

France has lost a battle. But France has not lost the war!

– Proclamation, 18 June 1940, in *Discours, messages et déclarations du Général de Gaulle (1941)*, p.15

'France at War With Foreign Tongues'

(From Barry James, the *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Feb 94)

PARIS – If the French government has its way, Ford Motor Co. will be in trouble if it continues to advertise that its cars come equipped with “air bags.”

So will Walt Disney Co., McDonald’s Corp., Coca-Cola Co. and a host of other American and British companies that include English words and phrases in their advertising.

The government this week introduced a parliamentary bill to make French obligatory and ban foreign expressions in virtually all business communications, including advertising messages.

Although most customers will probably go on talking about air bags, Ford will thus have to make sure to call the devices *coussins gonflables de protection*.

That is an extreme example. Elsewhere, Culture Minister Jacques Toubon is on firmer ground when he asks Why perfectly good and descriptive French words are shouldered aside by English expressions that do nothing to clarify meaning.

Why, he asks, for example, should the train that one day will convey passengers under the English Channel by called Le Shuttle – a piece of *franglais* that sounds ugly on French tongues – rather than La Navette? ...

So pervasive has the use of English become in science and technology that the Pasteur Institute in Paris decided amid protests in 1989 to publish its scientific annals in English. It said at the time that “95 percent of the original and significant works in the biological disciplines are published in English, both abroad and in France.”

'France Sets Out to Buy Friendship on U.S. Campuses'

(From a report by Ken Brown, in the *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Feb 94)

NEW YORK – Fearful of becoming politically and culturally irrelevant, France is giving money to six major American universities in the hope of creating a new generation of Francophiles.

The French are responding to declining interest among Americans in their language and culture, and to growing tension between France and the United States, which exploded into the open last year during the waning days of world trade talks.

“France is the one major country that has not put much money or effort into American universities,” said Ezra N. Suleiman, a professor of politics at Princeton University. “And with what happened with the GATT, they are feeling very misunderstood and ignored in the United States.”

The French program creates six Centers of Excellence in French Studies, which will emphasize interdisciplinary courses and research in French culture, politics and science, said Philippe M. Reliquet, who is based in New York as the deputy cultural counselor at the French Embassy.

The six universities – Harvard, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Chicago – will share \$400,000 a year for the next three years and will have wide discretion in using the money. The French government, which will decide on future financing, is evaluating the program ...

“If France ceases to be important for the United States, it’s not going to be long before it’s not important for anybody else, except the French,” said Stephen G. Nichols, a professor of French and humanities at Johns Hopkins.

'French Declines in Indochina, as English Language Booms'

(From a report by Michael Richardson in the *International Herald Tribune*, 16–17 Oct 93)

The failure of France in recent years to keep up with other foreign aid donors, investors and traders eager to secure access to the resources of Indochina and its market of some 80 million consumers has helped to catapult English to prominence.

For many of the companies that have moved into Indochina, whether from the West or Asia, the language of communication between foreign managers and their local staff is predominantly English.

"We still belong to the French-speaking group of countries," said Phongsavath Boupna, the Laotian vice minister for foreign affairs. "But the young generation is not speaking French so much. English has become

the most popular language here. It is the international and commercial language."

At least one recent attempt by France to make up lost ground has caused resentment. Earlier this month in Phnom Penh, about 1,000 Cambodian students took to the streets in a peaceful protest against mandatory French language classes at their technical institute.

The students said they were demonstrating against an attempt by France to make educational assistance to their school conditional on compulsory teaching of French.

Asserting that English would help the country to develop faster, the students called for it to be made Cambodia's official second language in place of French ... But English is the boom language in Indochina.

Prime Ministerial patter

(From a report by Russell Miller entitled "Stupid, foul-mouthed grub ...", in *The Sunday Times*, 20 Mar 94)

Here [...] is an edited selection of colourful epithets which have enlivened proceedings at various times in the Canberra parliament: stupid, foul-mouthed grub, piece of criminal garbage, pig, sleazebag, scumbag, scum, sucker, perfumed gigolo, harlot, boxhead, alley cat, barnyard bully, stunned mullet, pansy, harbrained hillbilly, corporate crook, loopy crim, half-baked crim, clown, bunyip aristocrat, mangy maggot, pissant, nong, vermin, dullard, clot, fop, rustbucket, thug, dimwit, gutless spiv, champion liar, fraud, cheat, ninny, dummy,

dimwit liberal muck ... It is just possible that the prime minister of Australia, the Honourable Paul Keating, might find something about the above list vaguely familiar, something that rings a distant bell in the recesses of his memory. If it doesn't it should, for every word slipped unbidden from his own lips [...] Crude, cruel, sardonic, verbally inventive and quick-witted in the arcane art of the political put-down, he has no peer. Being attacked by the opposition leader John Hewson was, he once said, "like being flogged with a warm lettuce". When told that Andrew Peacock was returning to lead the Liberal Party his immediate riposte was: "Does a souffle rise twice?"

Offshore Australian campuses

(From a report by Michael Richardson in the *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Feb 93)

SINGAPORE – Australian universities, prompted by cuts in government funding and a growing demand for English-language education services in Asia, are planning to create a new generation of "borderless" colleges by building twin campuses in Southeast Asia.

The University of Adelaide, which has pro-

duced three Nobel Prize winners since it was founded in the state of South Australia in 1874, is leading the way with a plan to establish Australia's first full-fledged offshore campus.

The proposal to build the campus on a 200 acre (80 hectare) site near Sepang, 70 kilometers (43 miles) southeast of the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, is a commercial joint venture with the Hong Leong group, a leading

industrial, financial and property conglomerate in Malaysia.

The proposal is awaiting final approval

from the Malaysian government but, according to Adelaide University officials, has already received some encouraging support.

The 'English stream' in Dutch education

(From 'The Netherlands – A Business Survey', *Newsweek*, 22 Nov 93)

For foreigners moving their families to the Netherlands as part of a corporate relocation, the excellent schooling available for their children is a substantial bonus. Holland's long-time role as an international business center has led to the development of a wide variety of both public and private schools geared to the needs of students from abroad.

Parents who wish to continue their children's education in a manner close to that found in their home countries may choose among the so-called national schools, such as the American School of The Hague, the British School of Amsterdam or the Lycée Français in The Hague. The national schools follow curricula based on the systems of their home countries.

The Netherlands is also home to a number of private schools offering a more multinational orientation. The American International School of Rotterdam follows what it calls an

"internationalized" American-style curriculum. The school is in the process of merging with the Japanese School of Rotterdam to form the International Education Center, due to open in 1995. The International School of Amsterdam also serves the English-speaking community, offering a curriculum derived from, but not limited to, Anglo-American models.

In addition, the Dutch government supports "English stream" schools within its public school system. Also called IGO (Internationally Orientated Education) schools, these schools were created to address the needs of both foreign students and Dutch students who have been educated abroad. There are about 15 such schools located in Holland's major cities, including the International School of The Hague. "The teachers at our school are experienced in catering for the needs of students from many different countries," says J. J. Mos, rector of the school.

The William Tyndale Quincentenary 1994

(Press release, Feb 94)

William Tyndale, who gave us our English Bible, is one of the great, and often forgotten, figures in English history. He was executed for heresy, yet his words are the basis of the Authorised Version ('King James Bible') and have reached more people than even Shakespeare. He was born in 1494, and in the Quincentenary year, 1994, there will be many celebrations of his achievement, particularly in a service at St Paul's on 6th October and an International Conference at Oxford, 5–10 Sep-

tember 1994, where people from all over the world will gather to discuss and rediscover his importance, led by distinguished speakers from Britain, Europe and the USA. There the foundation will be laid for future work on Tyndale as translator, as religious writer, and particularly as the founder of much that is taken for granted in our modern English language. For further information contact: Priscilla Frost, Oxford Conference Management, 10B Littlegate Street, Oxford OX1 1QT: Tel. 0865 794727.