in August. A similar deal had been proposed earlier to Chirac's predecessor, Francois Mitterrand, but Mitterrand refused to allow Washington to make any statement referring to nuclear cooperation between the two nations.

In some quarters of the French government, the deepening American connection has stirred consternation. Foreign Minister Herve de Charette has warned that once France embraces the American simulation technology, it will jeopardize its own self-sufficiency. ''If we take everything off the American shelf, we will no longer be certain that our nuclear program is fully under our own control,'' de Charette told foreign reporters recently.

But French scientists and Defense Ministry officials believe cooperation between France and the United States is so great that the claim of self-sufficiency is a charade. These officials say even more American help will be needed if France pursues its ambition of developing a more robust nuclear force by fitting its warheads on new air-to-ground rockets—something that only the United States has mastered.

French officials also argue that the cost of thermonuclear research in the post-testing era will become so enormous—at a time when Western countries are striving to slash defense budgets—that sharing state-of-the-art technology will become an absolute necessity.

The United States and France have not always approached the issue so amicably. When Pierre Mendes-France gave the green light in 1954 to develop a French atomic bomb, the United States was troubled by the specter of nuclear proliferation and sought to block French development of the bomb.

French determination to build a nuclear force grew after Germany was allowed to begin rearming itself and the United States expedited the flow of American assistance to France to cope with such complex matters as ballistic missile guidance systems and multiple warhead technology. High-speed computers also were supplied to the French on an exceptional basis.

When France shifted its testing site from the Algerian desert to the Mururoa atoll in the South Pacific, the American connection became even more critical. U.S. weapons scientists were dispatched to the site to help the French learn to diagnose their test results. French scientists, equipment and even nuclear bomb components were flown in DC–8 transport planes from Paris to the Tahitian capital of Papeets across American territory, with a refueling stop in Los Angeles.

Without permission to transit American air space, French officials say their country's nuclear program would have been stopped dead in its tracks. But in 1987, the U.S. Congress became so alarmed about the risks of French nuclear warheads and other dangerous materials flying across U.S. territory that it passed a law barring the flights and Paris was told to find an alternative route for its bomb parts.

After scrutinizing the map, the French realized that Panama was the shortest—and least troublesome—territorial crossing for such sensitive cargoes. The DC–8 planes, it was decided, would make the journey by flying with nuclear materials first to the French territory of Guadeloupe for a refueling stop, then proceeding across the isthmus before heading out over the Pacific to the final destination at Mururoa.

In a show of gratitude for Panama's willingness to provide a Central American air bridge for the French nuclear program, Mitterrand in 1987 bestowed one of France's highest awards—the title of commander in the Legion of Honor—on the notorious Panamanian dictator, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, French officials who confirmed an account of the incident published in the Newspaper Le Monde say it was the first time, and probably the last, that a notorious drug trafficker will be given such a medal.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 12, 1995]

THE ARMS RACE IS ON

(By Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr.)

In only a few months, the Republican Congress has quietly managed to undermine more than two decades of progress on nuclear arms control. With practically no public debate, the Senate included in its Pentagon authorization bill a land-based missile defense system that would flagrantly violate the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the foundation of all nuclear weapons agreements.

Under the bill, the United States would ''develop for deployment'' a ballistic missile defense by 2003. The legislation calls for trying to negotiate amendments to the Antiballistic Missile Treaty to allow for the system; but if such talks fail, we would have to consider withdrawing from the treaty.

The system, which could ultimately cost hundreds of billions of dollars, is designed to intercept only long-range ballistic missiles. The cold-war thinking behind it ignores the reduced threat of Russian nuclear attack. No rogue state will have long-range ballistic capability anytime soon.

The bill tacitly recognizes the limited value of an antiballistic defense system, because it also calls for creating new cruise missile defenses (which could be equally costly) and for spending at least $50 billion more on so-called theater missile defense systems that would protect armed forces and allies overseas.

In addition to its huge expense, this package would all but destroy the possibility of new gains in nuclear arms control, starting with the as yet unratified second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. President Boris Yeltsin of Russia has said that Start II ''can be fulfilled only provided the United States preserves and strictly fulfills the bilateral Antiballistic Missile Treaty.''

Besides, if we build the antiballistic missile system, Russia would probably begin building its own. This bilateral buildup would preclude future reductions of strategic weapons below the levels called for in Start II. Faced with expanded Russian defenses, Britain, China and France would not likely consider reductions in their nuclear forces and might even seek increases.

The proposed system is a much less effective defense than the agreements it would wipe out. Start I and II call for eliminating missiles and aircraft that could deliver at least 7,000 nuclear warheads; the proposed antiballistic missiles would be lucky to knock down a hundred such warheads in a full-scale assault.

Finally, a new American buildup would give belligerent countries grounds for withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or demanding changes in it.

The Clinton Administration deserves some blame for this dangerous new turn. Last year it advocated a theater missile defense system that itself undercut the Antiballistic Missile Treaty.

President Clinton can atone for this mistake by vetoing the Pentagon authorization bill unless the commitment to set up the antiballistic defense system is dropped when the House and Senate prepare the final version this fall. If he signs the bill because Congress is certain to override a veto, he must make clear that he will not deploy this system or seek any changes in the ABM Treaty.

Why risk restarting the arms race at a time when America has never been in less danger of a nuclear attack?

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. MCKINNEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. GIBBONS, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. OWENS, for 5 minutes, today.
Ms. BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. SCOTT, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. POMEROY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. MINGE, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. HILLIARD, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. BARCIA, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. WISE, for 5 minutes, today.
Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BALLENGER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCINTOSH, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, today.
Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CLYBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BISHOP, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. DOYLE.
Mr. BONIOR in two instances.
Mr. STOKES.
Mr. LEVIN.
Mr. STARK.
Mr. BERMAN.
Mr. MEEHAN in two instances.
Mr. STUPAK.
Mr. OWENS.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BALLENGER) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. BOEHNER.
Mr. OXLEY.
Mrs. MORELLA.