

Rejoinder

Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*: An Answer to Critics and an Agenda for Future Research

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It is a great pleasure to debate French foreign policy with six critics as insightful as John Gillingham, Stanley Hoffmann, John Keeler, Alan Milward, Marc Trachtenberg, and Jeffrey Vanke. Their criticisms span an impressive range, from the interpretation of a single word in a primary source to general reflections on the methodology and epistemology of historical interpretation. One particular virtue of this group is that it is interdisciplinary, and I especially appreciate the seriousness with which historians have taken the “trespassing” of a political scientist. The critics are, moreover, superbly informed and uncommonly energetic. The editor’s request for 1,000-word responses generated far longer critiques, including two extended analyses (from Marc Trachtenberg and Jeffrey Vanke) going back through dozens of primary sources to evaluate my selection of data and causal inferences. Such serious criticism is the rarest and deepest of scholarly pleasures, and I am grateful to each of the six for offering it.

This is not to say that the evaluations are uniformly positive. The core of my argument in the article is that French commercial interests constitute a predominant and sufficient motivation for French President Charles de Gaulle’s policy on European integration—a point I seek to defend with a broad range of documentary and circumstantial evidence. This I term the “commercial interpretation” of de Gaulle’s European policy.¹ Across and

1. “De Gaulle Between Grain and *Grandeur*: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958–1970 (Parts 1 and 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 3–43, and Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 4–68. All subsequent references to my article will be followed by part and page numbers.

within each essay, the responses of the critics range from broad acceptance to modest criticism to outright rejection. Overall, they identify significant qualifications and anomalies in a consistent commercial interpretation of de Gaulle's European policy. These criticisms teach us a great deal and help point the way for new research on French (and European) foreign policy in this period.

The criticisms can usefully be divided into two broad categories: (1) specific criticisms of the evidence concerning two concrete episodes, namely, the promulgation of the Fouchet Plan and the veto of British membership; and (2) general criticisms of and alternatives to the commercial interpretation. I will first discuss the concrete objections and then turn to the general criticisms and alternatives. I will close with a brief comment outlining an agenda for future research in this area.

Two Concrete Cases: The Fouchet Plan and the British Veto

Let me begin by acknowledging the efforts of my interlocutors, particularly Trachtenberg and Vanke, to identify instances in which the omission or misinterpretation of a specific document caused me to overstate the case for commercial motivations. In at least seven such instances, this criticism is clearly justified. First, I neglected to mention two brief passages in de Gaulle's memoirs, including a rhetorical reference in the penultimate paragraph, which mention possible geopolitical objectives of European integration.² Second, my interpretation of a discussion in 1964 between de Gaulle and Couve de Murville devoted specifically to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which I construed as evidence for de Gaulle's view that the real basis of Franco-American antagonism was that "both [were] agricultural producers," is overdrawn, since this conversation was, strictly speaking, about GATT.³ Third, I did not mention two sentences in the transcript of de Gaulle's celebrated 14 January 1963 press conference announcing the British veto, which concern potential geopolitical motivations. Fourth, my summary of de Gaulle's discussion with Harold Macmillan at Champs in June 1962 under-

2. Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir: le renouveau* (Paris: Plon, 1970), pp. 230, 313.

3. Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 265. It is only fair to add, however, that I include a fuller context of the quotation in the footnote, and I introduce it with the rhetorical question: "Why is there Franco-American conflict over the GATT?" Moreover, this passage unambiguously relates the need to connect the CAP to U.S.-European GATT negotiations: "Should the EEC take up the Kennedy Round negotiations without having established the CAP? That's the essential question" (Part 1, p. 25). Overall, a careful reader would not be misled.

states the evidence of de Gaulle's concern with geopolitical issues. Fifth, I misstated the date and occasion (though not the content) of de Gaulle's remark that agriculture "is the most important problem facing France except for Algeria." Sixth, two quotations drawn from primary sources that I was unable to consult (both fruits of Vanke's detailed primary research) lean gently toward a geopolitical interpretation. Seventh, we should not understate the importance of F. Roy Willis's path-breaking 1968 book, *France, Germany, and the New Europe*, which does analyze the political-economic factors underlying French policy in this period.⁴ These omissions, while few compared to the evidence presented in favor of the commercial view, legitimately qualify some of my more sweeping claims about documentary support. I will return to most of the seven points later in this essay.

Beyond these specific issues, the six critics raise a number of objections to my commercial interpretation of the Fouchet Plan and the British veto. Let us consider each in turn.

The Fouchet Plan

The Fouchet Plan, like French demands in the "empty chair" crisis, was not simply an expression of de Gaulle's alternative geopolitical ideology of European political cooperation—though it was that also—but a convenient smokescreen for his promotion of French commercial interests within the European Economic Community (EEC). By making de Gaulle seem more "European" while pursuing narrow French commercial interests and vetoing British membership, the Fouchet Plan dampened the mobilization of domestic and foreign opposition to his actions.

This is clearly the most speculative of the interpretations I advance in the article. I had to make a somewhat bolder inference from the existing documentary record in this case than I did when discussing de Gaulle's promotion of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or his veto of British membership. To be sure, we know that Alain Peyrefitte presented a memorandum to de Gaulle in 1960 setting forth a strategy to use the Fouchet Plan in part as a deliberate means of deception. We know that de Gaulle read it, adopted similar rhetoric, acted accordingly, and soon promoted Peyrefitte to a series of high positions, notably as press secretary. Some recent analyses of the Fouchet Plan have marshaled impressive evidence pointing to the direct influence of this document. We know, too, that de Gaulle was oddly uncompromising on the terms of the plan. He seemed unwilling to offer any compromises or quid

4. Roy Willis, *France, Germany, and the New Europe, 1945–1967* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968).

pro quos to achieve it; indeed, just hours after the critical agricultural agreement of 1962 he toughened the French stance, thereby dooming the negotiations to failure.⁵ We know, finally, that de Gaulle's EEC policy did not change after the Fouchet Plan collapsed—a critical point to which I shall return in a moment. All this suggests, I argue, that the Fouchet Plan was either irrelevant to the ongoing evolution of the EEC or at most a cover for it. Yet the documentary basis remains thin for now, and we should be cautious in imputing motivations to de Gaulle pending the availability of further evidence.

If my interpretation of the Fouchet Plan draws concentrated fire from the six critics, however, it is not mainly because of its slim documentary foundation. Only Vanke challenges the factual basis of my interpretation, and he does so by summarily dismissing the Peyrefitte document as “irrelevant,” without either addressing the extensive discussion of its impact or providing significant counterevidence.⁶ The focus of criticism, led by Hoffmann, is my purported claim that the Fouchet Plan (and the “empty chair” demands) were motivated *entirely* by economic interest, with no role for geopolitical ideals.⁷

This criticism I can put to rest. Perhaps I seem to overstate the case, but I certainly do not mean to deny—and I do not deny in the article—that de Gaulle genuinely valued the geopolitical objectives of the Fouchet Plan, notably the creation of a collective European foreign policy that would be more independent of the superpowers.⁸ I emphasize only that it was *also* explicitly designed to serve the important function of presenting de Gaulle as a politi-

5. If de Gaulle truly believed that the geopolitical goals of the Fouchet Plan were of primary importance, I ask in the article, why did he not offer to compromise in order to realize it? Hoffmann suggests that a compromised Fouchet Plan would not have retained its value to de Gaulle. If this is so, de Gaulle could have proposed to link the Fouchet Plan to controversial EEC issues, such as CAP policy or the institutional structure of the organization. Alternatively, he could have threatened to break up the EEC if he did not get his way on the Fouchet Plan. Trachtenberg dismisses the latter possibility by noting “this is not a valid test of de Gaulle’s seriousness on the issue. It would have been absurd to force France’s partners to accept a plan for European cooperation by making threats of that sort.” But why? De Gaulle repeatedly made precisely such threats in order to force acceptance of both the CAP and reform of the EEC’s institutional structure. Why is there no evidence that he ever considered any such tactics in support of the Fouchet Plan?

6. Other historians I cite take the Peyrefitte Memorandum far more seriously. Detailed consideration of their evidence seems warranted before dismissing it. See my discussion of this work, especially the recent analysis by Olivier Bange (cited in Part 1, p. 38, fn. 104). See also Edmond Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle et la construction de l’Europe (1940–1966)*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1967), pp. 27–29; and Alessandro Silj, “Europe’s Political Puzzle: A Study of the Fouchet Negotiations and the 1963 Veto,” Occasional Paper No. 17, Center for International Affairs, Cambridge, MA, 1967.

7. Hoffmann concludes that “the target he wanted to strike was not the EEC, which he viewed as a mere ‘treaty of commerce,’ his target was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).” Hoffmann also calls our attention to the fact that “de Gaulle had sketched out a comparable design already in 1945.” Still, Gaullist party policy goals on Europe vacillated considerably—from Euroskepticism to federalism and back—between 1945 and 1960. See Part 2, p. 58, fn. 177.

cian with a “European” vision during a period in which France faced the delicate task of simultaneously exploiting the EEC to realize agricultural goals and thwarting the federalist ambitions of other EEC member-states. My formulation is more nuanced and multicausal than the position attributed to me: “The Fouchet Plan was in large part, though of course not entirely, a deliberate deception intended to disguise the tension between France’s economic interests and de Gaulle’s opposition to supranational institutions” (Part 1, p. 37). Overall, the evidence seems strongly to confirm the secondary, though not insignificant, role of de Gaulle’s geopolitical ambitions.

Yet the critics clearly remain unconvinced even by this more modest claim. So I propose the following thought experiment. Let us stipulate, for the sake of argument, that the Fouchet Plan was promulgated entirely for geopolitical reasons. The commercial interpretation of French EEC policy *still* emerges unscathed. Whatever de Gaulle’s motivation may have been for promulgating the Fouchet Plan; the crucial point is that the rise and decline of the Fouchet Plan changed nothing in French EEC policy. By late 1962, I argue, de Gaulle was convinced that the Fouchet Plan had failed, and that there would be no meaningful political cooperation for “50 years.”⁹ A year later he acknowledged that Franco-West German cooperation had collapsed. Yet the essential elements of French policy—support for the EEC, pressure for the CAP, opposition to British membership—remained unchanged. De Gaulle set aside proposals for an alternative Continental institution. He focused instead on reform of existing EEC institutions and continued to promote economic integration. Whatever the true motivations for the Fouchet Plan, it appears to have had no broader significance. Does the geopolitical framework have any plausible explanation for the striking continuity of French EEC policy?

Only Vanke attempts to provide one. He maintains that CAP was an alternative goal that de Gaulle pushed only when his geopolitical ambitions were frustrated. Agriculture, Vanke claims, was not essential to France; de Gaulle initially was concerned solely with industrial trade because this was important in mercantilist terms. According to Vanke, the CAP became central to EEC negotiations only after “the successive failures of the Fouchet Plan in April 1962

8. My analysis of the Fouchet Plan also begins with just such an acknowledgment. I write: “To be sure, de Gaulle would have preferred more intergovernmental institutions in Europe, as well as closer European foreign policy cooperation. International opposition may have rendered the failure of such a proposal inevitable” (Part 1, p. 34).

9. “It is because the British were not willing to enter a political community that they were not allowed in the economic community. Political will is the spirit behind economic unification. . . . But it will be perhaps 50 years before there is a real political community.” Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, 429. For a further discussion, see Part 2, p. 27.

and the Franco-West German Elysée Treaty in April 1963 [which meant that] de Gaulle no longer had to treat the EEC in a gingerly manner” —a venerable interpretation that dates back to contemporaneous analyses by Miriam Camps and others. As evidence, Vanke asserts that “de Gaulle first raised the question of agriculture in the EEC” only during “the spring of 1961.”

Unfortunately, Vanke’s conjectured alternative is untenable. It is contradicted by at least two important types of evidence. First, if Vanke were correct, we would observe a critical shift in French policy between April 1962 and April 1963. Yet in fact the French government mounted an aggressive defense of agricultural interests in the EEC from the Stresa Conference of 1958 onward.¹⁰ De Gaulle’s discussion of French agricultural interests in the EEC crops up in speeches and internal discussions as early as mid-1960, long before the date of mid-1961 cited by Vanke,¹¹ which is itself a year or two too early to support his conjecture. That same year, well before the failure of the Fouchet Plan was known, de Gaulle was already employing his characteristic tactic of obstructing EC decision making in other areas (e.g., acceleration of industrial tariffs) unless further progress was made on the CAP. We also observe intense concern about the fate of agriculture in the contemporaneous EEC-EFTA negotiations and the proposed Kennedy Round.

Second, the increasingly prominent role of agriculture in de Gaulle’s speeches and actions is in fact perfectly explained by the timing and sequencing of ongoing technical EEC negotiations. Why, Vanke might ask, did de Gaulle wait until 1960, rather than making public threats immediately in 1958? Why did conflict intensify among EEC members after 1962–1963? The explanation for this seeming inconsistency in my argument has to do with the sequences of events in the EEC. Industrial tariff reductions, being more important and less technically complex, came first. After exceptionally intricate technical discussions, intensive interstate negotiations on agriculture began only in mid-1960, whereupon the French government immediately began to issue ultimatums and de Gaulle began to emphasize agriculture in his discourse.¹² As I argue in *The Choice for Europe*, increasing conflict during the mid-1960s is precisely what we would expect as negotiations move from discussion of the general structure of the CAP to discussion of prices and financing, which had a direct redistributive impact both domestically and

10. In aggressive French démarches and the beginnings of the policy of obstruction in 1960, see Leon Lindberg, *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), pp. 243–252.

11. On de Gaulle’s speeches in 1960, for example, see Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, pp. 242–243; and Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 67ff.

12. For a broader discussion, see my book, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), chap. 3.

internationally.¹³ In sum, de Gaulle's rhetoric and tactics in this period seem incompatible with Vanke's notion of a link between geopolitical disappointment and economic aggression, but are precisely what one would expect if the General were seeking to promote French commercial interests.

Vetoing British Membership

Trachtenberg believes that I overstate the case for the commercial motivations of de Gaulle's veto of Britain. Vanke goes further, accusing me of sustaining a "simplistic model through a selective presentation of the evidence that best validates it, while ignoring the most damaging countervailing evidence." They are echoed by other critics. What has been omitted? Four pieces of possible counterevidence are relevant.

The first such piece—which Milward stresses and Trachtenberg considers decisive—is de Gaulle's continued opposition to British membership even after Macmillan had signaled his willingness to accept the CAP in principle and to make concessions on Commonwealth preferences. If French documents show "that de Gaulle wanted to keep the British out no matter what they agreed to in the economic area," Trachtenberg maintains, then surely this counts against the commercial argument. He continues:

Agriculture was not the crucial factor. Macmillan at Champs was ready to make sweeping concessions to the French in this area. . . . Indeed, Moravcsik's whole discussion at the beginning of his section on British membership in the EEC suggests that economic issues were *not* fundamental here: What he implies in that passage (correctly, I think) is that no matter how far Britain was willing to go in making concessions, there was no way de Gaulle could have been won over. And in fact this is the impression one gets from other sources.

Trachtenberg and Milward conclude that something else—de Gaulle's geopolitical ideal of European political cooperation perhaps—must surely have been in play.

Milward and Trachtenberg are correct on the facts, narrowly construed. Scholars now agree that de Gaulle vetoed British entry in late 1962 not because he believed that Anglo-French agreement on the issues being negotiated was impossible, but because he found, to his surprise, that it was imminent. Yet Trachtenberg misconstrues the precise commercial motivation for de Gaulle's veto, and thereby misinterprets the meaning of French intransigence. The cen-

13. The fact that the focus of French policy (and that of its partners) for the first two years was on industrial tariff reductions more than agricultural policy reflects the greater economic and commercial importance of industrial trade—a point on which Vanke and I are in complete agreement.

tral issue was not Commonwealth preferences but British support for the CAP and its financing. If we understand de Gaulle's actual underlying commercial goal, French intransigence until 1969 (as well as the subsequent French reversal) in fact confirms the commercial interpretation. Why is this so?

De Gaulle knew that the eventual success of the CAP required much more than the two concessions the British could offer in 1962: a commitment to exclude Commonwealth goods and an acceptance of the CAP in principle. Not until 1964–1966 were common support prices and export levies set, and not until 1970 was a permanent financing arrangement in place. Without the former, the system remained dysfunctional; without the latter, its financing would have been subject to an annual British veto. The threat of a British veto of the CAP, de Gaulle recognized, was potentially fatal. Until 1966, as Peyrefitte's records describe in detail and Milward himself notes, de Gaulle remained unsure whether he could force the Six to take decisions on prices and financing—even *without* Britain as a member. As it stood, prices and financing among the Six were the toughest negotiations the EC has ever witnessed before or since; some felt they almost led to the organization's collapse. There was no way for the British to make a credible commitment to accept either common support prices or permanent financing—at least until 1970, when the CAP was embedded in EEC law and protected by the French veto. Indeed, we now know that leading British officials explicitly recommended that the British government negotiate swift entry, precisely so that Britain could effectively block the CAP. At Rambouillet, Macmillan was unambiguous about British opposition to high support prices. In this context, de Gaulle was quite correct that British membership would have facilitated an Anglo-American-German alliance against a more "European" conception of the EEC—one including the CAP—at least as it was conceived at the time.¹⁴

Under these circumstances, de Gaulle vetoed British membership not because the Commonwealth issue could not be resolved or because the British failed to accept the CAP in principle, but because British membership would

14. Vanke rather quaintly takes me to task for my purportedly "Marxian" and "determinist" tendencies, as against theories that respect individual liberty. In this regard we must heed Gillingham's observation that the overwhelming weight of industrial trade in the foreign economic relations of European states in this period means, with respect to the commercial interpretation of integration I propose, that one surely could and would have had a regional integration scheme even without agriculture—essentially the free trade area proposed by the British. Any arrangement excluding agriculture would, however, have been less advantageous to the French. Therefore, as Gillingham rightly observes and Vanke overlooks, a commercial interpretation of European integration is hardly a form of economic determinism. The final outcome—a small European customs union rather than a larger free trade area—owes much to specific West German geopolitical and economic concerns, as well as to the dynamics of interstate bargaining. For a more detailed discussion of the overall balance of economic and noneconomic factors in European integration, see Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe*, pp. 473–479.

have meant the end of any further progress toward the CAP and the degeneration of the EEC into a free trade area. Hoffmann is quite correct to observe that “even if an agreement could be reached on economic issues, Britain once within the EEC would try to turn it into a mere free trade area, sabotage the CAP, and ally itself with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) against France in negotiations for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).”¹⁵ This threat dominated French European policy until 1970, when prices had been set and a permanent financing arrangement was one decision away. In this context, it is significant that Pompidou’s single “non-negotiable” demand in exchange for lifting the French veto on British membership was the irrevocable establishment of just such a permanent financing system.

The second piece of possible counterevidence is a passage within the transcript of de Gaulle’s 14 January 1963 press conference that alludes to security relations. In the article, I point out that this celebrated public announcement of the veto is almost entirely devoted to elaborating the economic sources of agricultural comparative advantage. Trachtenberg and Vanke note, however, that in describing the emergence of the EEC, de Gaulle briefly (two sentences over four pages) observed that all members were “continental” powers that were not “linked to the outside by a specific political or military arrangement”—probably a reference to the Commonwealth and the “special relationship”—and were therefore “psychologically and materially” ready to create the EEC.¹⁶ Trachtenberg and Vanke are correct: This constitutes important counterevidence.

Yet we should not forget that this brief passage is an isolated, two sentence exception within a four-page discussion of economic history and commercial concerns. The geopolitical remark appears, moreover, as part of an introductory discussion of background conditions for the Treaty of Rome; de Gaulle’s explanation of the veto itself contains no corresponding reference to geopolitics.¹⁷ Overall, the 14 January 1963 press conference still seems to lend strong support to the commercial contention—even more strikingly so

15. Elsewhere in his commentary Hoffmann argues to the contrary that “many of the economic disagreements might have been negotiable.”

16. Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 284, par. 5. It is worth noting that de Gaulle also regularly stated that the “continental” powers constituted an economic bloc, as in Napoleonic times.

17. In a personal communication, George-Henri Soutou recently brought to my attention an ambiguous sentence in paragraph 22 of de Gaulle’s response concerning “a colossal Atlantic community dependent on and under the direction of the United States.” Taking into account other statements, in which such rhetoric was often directed at GATT, I conclude that this is a reference not to U.S. military policy, but to U.S. foreign *economic* policy—the central concern of de Gaulle’s 14 January 1963 discourse. For clearer examples of how de Gaulle’s criticism of an “Atlantic Community” could be directed at the GATT, see the press conference of 29 July 1963, cited in Jouve, *Le Général de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 305; and also de Gaulle’s confidential statement of 18 April 1962, cited in Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 107, 109–110

since these remarks are cited in the secondary literature as decisive evidence for a geopolitical interpretation. In this context, let us recall that I seek only to show that commercial concerns were a *sufficient* cause of the veto, not that they were the sole cause. Surely de Gaulle's remarks support this claim.

The third piece of possible counterevidence is the transcript of the meeting between Macmillan and de Gaulle at Château de Champs in June 1962. Trachtenberg rightly notes that the text is not as unambiguously supportive of a political-economic interpretation as I state; I overlooked some passages supportive of a geopolitical interpretation. I concede the point here. Yet in rereading the documents from this period, I found that the ambiguity in the Champs meeting is outweighed by supporting evidence in the record of the next Macmillan–de Gaulle summit, at Rambouillet six months later, which provides clear evidence of commercial motivation. This meeting is described in detail in my article.¹⁸ Rambouillet was critical, not only because it took place just a month before the veto was announced, but also because it clearly demonstrated that even after de Gaulle had lost hope about the Fouchet Plan, his opposition to British membership remained undiminished. Here, in contrast to Champs, de Gaulle stressed agricultural problems unambiguously. To judge from the transcript—and I direct readers to the summary of it in my article—de Gaulle's primary concern was that Britain would revise or block further development of the CAP and dissolve the existing Common Market into an Atlantic trading area. This suspicion was fueled by Macmillan's continued insistence, as at Champs, that (consistent with the GATT) CAP prices must not be raised so high that they would divert imports. More than once de Gaulle singled out this assertion for rebuttal. When Macmillan offered open-ended political cooperation, de Gaulle hardly bothered to explore the idea. On balance, while the summit at Champs is somewhat ambiguous, the more decisive summit at Rambouillet confirms the commercial interpretation.

The fourth and final piece of possible counterevidence, cited by Vanke, is the most striking—and the most vulnerable.¹⁹ What appears to be a long quotation from Peyrefitte's verbatim record links de Gaulle's opposition to "free trade in the Western world" with the MLF and "American hegemony." This quotation is critical to Vanke's overall case, for it is the most important single piece of evidence he cites to support his rather heated claims about my

18. Trachtenberg kindly agreed to let me revise the proofs to include this evidence in the body of the article. See Part 2, p. 20.

19. I cannot comment on Vanke's brief discussion of de Gaulle's talks with Harold Wilson, since I have not seen the primary documents in question. I refer the reader to my analysis of the evidence in Peyrefitte's third volume, which Vanke does not cite, and which strongly supports a commercial interpretation. See Part 2, pp. 24–25.

purported tendency toward selective citation. At first glance, the contiguity of free trade, the MLF, and U.S. hegemony in de Gaulle's discourse appears to be quite compelling counterevidence against a commercial interpretation.

Indeed, when I first read this quotation, I wondered how I could have overlooked such glaring evidence—until I realized that Vanke had cobbled together citations from three separate passages uttered by de Gaulle in three different months over a period of two years. On closer inspection, the striking juxtaposition between economic policy and geopolitics disappears. The three contexts are in fact quite disparate, and none of the three passages, taken alone, supports Vanke's claim of a direct link between geopolitics and British membership.

To appreciate the interpretive implications, one need only divide the seemingly interconnected quotations into their three constituent parts and read each in context. The first passage (about U.S. entry into the Europe of the Six behind the British) explicitly refers to American interests in GATT and goes so far as to speak of the U.S. threat as that of an "Atlantic *economic* community."²⁰ There is no discussion of geopolitics whatsoever. The second passage (about Franco-West German relations and American hegemony) does compare the EEC and MLF issues as examples of U.S. hegemony discussed by de Gaulle at his recent press conference, but draws no clear link between the two.²¹ The third citation (about the MLF and the British as a "Trojan horse") arises seven months after the preceding quotation within a chapter of Peyrefitte's book devoted exclusively to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other geopolitical issues. In that entire chapter, I found only one possible mention of the EEC and the British veto.²²

Who is engaging in selective citation here? Had Vanke cited these three passages in their separate contexts, readers would come away with a very different impression from the one he intends. If he had selected a representative sample of quotations (in context) over the two-year period from which this "quotation" is drawn, the preponderance would support a commercial interpretation. I do not accuse Vanke of deliberate misstatement. His evidence is correctly presented, and he is far from alone in seeking to make the

20. Statement of 18 April 1962, cited in Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 107, 109–110. Emphasis added.

21. Statement of 24 May 1962, cited in *ibid.*, p. 150.

22. Statement of 24 January 1963, cited in *ibid.*, p. 282. This is the closest thing to evidence that stands up in context. De Gaulle does mention the opening of the "Communauté européenne" to the British "Trojan horse." Yet this is not obviously a reference to the EEC. De Gaulle generally referred to the EEC per se as the "Common Market" ("Marché Commun"), and only rarely as the European Community ("Communauté européenne"). Perhaps he is referring in this passage to the broad grouping of European states, which would be threatened by Britain, not the EEC as Common Market. In any case, the evidence is at best ambiguous and the passage is isolated.

best case for the geopolitical argument by carefully picking and choosing among de Gaulle's statements. Yet it is just this which I criticize in the existing literature. For what does it really tell us? In my view, it demonstrates the contextless and speculative interpolation of geopolitical motivations into de Gaulle's discourse required to generate documentary evidence for a geopolitical interpretation of his European policy. My basic claim stands.

Alternative Interpretations: Is Commercial Interest Really a “Predominant” and “Sufficient” Motivation?

Having considered specific evidence regarding the Fouchet Plan and British membership, I will turn now to the broader challenges to my interpretation of de Gaulle's motives. All six critics maintain that my distinction between commercial interests and geopolitical ideology is too stark and simplistic to capture what was really going on in de Gaulle's government—and in his mind. In particular, a commercial interpretation based on interest group demands, they argue, is one-sided and overstated. As Trachtenberg puts it, “economic and political arguments were tightly linked and indeed pointed in the same direction.” Hoffmann argues that “the economic origins of de Gaulle's policy deserve to be explored as thoroughly as Moravcsik has done. But they were neither dominated by interest group considerations nor exclusive of other calculations, to which they were closely bound.” Even Gillingham and Milward, my most favorable interlocutors, suggest that a more nuanced interpretation would be appropriate.

Could this be true? Is the commercial account excessively simple? Three alternative interpretations of de Gaulle's policies merit our closer attention. One is simply that de Gaulle simultaneously strove for both commercial and geopolitical aims, with greater emphasis on the latter than my account allows. A second, more subtle claim is that de Gaulle was a “modern mercantilist” who indeed pursued commercial objectives, but primarily to further French power and *grandeur*. A third claim, closely related to the first two, is that de Gaulle sought commercial objectives in order to maximize French economic welfare, not to assuage powerful domestic interest groups.

Each of these claims is important and at least partly correct. Although I continue to maintain that commercial concerns are predominant and sufficient to account for de Gaulle's actions, the critics are correct that the interaction between economics and geopolitics, as well as among different types of economic interests, is more complex than my initial formulation suggests and will require future research to unravel fully. Detailed consideration of these three claims clarifies and qualifies important aspects of my commercial

interpretation and highlights important opportunities for future research. Let us consider each in turn.²³

Did de Gaulle pursue geopolitical as well as commercial objectives?

All six critics, except perhaps Gillingham, maintain that Gaullist EEC policy was aimed at the realization of geopolitical objectives as well as economic goals. Trachtenberg believes that I seek to “deny that de Gaulle thought of the EEC in political terms.” Trachtenberg and Vanke both point out that a good deal of documentation is available showing that de Gaulle really sought the goal of a political community, and the six critics adduce a sizable amount of it. On a number of occasions, particularly in 1962 and 1963 during discussions about the Fouchet Plan and the Elysée Treaty, de Gaulle mentioned economic and geopolitical factors side by side.

On this point my critics are quite correct, and I never meant to imply otherwise. I therefore welcome this opportunity to clear up what appears to be a misunderstanding of the essentially multicausal nature of my central argument. Although I do point to the one-sided nature of the existing literature and argue that there is surprisingly little direct evidence linking the EEC to de Gaulle’s geopolitical vision, I would not want to deny either that de Gaulle held the geopolitical views generally attributed to him or that such views contributed to the formulation of his European policy. My central argument is more precise and more modest. I maintain only that commercial considerations constituted a “predominant and sufficient” motivation for French policy.²⁴

I therefore do not deny that de Gaulle had political ambitions for the EEC, as my earlier discussion of the Fouchet Plan above exemplifies. Surely the General would have been pleased if there had been greater European foreign

23. All six critics overlook the section of the original article that addresses criticisms, entitled “Are Geopolitics and Economics Distinct? An Answer to Skeptics.” See Part 2, pp. 60–63.

24. From the introduction: “My argument here is not meant to deny that de Gaulle held the geopolitical beliefs generally attributed to him. Surely the General would have liked to see more autonomous European foreign and defense policies, more intergovernmental institutions for the EEC, and a more widespread acknowledgement of the primacy of the modern nation-state. . . . I insist only that the pursuit of mundane agricultural and industrial interests, combined with domestic economic reforms, constitutes a *predominant influence on and sufficient explanation of French policy toward the EEC under de Gaulle.*” (Emphasis in the original.) From the conclusion: I reiterate the point: “Nor do I assert that commercial motivations were the *sole* national interest underlying de Gaulle’s policy toward the EEC. There are episodes, especially the initial bid for the Fouchet Plan and the ‘empty chair’ crisis, in which ideological and geopolitical factors appear to play some secondary role. I insist only that constraints imposed by economic interest groups, particularly agricultural interests, constitute a *primary and sufficient* explanation of French policy toward the EEC in this period. The existing literature on de Gaulle, I maintain further, systematically understates, and often misstates, this fact.” (Emphasis in the original.) See Part 1, p. 6; and Part 2, p. 60.

policy cooperation and more intergovernmental institutions. This helped motivate both the Fouchet Plan and the French ultimatum that triggered the “empty chair” crisis. I do insist, however, that de Gaulle understood—at latest by the fall of 1962 and probably far earlier—that foreign policy cooperation was unlikely to emerge his lifetime. From then on (and perhaps earlier), economic integration had to justify itself. Overall, it is surprising that so little documentary evidence supports a geopolitical interpretation. De Gaulle had multiple motivations for promoting his vision of European integration, among which commercial considerations appear to have been the strongest.

The distinction between unicausal and multicausal formulations of the commercial argument—between my critics’ reading and my own intent—is crucial because it bears directly on the interpretation of empirical evidence. To demonstrate the primacy and sufficiency of commercial motivations, I cite two types of evidence, each of which withstands scrutiny if viewed as part of a multicausal argument. First, I maintain that the sheer number of passages supporting commercial concerns, and their rhetorical intensity, are greater. The fact that Trachtenberg and Vanke can point to occasional passages that mention geopolitical concerns does not undercut this finding. Although they cite some pieces of evidence I overlooked, only Vanke challenges my overall characterization of the documents, and he does so without systematic evidence.²⁵ I continue to maintain that the preponderance of evidence supports a commercial explanation.

Second, I point out that when de Gaulle explicitly discussed the EEC, he generally mentioned commercial interests first and with greater emphasis than he did geopolitical interests. In many statements commercial interests were a concrete reality, whereas geopolitical interests constituted a future aspiration (Part 1, pp. 27, 32; and Part 2, pp. 18–19, 26–29). As counter-evidence, Trachtenberg cites the discussion between Peyrefitte and de Gaulle on 24 April 1963 in which de Gaulle says “the EEC is not an end in itself”—a quotation echoed in Vaïsse’s prominent study. This is important evidence. Yet my article explicitly weighs it (along with three other quotations that appear to lean against the commercial interpretation) and finds it wanting. Trachtenberg fails to mention that de Gaulle concludes this very

25. Vanke’s archival research, which he had asked me not to cite, has uncovered slightly greater ambiguity in the diplomatic record. He believes there is as yet no documentary support for de Gaulle’s assertion in the memoirs that agriculture played an important role in early Franco-West German discussions on French EEC policy. In his commentary he also uncovers at least one quotation, in addition to the few I could find, that seems to lean slightly toward a geopolitical interpretation. “The essential point is the Common Market which, in itself, is not a bad thing, and especially the political and cultural organization of Europe.” Cited from French Foreign Ministry (MAEF), Cab., Couve 316.

same passage by noting that “political will is the spirit behind economic unification. . . . But it will be perhaps 50 years before there is a real political community.” In context the quotation suggests that de Gaulle’s current goals were commercial, whereas political union was but a very distant possibility. Overall, the passages cited by Trachtenberg and Vanke as evidence against a *unicausal* commercial interpretation actually support a more nuanced *multicausal* thesis in which commercial considerations remain “predominant” and “sufficient” to explain French policy.

In sum, I would like to think that Gillingham gets it right when he states: “Moravcsik is careful not to overdraw his portrait. He does not claim that grand ideas were unimportant in overall French foreign policy, but merely that, for electoral reasons, in the case of the CAP de Gaulle could not pursue those ideas until after French agriculture had been appeased.” If I have been unclear at any point about my commitment to this multicausal formulation of the argument, I stand corrected.

Was de Gaulle a “modern mercantilist” who treated economic welfare primarily as a means to promote French power and grandeur?

All six critics—in particular Hoffmann, Trachtenberg, and Vanke—take me to task for failing to acknowledge the possibility that de Gaulle was a “modern mercantilist.” The General, they suggest, sought to promote French economic welfare, and even perhaps supported special interest concerns, primarily as a means to bolster French international power and *grandeur*. Hoffmann states the argument lucidly:

Economics mattered because de Gaulle was a relentless modernizer, and because he believed, rightly, that economic modernization was essential for France’s *grandeur*. . . . Economic modernization thus was a means of the highest importance to the goals of power, *grandeur*, and activism, set by a modern mercantilist (by which I mean a leader who was pragmatic enough to believe in state intervention whenever necessary, and in free markets and competition whenever these could help the modernization of a country deemed incorrigibly archaic by many observers in the 1940s and 1950s; a man who saw the virtues of shock therapy such as the opening of borders and understood the deadening effects of industrial protectionism; a man for whom wealth was power, and power and activism in world affairs were the coins of *grandeur*).

As Keeler puts it, the agricultural reforms launched during de Gaulle’s presidency yielded substantial economic benefits and might well be seen as provid-

ing France with “*grandeur through grain*.”²⁶ Like the previous point, this is an issue I address explicitly in the article—indeed, it is I who introduce the term “modern mercantilist” in this context—and therefore I shall be brief here.²⁷

The most important point to keep in mind is that the six critics are correct on the facts. There can be little doubt that de Gaulle held such modern mercantilist views, though their relative importance for policy remains unclear. For the moment let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the modern mercantilist contention is correct and consider its implications. (I shall return to empirical evaluation in the next section.) The central point to make here is that the modern mercantilist view, right or wrong, would itself be a considerable departure from the prevailing geopolitical explanation of de Gaulle’s motivations.

The view I challenge in the article is the classic geopolitical explanation of Cold War Europe, of which Hoffmann and Trachtenberg are distinguished proponents, alongside almost every historian of Gaullist policy, including Serge Berstein, Charles Cogan, Françoise de la Serre, Jean Lacouture, Simon Serfaty, Georges-Henri Soutou, and Maurice Vaïsse. These scholars, as I show in the article, simply contrast commercial interests with a general mercantilist effort to strengthen France (or Europe); they contrast commercial motivations with the direct promotion of an independent European foreign policy through economic means. They do not emphasize the indirect impact of economic growth for military power and prestige; instead, they highlight de Gaulle’s preference for independent European defense cooperation outside NATO, his deep ideological antipathy to the Anglo-Saxons, and the heavy emphasis he placed on rhetorical and symbolic nationalism (Part 1, pp. 4–5, 8–14). This is the view that Vanke and Trachtenberg, despite allusions to mercantilist interests, continue to defend in their comments.

The distinction between the modern mercantilist explanation and the traditional geopolitical explanation may appear trivial, but in fact it goes to the

26. Keeler adds: “Moravcsik exaggerates the extent to which de Gaulle’s agricultural policy represented the appeasement of powerful interests within a backward sector, and he fails to acknowledge that achievements regarding ‘grain’ could indeed be viewed as a potential source of ‘*grandeur*.’”

27. I introduce a lengthy section considering counterevidence with the following questions: “Even if we were to reach agreement that de Gaulle’s EEC policy aimed to satisfy commercial interests, is it not possible that he ultimately had French *grandeur* in mind? Surely economic modernization augments the power, independence, and *grandeur* of France, a claim that finds eloquent support in de Gaulle’s memoirs. And surely no leader aiming to establish stable finances and maximize global prestige wants farmers continually disrupting domestic politics and uncompetitive industries weighing down fiscal policy. Perhaps the pursuit of electoral success, the promotion of material prosperity, and the subsidization of backward sectors of the economy were consistent with the Gaullist vision because they were in some sense preconditions for an important world role for France” (Part 2, p. 61).

heart of our modern understanding of de Gaulle. To accept the modern mercantilist explanation is to concede the core of the commercial interpretation, namely, that any modern democratic politician, whatever his or her ultimate values, will be forced to pursue a foreign economic policy dictated by modern theories of political economy. In this view, de Gaulle's distinctive ideas did not have, and could not have had, any real consequence for French trade policy. Geopolitical ideology prompted de Gaulle to pursue the same external objectives that any other (non-Communist) French politician would have favored for different, more straightforwardly economic, reasons. Whereas de Gaulle may have employed distinctive tactics (persuasive speeches, successful domestic management, fluid diplomacy), his underlying political objectives need not concern diplomatic historians.²⁸ As I state in the article:

If the promotion of French *grandeur* through economic liberalization is indistinguishable from the pursuit of producer group interests, what remains of the notion of de Gaulle as a visionary ideological leader? If any successful economic policy promotes *grandeur*, what could ever permit us to distinguish de Gaulle's purported pursuit of French *grandeur* from the mundane commercial considerations he professed to despise? Moreover, even this mercantilist interpretation undermines the conventional view of de Gaulle. (Part 2, p. 62–63)

In other words, the modern mercantilist view, if correct, would render meaningless the decades of debate over de Gaulle's distinctive "vision" of Europe—or, indeed, any causal relationship between de Gaulle's thoughts and his actions. Surely this is not what geopolitical interpreters of Gaullist policy intend.

Hence my analysis does not focus on whether the objectives of de Gaulle's EEC policy were ultimately geopolitical or economic, but on the narrower and more tractable problem of whether his *proximate* objectives were geopolitical or economic. As I demonstrate in the article with reference both to de Gaulle's contemporaries and to today's commentators, the nature of proximate objectives is the issue that motivates those who study de Gaulle. Still, this broad theoretical point leaves open the critical empirical question of whether de Gaulle was in fact constrained by economic interest group pressure or whether he was pursuing a broader conception of the public good. To that question I now turn.

28. Ideas may have been a form of domestic legitimation, but they did not alter external goals. I agree with Philip Cerny that de Gaulle's strong position domestically was critical to his foreign policy, and that ideology played a role in domestic legitimation. See Philip G. Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

Did de Gaulle pursue commercial objectives in order to maximize French economic welfare rather than to placate interest groups?

Hoffmann, Keeler, Vanke, and (albeit indirectly) Gillingham concede that de Gaulle was indeed pursuing commercial objectives, but they insist that these were not the objectives dictated by domestic interest groups. De Gaulle's actions, they claim, were largely autonomous of civil society, and were aimed at strengthening the French economy by bolstering industry and eliminating as many uncompetitive farmers as possible. As Hoffmann observes:

The merit of the agricultural policies set up by Debré at home and by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was to give France an agricultural *force de frappe* comparable to West Germany's industrial might *and* to "free" the great majority of French farmers for jobs in industry and the services. A much smaller rural population was far more productive than the traditional *France paysanne*.

In this view, de Gaulle promoted economic growth either because he viewed economic welfare as an end in itself, or, in the modern mercantilist view, because a strong domestic industry contributed to French power and prestige. Perhaps, as Hoffmann hints, both interpretations are correct.

There is considerable truth here. Certainly de Gaulle's relative autonomy from interest groups helped him implement reforms. Certainly he promoted the industrial development of France as an end in itself.²⁹ Certainly he often found himself in an antagonistic relationship with some domestic economic interest groups, including less competitive farmers and sometimes even industrialists. As Hoffmann notes, "the presidential election of 1965 came precisely at a moment when he had deliberately antagonized the farmers' organizations by his high-handed tactics in Brussels." Certainly de Gaulle believed that agricultural exports would be helpful in reducing both current account deficits and massive government subsidies, which, if left unabated, would have crippled French industry and state finance, thereby undermining both French prosperity and (à la the modern mercantilist argument again)

29. I fail to comprehend Vanke's contention that this point constitutes strong evidence against a commercial interpretation.

30. Vanke spots a small error. He correctly notes that I attribute de Gaulle's statement that "agriculture is the most important problem facing France, except for Algeria" to a Cabinet meeting in August 1962 rather than a confidential post-mortem between de Gaulle and Peyrefitte after a Cabinet meeting in June 1962. I am grateful to Vanke for flagging this error and, more generally, I applaud the insistence of fine diplomatic historians on precision in such matters. Nonetheless, Vanke greatly exaggerates its import when he suggests that such an error undermines the reliability of my entire interpretation. Two points are critical. First, within the very narrow decision-making circles of the Fifth Republic, what de Gaulle said in confidence to Peyrefitte should be accorded greater weight than what de Gaulle said to the Cabinet—a contextual point about

French political-military power.³⁰ Finally, as Gillingham and Keeler point out, de Gaulle sought to employ external competition to modernize French agriculture, as he did with French industry.

This is hardly conclusive, to be sure. There is still substantial evidence of direct interest group influence. De Gaulle was far from enthusiastic about subsidizing farmers. When he tried in the first few years of his presidency to pursue a more liberal farm policy, the agricultural sector successfully resisted. Keeler and Hoffmann are correct to insist that after a liberal interlude, de Gaulle's government did not simply return to the farm policies of the Fourth Republic. The Orientation Law, implemented by Agriculture Minister Pisani, continued to promote more modest reforms favored by younger and more productive farmers at the expense of the traditional agrarians. Yet this was hardly a liberal policy. De Gaulle continued to rant in private about the constraints on policy imposed by greedy farmers, against whose demands it was impossible to defend the autonomy of the state through conventional Gaullist appeals to the "national interest." We have seen, for example, how constrained de Gaulle found himself during the "empty chair" crisis and how cautiously he proceeded, an interpretation Milward bolsters with new evidence and even Vanke accepts. Hoffmann exaggerates when he concludes that I "assert but nowhere prove that de Gaulle's agricultural policy in the European Economic Community (EEC) was a response to, or aimed at satisfying, the demands 'of powerful domestic economic constituencies';" Hoffman notes that "when their preferences did clash with his priorities, [de Gaulle] did not hesitate to oppose them, as he did during the crisis of 1965." To the contrary, de Gaulle curbed his demands to suit domestic interest groups. In the aftermath of the disastrous presidential elections, he was forced to appoint Edgar Faure as agriculture minister—no more telling symbol of continuity with the Fourth Republic style of coalition governance is possible—and

Gaullist foreign policy making that Vanke overlooks. For more details on this point, see Part 2, p. 66, fn. 189. As with other matters—for example, our disagreement about the amount of time that passed in 1958 before de Gaulle, as head of government, decided to commit to the EEC—Vanke's corrections strengthen my underlying argument. Second and more important, in seeking to dismiss my larger argument on this narrow basis, Vanke ignores the most important aspect of the evidence, namely, the substantive content of de Gaulle's striking citation. To whomever it was addressed, this statement almost single handedly disproves any claim that de Gaulle considered foreign economic policy secondary. It gives paramount emphasis to the possibility of "an Algeria on our own soil"—that is, domestic unrest—rather than simply to mercantilist considerations that Vanke attributes to de Gaulle. To my knowledge, no similarly forceful quotation exists to support a geopolitical interpretation. Vanke is correct that de Gaulle often discussed the impact of economic welfare on national power. But, given the wording of the quotation, it is speculative, if not suspect, to assume without any further evidence that de Gaulle or any other democratic leader would have been concerned about domestic insurrection solely, or even primarily, because of its impact on the global balance of military power.

31. This process is not captured by classic analysts French agriculture cited by my critics, such as Gordon Wright, who wrote in the early 1950s.

the spigots of subsidies were turned on full force in a deliberate effort to buy rural votes.³¹

Vanke is correct to observe that such claims about producer group influence rest ultimately on counterfactuals. I applaud his willingness to make those counterfactuals explicit, and it is legitimate for him to question them. Still, Vanke's proposed counterfactual in this case ("What if French farmers had been politically disorganized and unable to come to an agreement on what they wanted from the French government?") is simply too narrow. Farmers can wield considerable influence through the ballot box or spontaneous protest. It is the producer interest that matters, not its particular mode of representation. I do not in fact argue that French commercial interests should be understood as the unmediated demands of major interest groups—though the use of peak interest group positions as a measure of aggregate interest may, taken alone, give a misleading impression to this effect. Instead, the formulation I employ in the article is something very close to Vanke's and Hoffman's understanding. The concluding sentence of my section on the "commercial explanation" reads: "The ultimate goal of the policy, for de Gaulle as for his predecessors and successors, was to assuage powerful interest groups, prevent domestic disorder, garner electoral support, modernize the French economy, and stabilize government finances" (Part 1, p. 20). Viewed in this light, two other counterfactuals seem more relevant to our discussion.

First, in the absence of pressure from farm groups and voters, what might de Gaulle have done? There can be little doubt that he would have sought to cut back domestic subsidies for bulk commodities like wheat, milk, and beef. This was in fact what he had at first attempted. Lower subsidies would have meant fewer surpluses, less pressure for agricultural exports, and more slack resources for the industrial sector of the economy.³² The CAP would have been largely superfluous and, I would argue, de Gaulle could have expended more of his scarce political capital in pursuit of other foreign policy goals.

Second, what policies might a non-Gaullist government have pursued in the 1960s? Here again it seems difficult to deny that such a government, despite lacking a Gaullist geopolitical ideology, would have pursued a very similar foreign economic policy.³³ Even if external deficits did not have geopolitical implications—à la Hoffmann's somewhat fanciful view of agricultural exports as an economic "*force de frappe*"—such deficits surely would

32. De Gaulle might even have reached the conclusion—one apparently reached by President Giscard d'Estaing a decade later, but reversed on political grounds—that France should focus on its areas of global comparative advantage such as fine wines, cheeses, and other luxury foods. For details, see Michael Tracy, ed., *Farmers and Politics in France* (Enstone: Arkelton Trust, 1991).

33. Assuming, of course, that it could engineer a devaluation. Again, the stability of de Gaulle's domestic governance was critical to his foreign policy.

have been a central concern to a non-Gaullist government. Was not the balance of payments an obsession of both de Gaulle's Fourth Republic predecessors and his Fifth Republic successors? And if non-Gaullists were less committed to limiting agricultural subsidies than de Gaulle himself was, as Keeler maintains, the pressure to secure preferential agricultural export markets would have been greater. It is difficult to view agricultural export promotion as a distinctively Gaullist policy, let alone a Gaullist response to geopolitical imperatives.

Still, my critics have it right in one very important respect. The central theoretical weakness of my argument in this article—and to some extent the book from which it derives—lies in its underspecified theory of domestic interest group influence.³⁴ It is too simple to assert that powerful interest groups get what they want. This seems to imply that such groups invariably resort to direct pressure or that commercial interests prevail even when their aims conflict. As Gillingham observes, we actually know relatively little about the full range of interest groups, parties, elite values, and public pressures that have influenced the European integration process over the years—even within the economic sphere alone—and we know even less about direct attempts at influence under de Gaulle. Since influence is always difficult to observe directly, the conventional social scientific solution is to look for stable relationships between certain structural factors, interest group positions, and government policies. Such a relationship does in fact exist, I argue in *The Choice for Europe*, between gains from trade and competitiveness, for which interest group positions are a proxy, and government policy in Britain, France, and Germany. Such an approach is, however, necessarily less convincing in a single case study.

Still, the causal story I seek to defend is somewhat more complex than a simple one-to-one relationship between peak producer group demands and government policy. How would a more nuanced argument proceed? One would begin by positing that the options of national governments in postwar Europe were severely constrained by the existence of rapidly expanding opportunities for industrial and agricultural trade, particularly from 1948 through 1973.³⁵ This period saw worldwide export-led growth and an epochal shift from North-South inter-industry trade to North-North intra-industry trade. The only long-term alternative to trade liberalization was a cycle of

34. In this issue, see Daniel Wincott, "Institutional Interaction and European Integration: Towards an Everyday Critique of Liberal Intergovernmentalism," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4, (December 1995), pp. 600–602; and my response, "Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Integration: A Rejoinder," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (December 1995), pp. 610–612.

35. For a more detailed presentation, see *The Choice for Europe*, pp. 87–90.

subsidization, stagnation, devaluation, and policy reversal. This period also saw the rise of irresistible demands to equalize agricultural income under conditions of greatly enhanced agricultural productivity. There was no alternative to the stabilization of agricultural incomes. More productive Continental countries such as France had to find preferential export markets, lest they bankrupt themselves trying to finance surpluses. The central reality behind European integration, from this perspective, was simply that no postwar West European government, regardless of partisan affiliation or individual leadership—even French governments under de Gaulle—could long resist the twin trends toward the liberalization of industrial trade and the subsidization of agricultural production.

In this view, trade policies at any given moment in the postwar period reflected a shifting balance between necessary adjustment to global economic trends and sectoral protection for sensitive sectors, notably agriculture—a balance John Ruggie terms the “compromise of embedded liberalism.”³⁶ In the name of encouraging efficient economic adjustment and reducing subsidies, governments promoted trade liberalization but did so within constraints imposed by particularistic domestic interest groups. The pressure from those groups reflected their varying competitive positions in global markets.

This tension between liberalization and protection is precisely what we observe under de Gaulle. Like his predecessors and successors, the General pushed consistently for economic adjustment, but was constantly constrained by interest group pressures. As I argue explicitly in *The Choice for Europe*, we would expect such interest group pressures to be strongest and most direct for agricultural issues, weaker and more diffuse for industrial trade liberalization, and even more diffuse for areas like monetary integration. For this reason, I remain untroubled by Vanke’s repeated insistence that de Gaulle sought to enhance industrial productivity, Keeler’s emphasis on de Gaulle’s program for agricultural modernization, and Hoffmann’s and Gillingham’s reminders that there is not always a “smoking gun” proving direct interest group pressure. Such is what one expects according to this more sophisticated (but still relatively simple) model of commercial policy making.

In the end, Gillingham and Milward are more forward-looking than Vanke. Rather than continuing to deny the importance of commercial considerations, they insist that we need more research on the political economy of Gaullist European policy—research based on more refined theories and a wider range of documents. Gillingham is correct that I do not provide as much

36. John Gerard Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 195–231.

direct evidence that “interest group pressures played important roles in these issues” as one would like and that I “leave largely unexamined the process by which economic cause became political effect.” I agree that there is much to be done. By way of conclusion, I turn now to prospects for future research.

Conclusion: An Agenda for the Future

Near the end of his critique, Trachtenberg laments that “scholars often simply talk past each other. Nothing definite, nothing conclusive, ever seems to emerge from discussions of that sort.” Largely because of the admirable rigor and detail of the comments by Gillingham, Hoffmann, Keeler, Milward, Trachtenberg, and Vanke, we have avoided such a fate. This exchange has uncovered clear areas of agreement, focused attention on specific areas of theoretical and empirical disagreement, and thereby highlighted important opportunities for future research.

First the common ground. Even though each critic (Gillingham excepted) believes that I push the commercial explanation somewhat too far—a complaint with which I have voiced a measure of sympathy—at least five of the six (Vanke perhaps excepted) still conclude that the role of President de Gaulle’s commercial motivations is understated, even neglected, in the existing literature on French EC policy. We agree, moreover, that a similar correction is needed in the general literature on the history of European integration. We all further concur that de Gaulle’s successful constitutional reform and domestic coalition gave him greater autonomy to implement the reforms sought by the French *Patronat* since the mid-1950s, of which devaluation and a fiscal balance were the two most important. We thereby set aside some of the more implausible canards of Gaullist historiography: de Gaulle’s supposed ignorance and contempt of economics, the decisive importance of Nassau, and many other simple connections between de Gaulle’s geopolitical ideology and European integration.³⁷ In their place new evidence—Alan Milward’s reading of the Dutch documents, for example—further bolsters the case for economic motivations. It thus seems that the commercial interpretation of de Gaulle’s policies is here to stay.³⁸ Gillingham and Milward may

37. To be sure, Vanke sticks resolutely to the dominant consensus, asserting that the veto of Britain was explicitly motivated by political-military concerns, that de Gaulle’s opposition to qualified majority voting (QMV) was driven primarily by his distinctive geopolitical ideology, and that more conflictual bargaining in the mid-1960s stemmed from de Gaulle’s disappointment with the failure of the Fouchet Plan. Yet in explaining the origins of the EEC and the “empty chair” crisis, even Vanke accepts the commercial interpretation, criticizing only the relative weighting of agriculture as opposed to de Gaulle’s “determination to force French industry to modernize.”

38. This is a natural and reassuring conclusion. Studies in economic history and political economy

even be right that, in the latter's words, "although the battle may never have a decisive conclusion, [the commercial] argument is very likely in the end to gain most of the territory in dispute."

Nonetheless, this exchange has highlighted areas of focused disagreement over the proper interpretation of critical elements of de Gaulle's European policy and of modern European diplomatic history more generally. These unresolved issues can serve as focal points for future research. Space permits me to mention only six.

First, what additional documentary evidence of de Gaulle's own calculations exists? As Milward observes, the available documentary record remains exceptionally thin. Is there reason to believe it is biased? Specifically, to what extent can de Gaulle's statements before the Cabinet and above all before his press secretary, be considered a reliable statement of his preferences and beliefs? Or were they efforts to "spin" the European issue, as Trachtenberg and Vanke hint? Were some important assumptions taken for granted by all participants and therefore left unstated?

Second, what were the views of other political actors during this period? Neither I nor anyone else has analyzed the full role of French political parties, business groups, ministerial experts, and ideological tendencies in French European policy during de Gaulle's presidency. As Gillingham notes, we know relatively little about the links between global economic shifts, producer group pressures, and policy.³⁹ Surely such an analysis might tell us much about the structural constraints within which de Gaulle acted.

Third, how might we best conceive of the relationship between geopolitical ideas and commercial interests in de Gaulle's policy? What was the relative weight of traditional geopolitical objectives, modern mercantilist goals, and straightforward commercial concerns? To what extent did de Gaulle conceive of the benefits in economic or geopolitical terms—that is, to what extent did de Gaulle seek economic welfare for its own sake and to what extent for its contribution to French *grandeur*? Does it matter, or is the policy choice identical? A more systematic comparison of different conceptions of economic interest might reveal new possibilities.

Fourth, what might we learn from a more sophisticated formulation of an argument based on geopolitical ideas, perhaps one incorporating insights

reveal powerful regularities in the conduct of agricultural and industrial trade policies among industrialized countries. Milward, who has done more than anyone to legitimize an economic interpretation of European integration, rightly observes: "Surely no one in the United States, thinking about U.S. international commercial policy, would react in astonishment to the efforts made by France, which was then the world's fourth or fifth biggest industrial economy, to fight so hard for its grain, meat, and dairy exports. Nor would anyone be surprised that French leaders responded so smartly to so concentrated a pressure group as the farmers."

39. John Gillingham is currently preparing a book on this topic.

from recent theories of “path dependence”? To what extent did the “idea of Europe” serve as a focal point for cooperation that might otherwise have taken a very different form? To what extent were the ideological and institutional options constrained by the past positions of governments? Research by younger scholars promises to shed new light on this issue.⁴⁰

Fifth, given that nearly all of us agree that commercial calculations of some kind played a larger role than heretofore acknowledged, what can we say about the precise mixture of direct interest group pressure and structural economic pressure on French policy? Were economic constraints imposed primarily through the direct pressure of interest groups and voters or through general macroeconomic conditions—what used to be termed “instrumental” and “structural” theories of business influence? Does the more nuanced theory of commercial policy I propose above, or another one like it, help explain French policy during this period? How much autonomy did de Gaulle have? In particular, how are we to explain important cross-issue differences in autonomy such as the apparent impact of traditional geopolitical factors on NATO policy, mercantilist concerns on industrial and monetary policies, and a classic “iron triangle” on agriculture?

Sixth and most profound, what can we say more explicitly about the methodology of historical interpretation—an issue raised by Trachtenberg in the conclusion to his commentary? On the one hand, as analysts we seek to be as sensitive as possible to the potential existence of important assumptions so obvious, or so deeply embedded in a common culture, that decision makers did not need to state them. This is, in the end, Trachtenberg’s explanation for why he continues to accept the primacy of geopolitical ideology despite the preponderance of documentation against it. Geopolitical motivations were so obvious, Trachtenberg argues, that they did not need to be stated.⁴¹ More generally:

Our understanding, most of the time, is not derived from close study of the empirical evidence; it is instead the product essentially of a thought process in which inferences are drawn according to a very general sense of how things work. In forming one’s own beliefs, the key test has to do much more with plausibility than with evidence.

40. Craig Parsons, “France, Europe, and the Institutional Construction of Interests” (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999); Jeffrey Vanke, “Europeanism and the European Economic Community, 1954–1966” (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1999, restricted until July 2004); and Mette Rasmussen, “Explaining European Integration: From the United Provinces of the Netherlands (1579–1795) to the European Coal and Steel Community (1952)” (Ph.D. Diss., European University Institute, 2000).

41. Trachtenberg argues: “French leaders, from de Gaulle on down, took it for granted that political and economic issues were closely interconnected. . . . The idea was that the Common Market was a kind of way station on the road to a real political union.”

This is all very well, but surely we want to avoid importing our own biases. Trachtenberg acknowledges that his own analysis is based on “the general assumption . . . that economic constructs of this sort almost inevitably have a political dimension.” This is admirably lucid and self-conscious, yet it seems to assume methodologically what we ought to be demonstrating empirically. Why should we believe it is true? Simply because it is “plausible”? And if a “preponderance” of evidence is not enough to rebut a “general assumption” of this kind, what is needed? How are past historiographical errors ever to be rectified?

Amidst that deep, perhaps ultimately unresolvable, tension between evidence and interpretation, I would like to close by again thanking my six interlocutors. If this exchange has demonstrated nothing else, it is the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and debate involving historians and political scientists, who have an undepleted stock of intriguing questions about modern European international history to confront together. If such collaboration is to emerge in the future—something all participants in this debate favor—it would benefit from deeper understanding and insight not just about the empirical record of the past and the theories that might explain it, but the methods we employ to link the two.