

IMF Regime Change: With Christine Lagarde, US Corporations Enter the French Government

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Unknown to the French, lawyer Christine Lagarde became the Foreign Trade Minister of the government of Dominique de Villepin. Only a few years ago, she was defending the interests of US multinationals to the detriment of French companies. Her political positions perfectly match her status as a member of the CSIS, the think tank of the oil lobby in the United States.

Christine Lagarde University of Saint Gallen, Switzerland, May 20, 2005. The composition of the new French government, announced on June 2, 2005, is amazing due to its incoherence. The Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, a Gaullist that won world recognition after his speech against the war in Iraq before the UN Security Council, is accompanied by a State Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, who is a committed supporter of the United States and Israel.



The Finance Minister, a strategic element of the US penetration, becomes an Atlantist bastion. The Minister of Economy, Thierry Breton, is a member of a powerful liberal think tank: the Aspen Institute [1], and member of its French branch. Three delegate ministers back Breton. For reasons of internal balance of the presidential majority, François Loos is in charge of Industry. Jean-François Copé is in charge of the Budget and the State Reform. It is a young leader who learned the US methods of communication under the guidance of John Negroponte [2], who currently heads the group of US intelligence agencies. Finally, Christine Lagarde is in charge of Foreign Trade.

In the political field, Mrs. Lagarde is a stranger. She is a brilliant lawyer, specialized in social law, who joined the Baker & McKenzie law firm, in Chicago, in 1981 and made a career in the United States. Not renouncing to her personal life, according to those in charge of her publicity, she went up the levels of the world's most important economy law firm (4,400 collaborators in 35 countries) until she was appointed as a member of its Executive

Committee and later, in the fall of 2004, she was promoted to president of its Strategy Committee. In the meantime, in April 2005, she joined the Vigilance Committee of the Dutch multinational ING, one of the most important financial societies in the world. Christine Lagarde occupies the fifth rank in the list of European businesswomen published by the Wall Street Journal and the 76th rank in the list of the world's most powerful women of Forbes magazine. Dazzled by such exceptional career, the French media abstained from investigating the new minister.

Although this element is not included in her official biography, Mrs. Lagarde was a member of the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) [3]. She co-versed over the Action USA/UE/Poland commission of this think tank along with Zbigniew Brzezinski [4] and, in particular, she was in charge of the USA-Poland Defense Industries working group (1995-2002) and issues regarding the liberalization of Polish exchanges. However, in those positions, she represented the US interests to the detriment of those of France's foreign trade, the sector that she currently heads in the French government [5]. As a lawyer of the Baker & McKenzie law firm, Christine Lagarde worked in favor of the interests of Boeing and Lockheed-Martin to the detriment of the interests of Airbus and Dassault.

In 2003, Christine Lagarde became a member, also in the CSIS, of the Commission for the Expansion of the Euro-Atlantic Community along with her friend Brzezinski and different personalities such as the former director of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Renato Ruggiero, and Stuart Eizenstat, former special ambassador for the restitution of religious assets in Central Europe. This commission was in charge of potential investments in Poland, Latvia, Romania, Czech Republic and Hungary.

A man played a key role in each of those commissions: Bruce P. Jackson, founder of the US Committee to Expand NATO, who represented the interests of the aircraft manufacturing company Lockheed-Martin, of which he was a vice-president. Thanks to the relations made in the commissions presided over by Christine Lagarde, Jackson signed the contract of the century: the sale, in April 2003, of 48 F-16 Lockheed-Martin jet fighters to Poland for 3.5 billion dollars.

The transaction caused great dismay in Europe as the Polish government was paying with the European Union's funds for the preservation of its agricultural sector.

The deal had nothing to do with Poland's real needs. On the other hand, once integrated to the European Union, the logical thing would have been that Poland would have bought the Mirage 2000-5 MK2 of Dassault or the Jaas-39 of Saab.

However, the contract was very linked to the Poland's incorporation to the colonization of Iraq along with the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. In addition, Jackson was the main financial backer of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq [6].

After that transaction, the Euro-Atlantic Commission of Christine Lagarde was in charge of "assisting Polish companies to better self-market capabilities as a subcontractor or supplier for contracts won by prime contractors (particularly U.S.) in Iraq, Afghanistan, and as part of Poland's defense modernization" [7].

Only supposing that Christine Lagarde abandoned her former duties and that she has no intentions of going back to them, would it be possible to admit that we are not witnessing a case of conflict of interests. However, when the political positions defended by the groups

she presided over are analyzed, it is impossible to ignore that they are completely against the French position defended by Dominique de Villepin before the United Nations.

To conclude, we have to say that the statements made by the minister two days after her appointment seemed shocking for the French trade unions. Christine Lagarde promised to carry out a reform of labor law because, in her opinion, "it often represents an obstacle for employment and for a number of business decisions". However, in order to understand her point of view, it is important to analyze her statements, not comparing them with the MEDEF speech, but linked to the positions that she has thus far supported. Christine Lagarde made big efforts to impose the Anglo-Saxon labor law model in Central and East Europe. Her goal was to promote the interests of the US firms, not those of the Old Europe.

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