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**FROM EUROPE TO PARIS: THE PUZZLE OF THE FRENCH RAFALE PROGRAM
AN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE POLICY-MAKING**

[Work in progress – Please do not quote]

The Making of Foreign and Defence Policy: Actors and Processes
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A Puzzle: Cooperate (or not)

The puzzle of this paper concerns the international cooperation in the French Weaponry Field. Why did the Rafale program not implement in cooperation? Why did the Rafale program achieve in a national framework whereas the French policy-makers, governmental and industrial, civil and military, participated in European negotiations with their British, German, Italian and Spain counterparts for seven years (1978-1985)? What are the conditions that explain this "great program" (Irondelle 2011: 67) has been achieved in national while the most powerful governmental agents (President François Mitterrand, the Minister Charles Hernu and the "Délégué" Emile Blanc) were officially in favor of cooperation? How to explain this outcome while defense contractors were at that time in France, under the orders of the State?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK : AN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

I propose a sociological approach by studying a *high politics* as a *low politics* (Mérand, 2008). This approach focuses neither on structures or on individuals nor on interests or on norms but on the relations between actors, their social representations and their practices (Bigo 1996, 2011; Fligstein 1996, 2001a, 2001b; Guiraudon, 2000; Saurruger 2008; Favell Guiraudon, 2011; Georgagakis, 2011; Fligstein, McAdam, 2012; Adler-Nissen, 2008, 2011, 2013; Vauchez 2013 Vauchez, Witte 2013). I mainly based my approach on the work of Mérand on European defense (Mérand 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2011; Mérand, Pouliot, 2008; Mérand, Bonneau, Faure, 2009, 2011; Saurruger, mérand 2010; Mérand, Hofmann, Irondelle, 2010, 2011; Mérand, Barrette, Chicos, 2012; Mérand, Forget, 2013). Mérand derives its theoretical parentage of several classical sociologists who conceptualized the interdependence of power relations: Bourdieu, Fligstein, Levi-Strauss and Mann. I add Elias and Polanyi. The sociological approach used by Mérand (2011: 172) to analyze the European security and defense policy field is appropriate to explain the French Weaponry Policy field as "a set of *practices* embedded in *social fields* and informed by *social representations*".

The French Weaponry Policy Field

A *social field* is an institutional order (Smith, Jullien, 2014), a space of differentiated, institutionalized and hierarchical social relations (*force field*) determined by an uneven allocation of resources that generate struggles around a specific stake and specific rules of the game (*struggles field*) (Chauviré, Fountain, 2003: 16-19; Chevallier, Chauviré, 2010: 21-24). In my research, I focus on the French Weaponry Policy field which is located in the "gap" – Mann (1986) would say *interstitial* – (Mörth, 2000, 2003; Mérand, 2008) between the field of the State (Bourdieu, 2012), defense and *high politics* and the economic field (Bourdieu, 2000), the market and *low politics*.

All governmental and industrial, civil and military, national and international decision-makers who have an "interest" - an *illusio*, Bourdieu would say - to arm France in producing and in acquiring military goods "to defend national sovereignty" in these symbolic and substantive, policy and industrial dimensions, are embedded in the

French Weaponry Policy field. These actors “run” to get the monopoly of legitimate definition of these particular symbolic goods called "military goods", "defense goods" or "strategic goods" under weapons programs.

A field is a social microcosm, by definition, relatively autonomous. The boundaries of the field are not static and can be more or less inclusive. The boundaries of the French Weaponry Policy field is driven by the policy process. If a national decision path is taken by the actors the field will be more exclusive while the international cooperation path will expand the size of the field. To be sure, the French Weaponry Policy field is opposed to the option (the "reverse field") that is not selected by the policy-makers: without cooperation or with cooperation. The development of this strategic decision (cooperate or not) takes place over several decades. It is not a moment or a succession of moments, it is a process. During this long, chaotic and non linear process, the boundaries of the field tend to change.

A field is considered in terms of its structure. The French Weaponry Policy field is structured by two main divisions: 1. The level of interdependences between governmental and industrial actors or the *empowerment* of arms producers (corporations); 2. The level of interdependences between national stakeholders and international actors or the *europeanization* of the purchasers of weapons (States).

What is the added value of the concept of social field to explain the policy-making? First, it incorporates the asymmetry of power relations between policy-makers corresponding to the unequal distribution of resources they have. Second, the relative nature of the differentiation process and thus the autonomy of a social field over another suggests borders inter fields interdependently (Fligstein, McAdam, 2012) while exceeding the formalism of the bureaucratic analysis. Third, this concept avoids the classic trap of the substantialisation objects of study in the social sciences: "The State", "The Ministry of Defense", "The corporations of defense", "the European Union", etc. These entities are not considered as unique and unified - even as "actors" - but as institutionalized and differentiated spaces within actors are embedded. The concept of social field overcomes the functionalist ontology which dominates theoretical frameworks (rationalists and néo-institutionnalists) to offer a relational approach of the power.

Professional and Non Professional Social Representations

In decision-making processes in which they participate, actors are not only limited and constrained by the field in which they are embedded and the position they hold. They act according to a (di)vision of the world, a set of *social representations* (Durkheim, 1898; Mérand, 2006, 2008, 2011). Beyond the notions of ideas and interests, the concept of social representation is characterized by a "unique" way to analyze reality (Mérand 2006: 131). Opposed to disembodied ideas, social representations are the concrete way that actors think the world (Durkheim, 1898: 6): "This leads us, not the few ideas that currently occupy our attention; these are all residues left by our previous life; these are the habits, prejudices, trends that move us without us being aware of it". This notion echoes in part the wider bourdieusian concept of *habitus* which is defined as a set of schemes of perception, action and

evaluation of the reality. Defined relationally as the concept of social field, the social representations are the output of socialization processes.

I focus on my research in the social representations from secondary socialization processes (Mérand, 2006, 2008). Social representations are identified at two levels of analysis: the *macro* level within the State (*national* social representations), the *meso* level within an institution (the *European* social representations, for example), and a specific function (*military* social representations). The common point of its various types of social representations is their professional nature. Nevertheless, the analysis of professional social representations are not enough to explain the decisions.

Non-professional social representations that is to say the intimate, the friendship, the love relationships must be taken into account at a *micro* level of analysis to explain better the decision-making processes at work in the French Weaponry Policy field. Elias (1991) is useful to complete the kinds of social representations which informed the policy-makers:

"But it does not do justice to the problem of social interdependence if we confine ourselves to the relatively impersonal interdependencies. It must integrate personal interdependences to the sociological theory and, above all, the emotional bonds of men as factors of social bonding (...) A much broader interdependencies are based on personal emotional connections, but they can not be understood without reference of an individual's relational network, without seeing how it is formed from him, how it is perceived in the context of "me" (...) These emotional ties, going through symbolic forms are also important for human interdependence as those arising from the increasing specialization" (Elias 1991: 168).

I would add that these different kinds of social representations are not exclusive of each other. The decision maker does not have either national social representations or European social representations, either professional social representations or intimate social representations. The decision maker is informed by a set of social representations, some structuring more its (di)vision of the world than others. It is this set of multiple and potentially conflicting social representations that must be identified (Lahire 1999, 2012).

Bricolage : decisional creativity in spite of binding frameworks

The actors of the French Weaponry Policy field are embedded in an institutional order that restricts their decisional leeway. Furthermore, they have limited information based on their social representations to make decisions. However, weapons programs are launched and take different decision paths: to produce weapons by national actors only, to acquire armaments in cooperation or to buy "off the shelf" to foreign countries. To explain these decisional variations, I argue that it is useful to go beyond the "logic of consequences" and the "logic of appropriateness" (March, Olsen, 1989) to focus on the practices of the actors that is to say what actors *do* (Mérand,

2011a: 182). Pouliot (2008: 257) defines the practice as “*patterned actions which emerge in a specific social context that imbues them with meaning*”.

As recalled Mérand (2011a), the life of decision makers is largely routinized. The same practices are performed and reproduced daily. This routine, these usual patterns of practices, drives an accumulation of a practical knowledge – Bourdieu would say a “*sens pratique*”. This practical knowledge that allows actors not only to repeat every day more or less the same professional routine but also to be creative. Lévi-Strauss (1968) refers by *bricolage* this practice creativity: “Bricolage is a sort of making do” (Mérand, 2011a: 183) corresponding to what Bourdieu called the art of invention (*ars inveniendi*). As an innovative practice, bricolage has two dimensions: substantive and symbolic (Mérand, 2011b). In addition, the Durkheimian concept of “collective effervescence” is complementary. It means a “creative element of bricolage when progress can be swift” (Mérand, 2011b: 152).

To sum up, the policy-makers are not driven neither by consequences nor by norms, neither designed nor entirely path dependent (Mérand, 2011b: 138). Actors make decisions so pre-reflexive: “clearly not thought and often almost instinctive” (Mérand, 2011a: 183). I assume that the actors of the French Weaponry Policy field are *bricoleurs* of the decision rather than engineers - which goes against the common sense of a world of armaments engineers and techniques.

An Argument : The Level of States/Corporations Interdependences

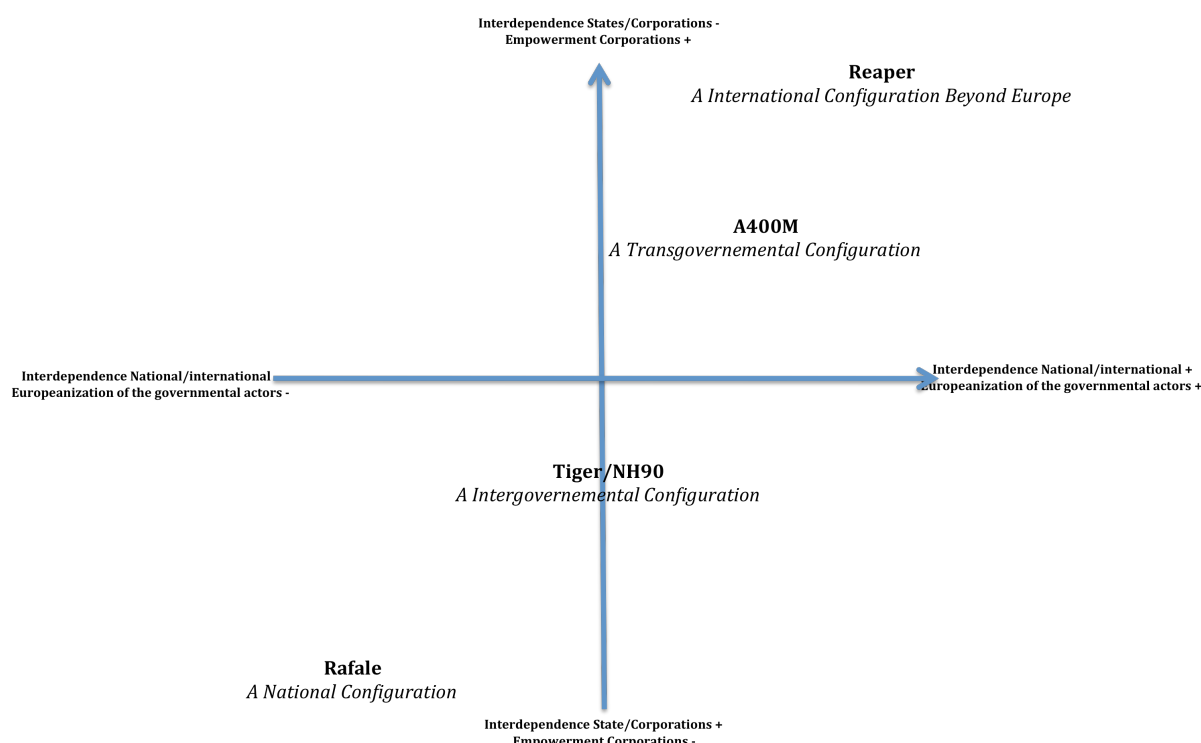
The decision to launch (or not) an *international* cooperation in the field of armaments is explained by the density of power relations between governmental and industrial stakeholders at the *national* level.

The more interdependent power relations between governmental and industrial actors is strong in the French Weaponry Policy field, the more likelihood of a weapons program is carried out in national (without cooperation). Purchasers and producers of weapons share a (di)vision of the world and are informed by a similar set of social representations strongly shaped in the national political framework. This is the case of the Rafale program that represents an exclusive national field. There is more than an overlapping between the polity and the economy, there is a complete embeddedness (Polanyi, 1983) between the field of the State and the economic field.

The more interdependent power relations decreases between governmental and industrial actors in the French Weaponry Policy field, the more likelihood of a weapons program is conducted in international cooperation. This empowerment of industrial actors vis-à-vis state actors led to the emergence and the institutionalization of a field of the production of military goods relatively autonomous with its own stakes, its own rules and its own practices. This is the case of Tiger and NH90 programs and more A400M program. A progressive economic “disembedding” from the polity (Polanyi, 1983) is observed in the French Weaponry Policy field.

To be even more clear (Figure 1), the development of *international* cooperations, that can be seen as a symptom of the *européanization* (rather than internationalization) of the purchasers of weapons (governmental actors), are explained by the *empowerment* of the arms producers (industry actors) vis-à-vis the governmental actors at the *national* level.

The States/Corporations Interdependences at the national level as a driver of the International Cooperations (or not) in the The French Weaponry Policy Field



CASE STUDY : THE PUZZLE OF THE FRENCH RAFALE PROGRAM

The Rafale is a "big weapons program" (Irondelle 2011: 67), the largest launched in and by France since the end of World War II. The main stake of this program is to develop, to produce and to acquire a very highly symbolic military good: a aircraft fighter of new generation. I explained the decision to take the national option (without cooperation) by the relational argument presented in the previous section. This weapons program was not carried out in cooperation, because the level of interdependence between governmental and industrial actors, their professional and intimate relationships were particularly high.

The policy making of the program is divided in two main historical steps: the first from 1978 to 1985 takes place at the European level, the second from 1986 to 1988 at the national level. The development contract that formally marked the end of the decision-making and the beginning of the implementation of the program is signed in February 1988 a few weeks before the French presidential and parliamentary elections.

The analysis of this case study is based on 161 interviews conducted with the policy-makers of the French Weaponry Policy Field at the decision level and the working level. More than half (90 interviews) specifically mentions the Rafale program.

Field and Reverse Field: the Rafale's borders

From 1978 to 1985, the French decision-making actors negotiate with their British and German as well as Spanish and Italian counterparts from 1983 to design technological and industrial convergences. In this first step of European negotiations, boundaries of the field are inclusive with five States and the whole of defense corporations. The *alter*-field of the future European aircraft fighter is represented by the American competition.

On August 1st, 1985 the National Directors of the British, French, German, Italian and Spanish Procurment Agencies met in Turin. France through the DGA Emile Blanc withdraws from European negotiations because the conditions of work and industrial shares are not met for French companies – less for Dassault Aviation than for Snecma.

From that time, the boundaries of the field become exclusive closing on the national territory. The Rafale reverse field is represented by what would become the Eurofighter Typhoon (UK, Germany, Italy, Spain). Nowadays, the current competitors of the Rafale on the export markets are the Gripen (Sweden) and the F-35 (United States) but in the 1980s, they are not competitors, it is not "against" them that the stake of the field to arm France was structured.

Actors

Actors from French Weaponry Policy field are characterized by their low number and the high volume of resources they have. The cost of entry in the field is particularly high. This structural reality requires to list the French actors at a *meso* institutional level but also the French agents at a *micro* individual level. Four kinds of actors and agents are identified: political, military, bureaucratic and industrialist.

At the *political* level, the President of the Republic has a central position. It is surrounded by civilian advisers but also by a personal military staff. The Chief of his personal military staff gets a strategic position with a direct and almost daily access to the President (practices vary by presidents and Chief of the personal army staff). The Minister of Defense holds a central position which depends on the decisional autonomy that the President leaves him. The more the relationships are narrow between the President and the Minister of Defense, the more likely the Minister of Defense has autonomy to act on the decision making process. The Minister of Defense's office, which does not formally exist, represents a set of high resources to shape the policy-making process. The position of the Prime Minister depends mainly on the formal configuration of the executive. In "normal" period (without cohabitation), the position of the Prime Minister is marginal. In contrast, during cohabitation, the Prime Minister has an essential position and tends in practice to fully use all of its powers. Jacques Chirac (1986-1988) is an illustrative case on the Rafale program.

The French presidential regime leaves a very marginal position to the legislative political actors especially in the 1980s who at best they had a right to speak ("voice") and the right to control *a posteriori* which is little used.

At the *military* level, the agent who has the highest volume of resources are the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Navy Chief of Staff. Each military staff has its own budget which it manages independently. In 1980, the Chief of Military Staff (CEMA) has a coordinate position: he did not have hierarchical and budgetary resources that he got, following the decrees of 2005 and 2009.

At the *bureaucratic* level, the main actor is the French Defence Procurement Agency (*la* DGA) and the main agent the Director of this Agency (*le* DGA). In the 1980s, the DGA remains a powerful administration of nearly 80,000 agents even if the Director is no longer Minister since 1977. From 1961 – year of the creation of the DMA, the DGA father – to 1977, the Director was a Minister. The DGA is responsible for the preparation and the conduct of weapons programs. It controls the entire chain of development, production, acquisition and export of military goods. The DGA is regularly defined by the actors as a "State within a State".

At the *industrial* level, three actors have a central position: Dassault Aviation, Snecma and Thomson CSF. A distinction is to be made between Dassault Aviation and other corporations. Dassault Aviation escapes privatization when the Socialists won the presidential and legislative elections in 1981. By selling a significant portion of the company's shares to the French State (20%), Marcel Dassault retains the majority at the general assembly. If the position of Dassault Aviation is unique in the defense industry in France in the 1980s, it fact remains deeply nested with State actors. At that time, the production of Dassault Aviation is almost exclusively military. Its main customer is the French State which moreover has the monopoly to regulate the exports of military goods abroad. Snecma and Thomson CSF are national and state corporations. Differentiating these corporations vis-à-vis the State is a formal exercise that has no practical sense. In other words, these companies are part of the scope of the State as well as the DGA, The Minister of Defense's office or the Chief of the personal military staff of the President.

Social Representations : National, Gaullist, Symbolic and Intimate

For all actors of the field, the Rafale represents the "grandeur" of France (Hoffmann, 1966) rather than its "grain" (Moravcsik, 1998).

The issue that shapes the decision-making is not budget. The stake is not how it will be possible to spend more or less. Budgetary considerations are not critical from the point of view of a large majority of actors to explain the decision to produce the program in the national borders. The budget dimension appears *a posteriori* (in the 2000s) to legitimize the program in France purpose to export the Rafale. The aim is to convince elites and public opinion of the limited cost of the program. As a reminder, the cost of the Rafale program is equivalent to the set of all other weapons programs which France participates. Two arguments are developed. First, the multirole configuration of the Rafale which aims to replace all fighters aircrafts of

France (Jaguar, Mirage 2000, Crusaders, etc..) by one (Rafale) and to limit their number. Second, the Rafale is considered by French actors such as less expensive and more efficient than the Typhoon its European competitor.

The Rafale is seen by the French governmental and industrial, civil and military decision-makers, as a way to develop the best aircraft, the most powerful, the most advanced, the fastest, the most beautiful, etc. The Rafale is not a "vulgar" attack helicopter or a "simple" military transport aircraft but a jet fighter of new generation. In the Cold War context, a jet fighter is widely regarded by french stakeholders as the most prestigious military equipment. Therefore, the national option is seen as the way to "preserve national independence", to "defend the national sovereignty" against the United States, but also against "Europe". This "independence" is political and industrial. At the political level, the national option ensures the sustainability of French foreign policy "grandeur" as it was defined by General de Gaulle. At the industrial level, the national option should protect and promote the French expertise in high technology. There is a tradition to keep: jet fighters have always been a national designed – in this respect it is significant that the Jaguar made with the British is rarely mentioned by the French policy-makers – and it must be the same in the future. In summary, for a large set of actors of the French Weaponry Policy field – if not all of them except the French Navy, one Minister of Defense and one DGA –, the national option represents largely, a "natural", positive and necessary decision.

However, the cooperation is a negative, strange ("unnatural") and ineffective option, for a large majority of governmental and industrial, civilian and military stakeholders. Officially, President Mitterrand, the Minister of Defense Hernu and the DGA Blanc that is to say the three political agents that have the highest positions in the field, defend the cooperation option. But the analysis of the data (interviews) leads me to consider the position in favor of cooperation and the support of the national option as convergent and not in opposition. The program must be designed around, through and for France. Europe is seen in a gaullist tradition as a strategic tool to improve the positions of French actors, governmental and industrial. To be sure, the actors use different terms but have a similar representation of how to frame and to implement the program. This is the reverse idea to those of "constructive ambiguity" (Hoffmann, 1966), "totem" (Jabko, 2006) or "mobilizing banner" (Joana Smith, 2006): one word ("market", for example), different meanings.

Thirdly, as regards the purchase option "off the shelf", the French Navy is the only consider this option. For the French Navy, F-18 represent jet fighters of a good quality available in a timely and reasonable cost. The Minister of Defense Giraud (1986-1988) and the DGA Chevallier (1986-1988) share this perception, but they remain largely isolated.

The actors are not only informed on the decision making process by professional but also intimate representations. On the Rafale program, the close relationship maintained between President Mitterrand and General Pierre de Bénouville is characteristic. General de Bénouville is a childhood friend of President Mitterrand. He is an intimate of the President, speaks with him in a familiar way and is an "evening visitor". It is also one of the closest advisers of the CEO of Dassault Aviation, Marcel

Dassault himself. In other words, General de Bénouville has a strong social capital that places him in a unique position of centrality called gatekeeper between President Mitterrand and Marcel Dassault, between the field of the State and the economic field. By his unique structural position, General de Bénouville participated significantly to shape the Mitterrand's representations of the Rafale in a national way.

Power structures

During the first step (1978-1985) of the decision making, the main conflict is the industrial division at European level between the French engine manufacturer (Snecma) and the British counterpart (Rolls-Royce). Compromises were found between the national industrial prime contractors leaving Dassault Aviation takes the leadership. But British governmental and industrial actors asking in exchange that Rolls-Royce is the industrial prime contractor on the engine part. This demand which is not accepted neither by Snecma – CEO Jacques Benichou has been very active with the French authorities by sending several letters and by participating in many meetings – nor by the French government actors - Emile Blanc refuses to sign the proposal makes by his European counterparts on August 1st 1985 in Turin. I emphasize on this fundamental turning point in the program. In the early 1980s, Rolls-Royce has a dominant position in relation to Snecma. The French government actors consider the British request as inadmissible. If Rolls-Royce was the prime contractor, the survival of Snecma would be in danger. The aim of these negotiations are the "hot section components" of the engine that Snecma does not mastered. In its civil alliance with General Electric on the best seller CFM56, Snecma does not have got the "hot section components". Its independence and its industrial value is linked to the achievement of this skill.

During the second period (1986-1988) of the decision making, the main conflict lies between actors who defend the national option and those who prefer to purchase "off the shelf", at the national level. In 1986, if European cooperation is buried, the national option is not acquired. French Navy defends the purchase of American F-18. This position is due to close relations between French Navy and U.S. Navy, an urgent need to replace the Crusaders and a limited issue: combat aircraft are not the most strategic materiel for the Navy. The Minister of Defense Giraud and the DGA Chevallier defend the same position mainly for material reasons: the F-18 is available in addition to a reasonable cost. All other actors in the field is opposed to this position. The Air Force promotes the development of the Rafale. Unlike the Navy, the jet fighter is the most prestigious materiel for the Air Force and the capability need is not clear, the Air Force received the Mirage 2000 in 1984. The DGA (the administration beyond the Director), the French corporations (Dassault Aviation, Snecma, Thomson CSF) and also Matignon are in favour of the national option. In February 1988, the Prime Minister Jacques Chirac took the decision in favor of the national option.

These two divisions are not structured around the civil-military divide. The first opposed the French and British on industrial issues, the second opposes the French Navy and two main agents (the Minister Giraud and the DGA Chevallier) to all others actors.

RAFALE: A NATIONAL CONFIGURATION OF THE FRENCH WEAPONRY POLICY FIELD

Finally, the Rafale represent a national configuration of the French Weaponry Policy field while the French actors have negotiated with their British, German, Italian and Spanish counterparts for seven years. The French governmental and industrial actors have a very close professional and intimate relationships within the national framework. Their social representations are strongly determined by their national affiliation. The intimate networks of the President Mitterrand seem to have shaped the decision more than marginally. If the explanation that underpins it is heavily criticized for the sociological approach chosen, the image of the "military-industrial complex" that is to say a strong inbreeding between the different actors of the field represent quite rightly the configuration of power that determines the decision making process of the Rafale program.

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