supra-nationalism. On top of that, France's EEC partners tended to move in the direction of their respective pro-federalist forces. However, in a confidential memorandum of August 1960 on how to sell de Gaulle's conception of Europe,[42] the Gaullist deputy (subsequently minister of information) Alain Peyrefitte noted that France's EEC partners were only 'Community-minded' as long as it suited them. It was up to France to uncover their 'hypocrisy', but this would require 'a tactic': France had to combine a *cautious* treatment of the existing European institutions with *boldly* far-reaching new proposals for political co-operation. If the latter were sufficiently pro-European, the other five EEC members would be trumped and the federalists could side with Gaullist France without losing face. Moreover, such a tactic could prevent France from giving the impression that it wished to construct a 'British [i.e. intergovernmental] Europe without the British'. Or in stronger terms, if France was sufficiently 'bold' in its new EPU initiatives, Britain might well decide that it would be better to remain outside Europe. Peyrefitte emphasised that in order to cash in on these opportunities, it was crucial 'never to appear negative'.[43]

Peyrefitte's memorandum can be read as the outcome of a profound endeavour to develop a rhetorical strategy that would outmanoeuvre the Dutch opposition to de Gaulle's plans for EPU.[44] As early as 1960, Paris appeared to be seriously disconcerted by the effectiveness of the 'illogical' resistance from The Hague. According to the French, the combination of support for both British accession and supra-nationalism constituted a contradiction in terms.[45]

Peyrefitte's advice was thus essentially focused on how to transform 'Little Europe' in line with de Gaulle's vision, while at the same time improving the general's European image – a necessary precondition for a smooth Gaullist makeover of the EEC. However, Peyrefitte's scenario only represented a *maximal* outcome, for it

[40] Peyrefitte, *C'etait*, 1, 62.

[41] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 477 and 471, 18 and 16 Nov. 1960; and 30156, Linthorst Homan to van Houten, 19 Sept. 1960.

[42] The note was meant to be a confidential counsel, but had accidentally been leaked by Peyrefitte's secretary to the French liberal group in the European Parliament (Peyrefitte, *C'etait*, 70). Two years later, in September 1962, members of the Socialist faction in the European Assembly, to the shock of many, quoted from it (Bange, *Crisis*, 25; cf. Miriam Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955–1963* (Princeton University Press, 1964), 500). On 7 February 1963, the Belgian daily *La Dernière Heure* published the memorandum, which was considered shockingly revealing on the cynical essence of Gaullist European policies and the general's veto in particular.

[43] Jouve, *Le Général*, 2, 489.

[44] Cf. DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 471, 16 Nov. 1960.

[45] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 379, 16 Sept. 1960.

depended on the consent of the other five EEC partners. Since this was highly uncertain, Paris had seriously to reckon with the possibility that things would not turn out as Peyrefitte had outlined. The general realised that if he lost the rhetorical battle, he had to be willing and able to throw off the pro-European mantle in order 'to take on directly' the US and supra-national 'first fruits of integration'.[46] In that case de Gaulle would have to make sure that he would be the first to shift the game from the realm of rhetoric to the harsher world of actual events. According to the general, two things were vital when entering such a *minimal* scenario.

First, as 'Little Europe' effectively constituted the 'fulcrum' for French *grandeur*,[47] in such a minimal scenario the 'Europe of the Six' had to remain a closed bastion. In practice, what this meant was that the friendship between Bonn and Paris had to be made strong enough to survive a radical French shift of tactics to a support of the status quo, with the primary aim of blocking enlargement and preventing the expansion of supra-nationalism. After all, profound Franco-German co-operation was the precondition for the existence of 'Little Europe'. Second, before France could decide on such a radical shift in its European policy, the CAP had first to be made irreversible. According to de Gaulle, the CAP was 'owed to' France as compensation for 'serious risks' that the country had accepted 'in industrial and commercial matters' by signing the EEC treaty.[48] In addition, however, it also provided the opportunity to soften the effect of extensive domestic agricultural reforms.[49] Again, Bonn was the crucial partner which had to be won over, all the more so since de Gaulle suspected that influential forces within the German government seriously considered playing the British card to get the CAP, which was clearly disadvantageous for Germany, taken off the agenda.[50]

The Dutch secretary of state for European affairs, the staunch Atlantic liberal Hans van Houten, was informed of the Peyrefitte memorandum (already!) in October 1960.[51] As The Hague realised all too well, the British question was not only 'essential' to the Netherlands,[52] it was obviously also the weakest link in the French strategy. After all, if future circumstances gave France's opponents the opportunity to couple British accession to EPU (for instance as a result of a British membership bid), they would stand a good chance of being able to kill off the Gaullist project.[53] Time was therefore the crucial factor. Whereas de Gaulle had to gain momentum for the EPU if he were to trump the pro-British forces, The Hague on the other hand had to try to buy time, awaiting any kind of Atlantic intervention in the EPU process. For both parties Adenauer was the key to getting things moving in the direction desired.

[46] De Gaulle, LNC, VIII, 399.
[47] Herbert Lüthy, *France against Herself* (New York: Praeger, 1955), 283 f.
[48] Edgard Pisani, *Le Général Indivis* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974), 64.
[49] Parsons, *Idea*, 142.
[50] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 429, 20 Oct. 1960.
[51] DNA, 2.05.118, 30157, van Houten to Sassen, 15 Feb. 1963.
[52] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 477, 18 Nov. 1960.
[53] Cf. DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, de Vos to Luns, 29 Nov. 1961, 2.

Fully aware of his position, the chancellor appeared to go out of his way to keep all options open as long as possible.[54]

De Gaulle had already tried to speed things up. During his meeting with Adenauer in July 1960 at Rambouillet, the general had read his private note of July 1960 (see the subsection 'The refining of de Gaulle's vision of European political union', above) to the Chancellor.[55] But apparently de Gaulle misinterpreted the reluctantly positive reactions of his interlocutor, as he would soon realise.[56] When, on 5 September, during one of his infamous press conferences de Gaulle launched his new EPU plan in all its boldness, openly attacking the unrealistic 'dream of supra-nationalism', Adenauer was furious. The chancellor felt that the general had betrayed their confidential talks.[57]

Adenauer, who in a parallel fashion was involved in secret negotiations with Macmillan over an EEC–EFTA merger, hit back hard. On air he remarked that he was, and always had been, a 'sincere supporter of the *existing* European and NATO policies'.[58] Mentioning NATO in this context was a slap in the face of de Gaulle.

However, mindful of the crucial importance of the Franco-German partnership for the feasibility of his EPU plan, the general was prepared to readjust his plans and so decided to gear his European policies to Peyrefitte's advice.[59] On 30 September 1960, he secretly instructed the prime minister, Michel Debré, who was sent on what had become a reconciliatory mission to Bonn. De Gaulle urged Debré not to 'take on' the Communities 'directly', as they would be '*ipso facto* put in their place' if France succeeded in pulling off 'the Europe of the co-operation of states'. Moreover, de Gaulle ordered Debré to be careful of Adenauer's (Atlantic) feelings.[60] As the Dutch ambassador to Paris noted, the general appeared to realise all too well that maximum 'ideational suppleness' was needed to run the show in the realm of rhetoric.[61] Meanwhile, de Gaulle had intensified his courting of Adenauer, which he had begun during the autumn of 1958 at his house in Colombey-les-deux-Églises.[62] In response, the chancellor appeared prepared to examine the possibilities of a confederation for political co-operation among the Six and seemed willing to

[54] In Bonn, Adenauer was caught in the middle of three factions: (i) The 'federalist' entourage of former state secretary and now commission president Walter Hallstein, (ii) the 'Francophiles' of the *Auswärtige Amt*, and (iii) the overactive Erhard lobby, still feverishly promoting FTA in order to merge EEC and EFTA (cf. Lappenküper, *Beziehungen*, 1480–1542).

[55] Hermann Kusterer, *Der Kanzler und der General* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1995), 139 f.; Soutou, 'Le general', 129.

[56] De Gaulle, LNC, VIII, 396–9.

[57] Lappenküper, *Beziehungen*, 1523.

[58] Ibid. (emphasis added).

[59] Soutou, *L'Alliance*, 153 and 171–3. To be sure, de Gaulle appeared to have toyed with the idea radically to revise the EEC (Jouve, *Général*, 1, 202–3; Christiane Rimbaud, *Pinay* (Paris: Perrin, 1990), 365), but already in 1958 he had decided to accept it more or less as it stood; 'after all the EEC did exist' (DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 477 and 379, 18 Nov. and 16 Sept. 1960; Parsons, *Idea*, 126.)

[60] De Gaulle, LNC, VIII, 398–9; cf. Jouve, *Le Général*, 2, 399; DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 471, 16 Nov. 1960.

[61] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 413, 470 and 477, 12 Oct. and 15 and 18 Nov. 1960.

[62] See de Gaulle, LNC, VIII, 396–7; Maillard, *De Gaulle*, 182–210. Follow-ups: de Gaulle LNC, IX (Paris: Plon, 1986), 54–55, 163 and 221–2.

back the French effort to give the existing European framework a new impulse.[63] Adenauer agreed to a summit of the Six, to be held in Paris. Logically, Britain could not 'directly' participate in this new process *à Six*, as de Gaulle privately noted. 'Association', however, could be presented as a possibility, to avoid the impression that France was 'shutting the door in Britain's face'.[64]

In The Hague, Luns flatly rejected de Gaulle's new EPU initiative. Luns reminded his colleagues in the Dutch cabinet that the Rome Treaty explicitly declared an intention to expand the 'Europe of Six' and that this had been an important factor in the Dutch decision to join. At present, however, one could see only 'the beginning of a split' in western Europe, which could only be exacerbated by political co-operation between the Six. The good news was that Luns had received a letter from Adenauer in December, in which the chancellor had confirmed that the German government would seek 'deceleration' at the upcoming summit.[65] The Hague, however, was not as united against de Gaulle as Luns would have wished. As will be shown below, the Dutch cabinet remained divided on the issue and undecided regarding the strategy to be followed, and thus committed to an essentially reactive policy.[66] Although his stance against de Gaulle would make him very popular, Luns could not rely on the backing of the cabinet, or even of the members of his own party (the Catholic People's Party, KVP).

The Dutch struggle

Shortly before the Paris summit, de Gaulle managed to cobble together a Franco-German-Italian coalition in favour of his proposals.[67] As a result, Luns and the Dutch prime minister, Jan de Quay, who relied totally on his party-member in this matter, found themselves isolated at the summit on 10 February. Nonetheless, Luns firmly expressed his anxieties about a split in western Europe and explained the Dutch objections to a superfluous institution for intergovernmental decision-making. Furthermore, Luns made it clear that if the other governments preferred to proceed, Britain's participation in the negotiations (possibly through the WEU) would be a necessary precondition for Dutch approval.[68] De Gaulle, strongly backed by Adenauer, with whom he had short-circuited the meeting,[69] pressed for substantial decisions, repeating that he found the Dutch stance illogical. Nonetheless, the summit

[63] DNA, 2.05.118, 1391, Beyen 414, 12 Oct. 1960; Lappenküper, *Beziehungen*, 1529–30.
[64] De Gaulle, LNC, VIII, 401.
[65] DNA, 652, 153, Notulen van de Ministerraad (MR), 27 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1961; cf. 154, MR, 17 Feb. 1961.
[66] Cf. DNA, 652, 153, MR, 20 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1961, and 155, 30 Mar. 1961, and 156, 14 and 17 Apr. 1961.
[67] By making pro-Community concessions to the Germans – by substituting the word 'confederation' with 'organised co-operation' and by excluding the topic of defence from the original French plan (Soutou, *L'Alliance*, 177), and by French support for Florence as the seat of the future European University and an Italian candidacy for the vacancy of Secretary General of NATO.
[68] DNA, 652, 155, MR, 7 Apr. 1961
[69] Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (DDF), 1961, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1997), 168–177.

conclusions did not go beyond an agreement to establish a committee of national representatives to study a possible EPU, which would later be called the Fouchet Commission.[70] Paris had to accept that The Hague had managed to delay the realisation of political inevitabilities.[71]

But The Hague did not need to foster illusions. For the moment, there was neither an invitation to the British from the EEC, nor a British bid for membership. Moreover, the carefully sweetened EPU initiative of de Gaulle was now generally perceived as a stepping stone to the widely popular idea of deeper political European integration. If that was not enough, the other four EEC members,[72] as well as Jean Monnet and Washington,[73] had all reacted positively to de Gaulle's plans! In fact, it appeared that the Netherlands now found itself in the isolated *and* 'negative' position that it had feared from the outset.[74] Given this state of affairs, The Hague could only temporarily delay EPU, hoping that circumstances soon would change for the better. And there was reason for such hope. At the WEU council meeting at the end of February 1961, Edward Heath, then the Lord Privy Seal, officially indicated that Britain was in principle prepared to reassess closer ties with the EEC.[75] Luns immediately – although vainly – seized the opportunity to press Heath to undertake additional steps towards involvement in the EPU talks.[76]

As yet, the British overtures remained insufficient to put real pressure on France. Although there were clear signs that a fully fledged British membership bid was becoming less improbable,[77] Paris could still easily call the Dutch (and London's!) bluff by labelling full membership a precondition for participation in the EPU talks. Moreover, the pro-European spin from Paris was working, unmistakably pushing The Hague towards an uneasy choice between either getting into line on EPU or rejecting it outright. The latter option would be untenable, not least because, in the Dutch parliament, the KVP had joined the pro-EPU chorus.[78] The pressure on The Hague was becoming unbearable and had already led to serious disagreement in the cabinet.[79] The Peyrefittan tactics were working: de Gaulle had become the unchallenged king in the realm of rhetoric and as such effectively disarmed Dutch opposition to his EPU plans.

On 10 April, Prime Minister de Quay expressed his despair about EPU developments in a confidential memorandum. His analysis was simple and to the

[70] Cf. DNA, 652, 154, MR, 17 Feb. 1961.
[71] DDF, 1961, 1, 192–93.
[72] DNA, 2.05.118, 30154, van Houten to S., 7, 21 and 25 Sept. 1959.
[73] DNA, 652, fiche 153, MR, 20 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1961; Lappenküper, *Beziehungen*, 1510 and 1526.
[74] Cf. DNA, 2.05.118, 30154, van Houten to S., 12 Nov. 1959, 2.
[75] Yet, anticipating support from Bonn, the British formulated the precondition that agricultural goods had to be excluded from a common tariff. NA, CAB/129/104, Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, 3 March 1961; see N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 186–7.
[76] DNA, 652, 154, MR, 3 March 1961.
[77] Eric Roll, *Crowded Hours* (London and Boston, MA: Faber & Faber, 1985), 110; DNA, 652, 156, MR, 14 April 1961.
[78] DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, Kymmell to de Vos, 8 Dec. 1961.
[79] See DNA, 652, 156, MR, 14 April 1961.

point. Very soon, this ongoing process would confront the Netherlands with hard choices concerning its position in the world. According to de Quay, The Hague faced nothing less than 'the most important decision' since the 'decision of 1940 to continue the fight against the Germans' (which had implied abandoning Dutch neutrality). Now it was the question of whether to choose a positive or a negative response to de Gaulle's plans, a choice that would 'probably determine the future of the Netherlands for decades to come'.[80]

In subsequent meetings the cabinet discussed the possibilities of setting in motion British accession to the EEC in order to slow down the Gaullist EPU. In the absence of Luns (who was on a visit to the United States), the economics minister, Jan Willem de Pous (a member of one of the two Protestant parties represented in the de Quay cabinet), outlined the considerable tactical opportunities that would open up if the government dared to act as if the 'historical moment' of a British EEC membership bid was imminent. There were two obvious advantages of such a gamble. First, the Dutch delegation could insist on full British membership of the EEC as a *conditio sine qua non* for Dutch consent regarding EPU – the so-called *préalable anglais*. Second, this would put pressure on France, since that country had consistently called British EEC membership a precondition for participation in the EPU. Unfortunately, de Pous failed to convince his colleague, the Catholic (KVP) Victor Marijnen, minister of agriculture, who was not prepared to put the CAP on the line for the British case. Like other more pro-European KVP ministers in the cabinet, Marijnen preferred to compromise on Fouchet and therefore preferred British association rather than accession.[81] The cabinet remained divided and de Quay's daunting decision was postponed.

For the Dutch delegation in the Fouchet Commission, this indecision was too much to cope with. With cabinet instructions still pending and Luns abroad, the pressure on the Dutch delegation, from the Commission as well as from Washington(!), apparently became insupportable and the Dutch position in the Fouchet Commission deteriorated into chaos. While the cabinet in The Hague was still preoccupied with the fine-tuning of the timing and wording of its *préalable anglais*, the Dutch representative found his position untenable and therefore refrained from asserting the *préalable anglais* altogether. The Dutch government was unpleasantly taken by surprise.[82]

On his return from the United States, Luns explained to the cabinet that in spite of major Dutch concessions, France had not yielded one bit on any of the Dutch demands (fusion of the Communities, direct election of the European Parliament). According to Luns this implied that everything, including earlier Dutch concessions, once again had to be considered 'undecided'. Moreover, he brought other good news (which may have been the main reason for his renewed activity after a period of

[80] DNA, 2.05.118, 30156, Fock to van Houten, 10 April 1961.
[81] DNA, 652, fiche 156, MR, 17 April 1961.
[82] DNA, 652, fiche 156, MR, 21 and 28 April 1961; de Vos now only desired preparatory WEU meetings on questions regarding NATO.

conspicuous absence): the pro-Atlantic European Paul-Henri Spaak was returning as foreign minister of Belgium and was potentially a strong ally in the fight against the Gaullist EPU. Luns pleaded for further work to delay the EPU talks in order to build a Benelux coalition.[83] In the weeks that followed, Spaak, albeit ambiguously, sided with Luns, and the Benelux managed to formulate a common standpoint, of which close co-operation with NATO and the desirability of including Britain and the Communities in the EPU talks formed the core. The Bonn summit was postponed to July, also to await a Benelux memorandum.[84] The consistency of the Dutch position had survived, but mainly thanks to lucky coincidence. After six months alone in the line of fire, The Hague decided to sidestep the fundamental questions once again and hide behind Spaak, who was (still) rather conciliatory regarding the Gaullist EPU plans.[85]

From rhetoric to the brute reality of political facts

With Dutch opposition moderated by the Benelux, the Bonn summit of 18 July was a belated success for EPU. Moreover, during his talks with Adenauer on 20 May, de Gaulle had deepened his relationship with the latter to the point he desired. First, the Chancellor had declared that if Fouchet ended in failure France and Germany should strike a bilateral deal on EPU. 'The others would follow', he said. Second, they had agreed on excluding Britain from the EPU talks.[86] The Bonn declaration seemed to pave the way for a treaty to institutionalise intergovernmental political co-operation among the Six.[87] The Fouchet Commission was ordered to draw up swiftly a draft treaty. Fouchet delivered. To the surprise of many, on 19 October he tabled a complete draft treaty (Fouchet 1).[88] The draft modestly reflected de Gaulle's vision and Fouchet stressed that as a basis for further negotiation, it had the general's complete backing. Moreover, he largely succeeded in isolating the very sceptical Dutch delegation once again.[89]

Nonetheless, from de Gaulle's perspective, Fouchet 1 came too late. During the summer the general had lost control of the process among the Six, which he had so

[83] DNA, 652, 156, MR, 28 April 1961.
[84] DNA, 2.05.118, 1392, Beyen 346, 28 June 1961.
[85] See Soutou, 'Le general', 135; Nijenhuis, 'tactiek', 45.
[86] DDF, 1961, 1, 618–24, here 620 and 622. Adenauer would reconfirm his preparedness to strike a Franco-German deal on EPU during a conversation with de Gaulle on 15 July 1962 – during the chancellor's official visit to France. See Horst Osterheld, *'Ich gehe nicht leichten Herzens'. Adenauers letzte Kanzlerjahre* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1986), 132; and Soutou, 'Le général', 142.
[87] DDF, 1961, 2 (1998), 105–25.
[88] Soutou, 'Le général', 135. Fouchet 1 foresaw an irrevocable (confederal) co-operation aiming at a common European foreign and defence policy, as well as close co-operation in the field of culture. Central to the draft treaty were summit meetings at the level of the leaders of government (every four months) and regular council meetings at the level of ministers of foreign affairs. Furthermore, these new institutions were to be backed up by a 'political commission' of high-level representatives of the ministers of foreign affairs. Crucially, the draft treaty contained a revision clause (after three years), which would enable strengthening the institutional features of the political co-operation.
[89] Lappenküper, *Beziehungen*, 1568 and 1573.

scrupulously tried to orchestrate. His road map had been thwarted by intervention from *les Anglo-Saxons*.

Atlantic activism and Dutch self-awareness

The foreign policy elite in Washington had been consistently supportive of 'Little Europe', because of what they called the political trade-off – that is, the strengthening of the western European bloc against the Soviet Union. This was considered more important than immediate US economic interests. It was precisely for this reason that the State Department had kept its distance from the FTA negotiations. Indeed, had it been pressed on the issue, it would have sided with the French.[90] Under the new Kennedy administration this position did not change, but, under the influence of Monnet, Washington decided to become more active in European affairs in an effort to devise better transatlantic institutional arrangements, mainly to tackle the growing budget deficit and the United States' declining trade position (vis-à-vis an increasingly challenging EEC with CAP in the making).[91]

In spring 1961 this fresh US activism coincided with the British quest for the right way to approach the EEC, also given that the CAP, regarded with hostility in London, had not yet taken off completely. The final push came from Washington. The Americans were only willing to accept the economic disadvantages of British EEC membership if it included as the political quid pro quo full British membership, not least since British participation in EPU would enhance European and Atlantic unity.[92] In April 1961, Macmillan yielded to US pressure and decided to apply for full EEC membership.[93] When he made this decision public during the summer, everyone on the Continent was taken by surprise – some pleasantly, others very unpleasantly.

Although it had arrived later than the Netherlands had wished, the moment of the British bid still offered the Dutch the chance to block EPU. However, given the progress made on that issue, this could no longer be the silent death The Hague preferred in the light of 'public opinion'. On the other hand, given that the FTA had been thwarted, it was probably the last chance to mount a challenge to 'Little Europe', which was The Hague's absolute priority.

Luns prepared for a new round of opposition to de Gaulle. Mindful of the thorough analysis his colleague de Pous had presented in April, Luns knew that if he managed to link the negotiations for British accession (beginning 10 October) to Fouchet in a 'positive form', he could put the pressure on de Gaulle. The General would then

[90] NA, PREM11/4013, FO to Tokyo, and Tokyo to FO, 23 and 27 Oct. 1959; FRUS, 1958–60, 7(2), 21 and 47–49.

[91] Geir Lundestad, *'Empire' by Integration: The United States and European Integration 1945–1997* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 58–95; Walt W. Rostow, 'Kennedy's View of Monnet and Vice Versa', in Douglas Brinkley and Richard T. Griffiths, eds., *John F. Kennedy and Europe* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 284–5; Pascaline Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy and the United States of Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 139 f.

[92] Roll, *Crowded*, 110; Reyn, *Atlantis*, 363

[93] Jacques van Helmont, unpublished diary, in Private Archive Max Kohnstamm (Fenffe, Belgium), 149.

have to prove that Fouchet was not a French instrument to block British entry.[94] In addition, The Hague was pleasantly surprised to find that Spaak was prepared to continue the Belgian–Dutch battle against Fouchet.

It now seemed that even their 'maximal scenario' was within Dutch reach. Indeed, France still blocked an invitation to London to participate in the Fouchet negotiations, but the Dutch believed that a slightly more watered-down version of Fouchet I could render it impotent, all the more since short-term British EEC accession seemed more and more realistic.[95] Only now did the pragmatist Luns fully yield to the de Pous line and start to live up to his image of the anti-de Gaulle hardliner by uncompromisingly asserting the *préalable anglais*. Significantly, this implied that The Hague now definitively considered the CAP of secondary importance. For the Dutch, the EPU battle was now about principles rather than interests.

Somewhat ironically, the entire adventure of solitary opposition to Gaullist France enabled the Dutch finally to get close to their own vision of European integration, which in many aspects had been repressed for more than a decade after the 'Little Europe' project had been launched in 1951 (and re-launched in 1957) with Dutch consent. In December 1961, in a note to Luns, the Dutch representative in the Fouchet Commission presented a remarkably candid analysis of the current state of affairs. The Hague only now appeared to realise fully how isolated it had been on the Continent, wary of the Franco-German axis, suspicious of the Francophiles in Belgium and Luxembourg and averse to the federalists from Italy and Brussels. As long as Britain was kept outside, The Hague simply had no allies. British accession assumed a deeper significance: 'co-operation limited to the Six was against Dutch interest' and without Britain the Six were 'merely the European relief of egocentric French politics'.[96] Luns became more combative than ever.

De Gaulle's intervention, January 1962

Given the developments from summer 1961 onwards, de Gaulle felt compelled to intervene in order to re-establish some control over the process. Again, he had carefully obtained Adenauer's agreement to his road-map: (i) first, a CAP deal before the end of the year (1961); (ii) then significant progress on the EPU in January 1962; (iii) and then, logically, postponement of British EEC membership.[97] Thus, before de Gaulle definitely decided to switch his European policy to the minimal variant – that is, no EEC enlargement and firm Franco-German unity (see section 2) – he decided first to expose the other five to some of his sovereign shock therapy, in what may have been an ultimate attempt to redirect the EPU negotiations, and also of course to call London's (and Washington's) bluff – but, to be sure, only after the CAP had been established irrevocably.

[94] DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, de Vos to Luns, 29 Nov. 1961.
[95] DNA, 2.05.118, 30162, de Vos to Luns, 2 Dec. 1961, 4.
[96] Ibid., 6–8.
[97] De Gaulle, LNC, IX, 174; DDF, 1961, 2, 703–8.

After the French presidency had stopped the clock of the year 1961 to extend the agricultural marathon in order to bargain for two extra weeks, the deal was finally struck on 14 January 1962. Now the CAP machinery was definitely set in place.[98]

Four days later, the French delegation presented Fouchet 2, redrafted by the general himself. Fouchet 2 contained three highly provocative changes to Fouchet 1 which reversed earlier French concessions: (i) the omission of any reference to NATO; (ii) the reintroduction of 'economics' as a goal of political co-operation; and (iii) closely connected with the second change, the deletion in the revision clause of the passage emphasising respect for the existing institutional structures of the treaties of Paris (ECSC) and Rome (EEC and EURATOM). These changes not only implicitly destroyed the consensus of Bonn on the basis of which the Dutch could be isolated;[99] the last two changes plainly suggested that de Gaulle aimed at weakening the existing Communities.[100] As if this was not enough for the other five to stomach, Paris at the same time toughened its opposition in the negotiations with Britain for the latter's access to the EEC.

Before long de Gaulle was forced to accept that this 'European Europe' cocktail might have been too strong for France's partners. Only Adenauer (who faced fierce opposition at home) managed to swallow it, albeit while standing under a very unpleasant 'cold shower'.[101] Yet, with the backing of the chancellor, de Gaulle judged circumstances sufficiently opportune to give it one last try. As in his diplomatic offensive in autumn 1960, the general personally tried to cobble a Franco-German-Italian coalition (mainly by compromising on a reference to NATO and a reintroduction of explicit respect for the existing institutional structures in the draft treaty's preamble, during a meeting with Adenauer in Baden-Baden on 15 February and in Turin on 4 April 1962).[102]

But de Gaulle's high-handedness had made Spaak shrink from making any constructive moves towards Paris. The Belgian, like many others, felt personally incensed and feared a weakening of the Atlantic alliance.[103] In fact, it was Spaak (rather than Luns) who in the event would lead a swift and very effective operation to demolish the entire Fouchet undertaking. In doing so, Spaak gave the signal for

[98] The commodity regulations for the most important products were established, Community bodies – under intergovernmental guidance – would manage the separate product markets and a European fund would allow for the management of import levies, price supports, and structural reforms (Parsons, *Idea*, 137; cf. Ludlow, 'CAP').

[99] According to the head of the European Department within the Quai d'Orsay, Jean-Marie Soutou, 'Fouchet 2' might have been the product of a miscommunication between Couve and his advisers, who wrongly believed that their minister had already approved of de Gaulle's editing of the draft treaty. However, Couve appeared to have been as unpleasantly surprised as were the Quai and Christian Fouchet. They all realised that these last minute *and* unilateral changes in the draft treaty would be unacceptable for France's EEC partners (Soutou, 'Le général', 136–7, and *L'Alliance*, 192; cf. Maillard, *De Gaulle*, 250).

[100] Soutou, *L'Alliance*, 190–1.

[101] Osterheld, *'Ich'*, 97.

[102] Soutou, 'Le général', 139–40, and *L'Alliance*, 199.

[103] Rik Coolsaet, *België en zijn buitenlandse politiek 1830–1990* (Leuven: Van Halewyck), 433. For Spaak's (personal) motivation see Michel Dumoulin, *Spaak* (Brussels: Racine, 1999), 650–1.

the beginning of the endgame for which de Gaulle had been preparing, should his EPU initiative take an undesired course.

On 10 April, Heath tried to save British accession to the EEC by publishing the constructive British vision regarding European integration.[104] However, on Dutch instigation,[105] Heath not only declared that the British government was prepared to accept the principle of institutionalised political co-operation, he also requested direct British involvement in the EPU talks. Given the state of affairs in the Fouchet negotiations (with a rigid Adenauer–de Gaulle bloc facing fierce opposition from the others), this British request for involvement in EPU talks meant the final blow for the Gaullist EPU.

The Hague's finest hour had begun. Finally, the pure and perfect *préalable anglais* could be asserted. Moreover, Spaak was more than prepared to support the *préalable anglais* strongly and even to lead the demolition of Fouchet. At the ministerial meeting on 17 April, Spaak and Luns seized the opportunity that Heath had given them; they declared that they would reject any EPU treaty that did not include Britain. Subsequently, Couve concluded that a continuation of the negotiations had become pointless.[106]

De Gaulle's shift to the minimal scenario, May 1962–January 1963

After the failed ministerial meeting in April, the facts were unambiguously against de Gaulle's EPU initiative: the Fouchet plan was dead and the Adenauer–de Gaulle bid for European leadership was effectively thwarted. Moreover, de Gaulle had definitely lost the battle over pro-European spin.

But the general had anticipated this course of events and was already fully prepared for the negative endgame he would personally initiate to prevent the Anglo-Saxons from taking the initiative over European integration. In contrast, The Hague was not prepared for this at all. At his press conference on 15 May, de Gaulle severely attacked the existing form of European integration (an attack which led to the resignation of his Popular Republican Movement (MRP) ministers).[107] Now the time had come for the general, without more ado, to initiate the moves that would determine Europe's institutional future. After the consecutive actions of Heath, Spaak and Luns, which had effectively killed the Franco-German effort to float the Fouchet plan, de Gaulle had Adenauer more firmly on his side than ever.[108] With the CAP well and truly established, de Gaulle, together with the chancellor, discarding all pro-European spin, now battled hard for a 'European' future for Europe.

Since Peyrefitte's tactic of pro-European spin had eventually proved inadequate to bring about the results desired by de Gaulle, a historic Franco-German pact would

[104] For the complete speech of Heath see Camps, *Britain*, 525–30.
[105] Nijenhuis, 'tactiek', 48–9.
[106] DDF, 1962, 1 (1998), 433–4; Soutou, 'Le général', 141.
[107] Peyrefitte, *C'était*, 1, 151; cf. note 86.
[108] Osterheld, *'Ich'*, 123; Vanke, 'Impossible', 108. To be sure, de Gaulle's uncompromising anti-Soviet hard line in the Berlin crisis had decisively contributed to his credibility as the most reliable Western partner in the eyes of Adenauer.

perhaps suffice to reverse the detested tendencies of supra-nationalism and 'American integration' in the period to come. According to de Gaulle, the situation called for threefold action.

First, the Anglo-American proposal for an 'Atlantic partnership' (John Kennedy's Grand Design) – not least as an alternative to Fouchet – had to be nipped in the bud, since it would allow them to hijack 'Little Europe'. Second, de Gaulle's countermove to this Atlanticist proposal had to be based on a firm Franco-German agreement. The latter was all the more urgent since the aged Adenauer could hardly continue in office much longer (and the anti-'Little Europe' Erhard would almost certainly be his successor). Third, British EEC entry had to be blocked in order to make room for a relaunch of EPU on a Franco-German basis in the near future. After all, from de Gaulle's perspective, the necessary sequence of events (first EPU and only then a solution to the British question) was seriously threatened with reversal as a result of US activity regarding European integration, the British membership bid and the failure of Fouchet.

Since he personally had laid the foundations for this back-up scenario of nakedly hostile moves (Franco-German union and veto of British accession), the general was willing and able to do the job. But before he could begin this course of action, it would first have to be unmistakably clear that France understood his policies and backed his actions as president – that is, after the Evian agreements (on the independence of Algeria) and the referendum (on constitutional changes) of autumn 1962, by means of which he strengthened his hold on power.[109] De Gaulle chose the day of the anniversary of his great CAP success and Kennedy's State of the Union address, 14 January 1963, to present his analysis of the state of affairs in Europe and the world. It would be his most confrontational press conference ever and the overture to the highly controversial Franco-German friendship treaty, which was signed eight days later.

Conclusions

The deep aversion of the Netherlands towards any 'continental orientation' was incompatible with de Gaulle's 'European Europe'.[110] However, this incompatibility by no means made the Fouchet plan 'impossible' from the start,[111] nor did it *ipso facto* doom British accession to the EEC. After all, there was a significant difference in power between France and the Netherlands. From a French perspective the obvious way to get rid of the irritating opposition of the Dutch was to isolate them through a Franco-German entente, and if necessary subsequently to blacken The Hague's equivocal pro-European image, and then force the Dutch into line with a minimum

[109] According to the highest levels in Washington the unexpectedness of the veto lay rather in the fact that de Gaulle had managed to strengthen his power-political position, instead of being assassinated or outmanoeuvred over the issue of Algeria in the preceding months. See Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky, 1965), 571.

[110] Cf. BZ, 1965–74, Sous-chef DGES to DGES, 9 Aug. 1967.

[111] Vanke, 'Impossible'.

of compromise from the French side. The fact that The Hague in the end could resist and, with the decisive help of Spaak, could even thwart the Gaullist plan, was not the result of a carefully planned, scrupulously followed strategy based on commercial interests, as is often supposed, but rather the product of fortunate coincidence and rather vague yet strongly principled Atlantic beliefs. Moreover, it saved an agonised and split government from making (fundamental) choices.

During 1960, de Gaulle had gradually come to realise that the necessary precondition to accomplishing his ambitious vision of a 'European Europe' was victory in the continuing rhetorical battle over pro-European images. In September 1960, the general decided to raise the stakes in this battle, in order to call the EEC partners' (and London's and Washington's) bluff. This strategy worked well until the British EEC membership bid in the summer 1961. This British bid made de Gaulle's 'maximum scenario' – the parallel realisation of (i) an intergovernmental EPU based on Franco-German co-operation, (ii) CAP, and (iii) NATO reform as a crucial spin-off from EPU – significantly less probable. Moreover, it considerably strengthened the position of the – by then – desperate Dutch delegation in the Fouchet Commission.

Well aware of the disadvantage to France of this development, de Gaulle gradually shifted to a 'minimal scenario'. Once having secured the CAP (January 1962), the general uncompromisingly put maximum pressure on the Fouchet negotiations, yet not without first safeguarding Adenauer's backing for an EPU *à deux*. Nobody in Washington, London, or The Hague seemed aware that the general was prepared to embark on a race to the bottom, both in terms of reciprocal trust and in terms of the credibility of European integration in the public eye. Only after de Gaulle's press conference of 14 January 1963 (see the introduction to this article), did the Dutch, like many others, realise how reckless the general had been.

Once his 'maximum scenario' had ended in failure, de Gaulle's main goal was to prevent *les Anglo-Saxons* from seizing the initiative in the debate on the future of European integration by proposing an alternative to his EPU. Although it may be judged a Pyrrhic victory in terms of the credibility of his European intentions, the crude shift to a 'minimal scenario' did enable de Gaulle to safeguard what he saw as France's vital interests concerning European integration (Franco-German union and CAP) *and* to thwart Anglo-Saxon plans to reshape 'Little Europe'. As such, it turned the accidental success of the Dutch resistance to the Fouchet plan into a Pyrrhic victory as well. When reality eventually caught up with rhetoric, both parties had to pay their own particular price for their opportunistic raising of the stakes in the rhetorical battle over which of them was projecting the true pro-European image.