

HOW CAN FRANCE'S NEW NATO POLICY BE EXPLAINED VIS-à-VIS EUROPEAN SECURITY COOPERATION?

BY

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HOW CAN FRANCE'S NEW NATO POLICY BE EXPLAINED VIS-Á-VIS EUROPEAN SECURITY COOPERATION?

Introduction

There is little doubt that France has played a prominent, influential, and unique role in the 60-plus years of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Along with being one of the founding members of the alliance, over the past 10 years France has been the third largest contributor to NATO's forces (Cameron and Maulny, 2009, 6) and the fourth largest contributor to NATO's common budgets. (Cameron and Maulny, 2009, 1)

Lately, much has been written about France and the recent decision by President Sarkozy (and alliance members) for France to rejoin NATO's integrated military structure. This decision effectively removes the "special status" France has enjoyed since Charles de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to leave NATO's military structure. Most of today's literature on this remarkable about-face has focused on how France's new status within NATO could benefit France, NATO, the European Union (EU), and whether or not France's new NATO policy represents a true shift in policy.

It can be argued that NATO has been the most successful alliance in history. Originally founded to defend its members against a potential threat resulting from the policies and growing military capacity of the former Soviet Union; NATO's ultimate (and original) success occurred with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union. Since that time, some believe that NATO has morphed into more a political organization as it has struggled to redefine its roles, missions, and purposes to meet the threats and challenges of the day.

Since NATO's beginning, European members, in particular France, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and Germany (first as West Germany in 1955), have wrestled with a "balancing game"; trying to maintain a balance (of power) between the military, economic, and political dominance of the United States (U.S.) and the desires of Europe. (Howorth, 2002, 1) This proved difficult in the early years, as Europe focused more on working its way out of the destruction caused by World War II and putting back into place the industrial infrastructure that had been left in ruin. France has also wrestled with an intra-Europe "balancing game", often trying to lead security efforts for Europe to act independently from U.S. influence while the U.K., Germany, and most newer members of the EU have demanded security efforts be worked in cooperation with the U.S. (partly, in recognition of Europe's impotence to go it alone). On the flipside, the U.S. has wrestled with its own relationships with Europe since the end of the Cold War left it as the sole super power and new threats emerged. In other words, in the last 20 years, the U.S.'s interests have been pulled both east and west, leaving some in Europe concerned about her commitment to ensuring Europe's long term security.

France has been at the center of these "balancing games" starting with de Gaulle's withdrawal from the integrated military structure of the alliance in 1966. Since de Gaulle's stance, France has been in a "creeping reintegration" mode culminating with Sarkozy's decision to rejoin NATO's integrated military command structure in 2009. Interestingly, Sarkozy chose to rejoin the Defence Planning Committee (DPC), where France's influence can be most felt (i.e. on the U.S. proposed missile shield). However, Sarkozy also stated "France's nuclear deterrent will remain a strictly national responsibility", meaning France has not joined (France never was a part of) the Nuclear

Planning Group (NPG). What this means is that although France has reintegrated into NATO, this does not necessarily mean the end of the “exception française” in matters of defense and security policy. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 104)

This paper will demonstrate that France’s newest stance towards NATO is linked to the status of European security cooperation by weighing these two questions: 1) Does France rejoin NATO to facilitate the Europeanization of NATO while simultaneously trying to enhance the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)? And 2) Because of the remaining uncertainty (in spite of the Lisbon Treaty) with ESDP, does France need to secure its influence and options to act globally (security, power, etc.) via NATO? But first, we must trace how France’s policy of “creeping reintegration” back into NATO has evolved in order to maintain/enhance France’s influence in security matters, both within Europe and globally. Before we do that, a brief overview on the establishment of “exception française” is in order. Finally, this work will offer some possible explanations on what France’s return to NATO means to the future of the alliance, the transatlantic link, and the future of ESDP.

Roots of European Identity and de Gaulle’s Policy of Exceptionalism

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington, DC on 4 April 1949, established a collective defense system, with France as one of its 12 founding members and fully integrated. (Cameron and Maulny, 2009, 1) The purposes of this alliance can best be summed up by the Washington Treaty’s Preamble: NATO members are “determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.” (1949) In the early days of the alliance, France and the U.K. emerged as the European powers, with the political,

economic and military power from the other side of the Atlantic residing with the U.S. Clearly, with the devastation from World War II still fresh, Europe needed the U.S. commitment to ensure collective defense of the North Atlantic area.

Almost immediately following WWII, a fundamental difference of strategic approaches developed between France and the U.K. as was seen during the Treaty of Dunkirk negotiations. The differences stemmed from what should constitute a threat requiring support from an ally; an actual invasion, as the U.K. proposed, or a threat of an invasion, as France proposed. (Howorth, 2002, 1) Fundamental differences in strategic approaches for European defense would continue between the U.K. and France for 50 years, not resolved until St Malo, and would lead to many shifts in policies as each country jockeyed for control of the future of Europe.

The Schuman Plan was France's first attempt at integrating European nations into a common purpose, in this case, the coal and steel industries. It also brought West Germany into a permanent European structure that ultimately Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg joined in 1952. (2007) Its success ultimately led to the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) (2000) Although not related to security or defense for Europe, this began the new age formation of a European Identity and also led to West Germany joining France and the U.K. to become one of the 3 big powers in Europe.

By the mid-1960's, de Gaulle, through a series of maneuvers, was trying to establish and maintain some sort of French independent influence both in Europe and the alliance. This culminated with his decision in 1966 to withdraw France from NATO's integrated military command structure and became known as France's policy of

exceptionalism. At the core, the concept of exceptionalism is that France's place in the global world order is unusual or extraordinary. De Gaulle was strictly opposed to NATO's graduated response doctrine which led France to become skeptical to the U.S.'s commitment to fully engage in Europe (From the U.S. perspective with the U.S.S.R.'s massive nuclear build-up, it felt why risk sacrificing Chicago for the sake of Paris?) With exceptionalism, France was saying "don't ignore France (and the Europeans)" and throughout the decades leading to the end of the Cold War, France's policy of exceptionalism allowed her to represent a third voice between the two antagonistic U.S. and U.S.S.R. (Cameron and Maulny, 2009, 1)

Gaullism consisted of three main themes: independence, greatness, and *mission civilisatrice*. De Gaulle also wished to keep Britain out of the European Community while sidestepping the U.S.-dominated NATO by creating an autonomous European defense organization. (Herpen, 2009, 3) As Müller described it, the special character of France's relationship to NATO was aimed at primarily guaranteeing French independence and influence internationally, formed an integral element of its national identity, and often placed France as the sole, unequivocal opponent of American dominance over Europe. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 1) There was a belief in Paris that the U.S. – U.S.S.R. Cold War could be dampened by a more independent French position that would also contribute to French security. Thus, de Gaulle's policy of exceptionalism allowed France to try and maintain some sense of balance of power, both within Europe and with the U.S. while simultaneously maintaining its grandeur and status as a global power.

Never letting its past policies stand in the way of exerting more influence, France began a long and methodical divergence from Gaullism in the early 1970's; a "creeping reintegration", back into the world stage, both with NATO and its European allies. President George Pompidou initiated this divergence from Gaullism by lifting the French veto, allowing the U.K. into the European Community in 1973. (Herpen, 2009, 4) Next was President François Mitterrand, arguably a master of ambiguity, but also the most transatlantic French leader of his time. Mitterrand offered NATO his complete support during the "double-track" decision and in 1983 even spoke before the German parliament urging approval of rearmament. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 96) It was also Mitterrand who, in 1984, unilaterally attempted to revive the Western European Union as a forum to discuss security and defense issues within Europe. All these small steps taken by France were meant to lay the groundwork for a Europe that could stand on its own two feet with France leading the way on how it would evolve.

France's relations with NATO and with European Defense in the Post-Cold War Era

With the end of the Cold War, NATO found itself struggling to redefine its roles and missions due to the dramatic changes in the security environment; one which left the U.S. as the world's lone super power. Europe also saw many changes as European Identity grew stronger along with its growing economic power. For nearly 20 years, 1990 until 2008, France's relations with both NATO and within Europe continued to evolve in an ambivalent fashion as France was attempting to influence affairs both in Europe and with NATO. At times France's politics and policies seemed to have contradictory effects.

The 1991 Gulf War was the first major event for the U.S. and her alliance allies following the end of the Cold War. In keeping with his philosophy of “creeping reintegration” and divergence from Gaullism, Mitterrand sent 14,500 troops in support of the UN forces during the Gulf War. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 78) The Gulf War was eye-opening for France as it witnessed first-hand its inferiority in military capabilities compared to the U.S. The 14,500 French soldiers under a U.S. general using NATO procedures were humiliated and revealed a lack of French (and European) capabilities. Because of this, France (and Europe) realized their lack of ability to underwrite collective security and thus, the Gulf War proved to be a “turning point in French NATO policy.” (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 97) Any remaining illusions France had that with the end of the Cold War, there was little need for NATO or for U.S. power for European security were shattered.

If events of the Gulf War weren't enough, the Bosnia disaster of 1992-5 proved to be another wake-up call for Europe. Because of Europe's inability to handle this crisis itself, NATO came to the rescue. This watershed moment proved to France (and to Europe) that Europe still could not underwrite its own collective defense. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 78) Furthermore, with the U.S.'s reluctance to commit ground troops to Bosnia, France now became more worried about U.S. disengagement in Europe, rather than trying to keep the Americans out of European affairs. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 79) (Neuss, 2009, 122)

With the Gulf War and the failures in Yugoslavia fresh in their minds, French leaders realized that both politically and militarily the “exception française” was making less sense. France's “special status” was significantly impeding its ability to influence

the alliance and the EU while simultaneously arousing suspicions and distrust amongst its European allies. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 79) France desperately needed to continue to change policies because exceptionalism was proving to be problematic. Therefore, more divergence from Gaullism was in order, with Mitterrand approving combined operations between France and NATO and with France now participating in NATO defense minister meetings and the Military Committee (MC).

President Jacques Chirac continued France's "creeping reintegration" by getting closer to NATO so that France could better influence the emergence of the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) he announced in December 1995 that France was officially rejoining the Council of Defense Ministers along with the Military Committee, leaving one final obstacle to complete the process of reintegration in NATO's military structures. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 97) With the adoption of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept in Berlin in early 1996 which allowed Europeans for the first time to establish their own separate security and defense identity, Chirac saw a golden opportunity to consummate France's return to NATO's integrated military structures. However, France's failed claim to command of AFSOUTH in Naples proved to make Chirac's quest for reintegration prohibitive and, in some regards, this cooled further NATO rapprochement until 2002. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 97)

Although French relations with NATO had cooled with Chirac's failed claim for AFSOUTH, progress was being made within Europe. Regarding European security, France's position had always been to take the lead within Europe to handle crises on its own. For over 50 years since the end of WWII, the U.K. never supported increasing European security at the expense of NATO or excluding the U.S. from remaining an

integral part of European security. The U.K.'s skepticism remained because of France's "special status" within NATO. But with the methodical and deliberate "creeping reintegration" along with the revelations of Europe's failure with Bosnia, and the growing U.S. reluctance to remain fully engaged in European matters, the U.K. and France made huge strides in establishing a true European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) culminating at the St Malo Summit of 4 December 1998.

Fundamental differences of strategic approaches between the U.K. and France, dating back to the 1947 Treaty of Dunkirk negotiations, were finally coming to an end. Essentially the U.K. agreed that the EU "must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises" while France agreed to "in conformity with our respective obligations in NATO, we are contributing to the vitality of a modernized Atlantic alliance." (Howorth, 2002, 6) St Malo was monumental in that it gave ESDP the boost it had lacked due to U.K. opposition while moving France even closer to rejoining NATO as a full member. Clearly, St Malo provided a "clear acceleration" for ESDP (Cameron and Maulny, 2009, 5) although the U.K.'s support was short-lived due to the aftermath of 9/11. This also reflected a shift in U.S. policy towards seeing a strong European defense capability as something positive instead of a threat. (Neuss, 2009, 118)

If Chirac's failure to rejoin NATO in 1996 had cooled relations between France and NATO, events following September 11th, 2001 proved to be even more problematic, both to France's relationship with NATO as well as relations amongst the alliance's allies. What became evident early on following 9/11 was the lack of a balanced transatlantic

relationship. Rather than just rollover to the U.S., France spearheaded the fight on many issues as the U.S. pursued global terrorism essentially unilaterally.

While France was insisting the U.S. (and NATO) use political and diplomatic instruments rather than military means, while reserving the use of the military to specific Al-Qaeda targets within Afghanistan, the U.S. had other ideas. Based on the U.S.'s experiences in Kosovo, Bush did not let the declaration of Article 5 constrain his plans to deal with the terrorist threats. With U.S. partnership with allies almost non-existent, "a new division of labor evolved, one in which the U.S would do the war-fighting and the E.U. would do the dishes." (Howorth, 2002, 11)

France, seeking to regain its influence over U.S. policy, chose the U.S.'s new doctrine of "pre-emptive action" (leading up to the Iraq War) as the major battle to fight. It was France's refusal (along with Germany, Russia and China) to endorse Bush's proposals for a pre-emptive strike against Saddam Hussein that forced Bush to play the United Nations card. (Howorth, 2002, 16) Although France's attempts to foil America's plan ultimately failed, it did somewhat shift Bush's timetable. More importantly, this fight led to an intra-Europe split over Bush's plans for Iraq, pitting what former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called "old and new" Europe against each other. When the U.K., Spain, Italy and newer EU members wrote the letter rebuffing France and Germany's attempt to derail Bush's plans, this did not foster cooperation within Europe and was a major setback to European defense matters. The bigger lessons for France stemming from the fallout resulting from 9/11 were to come with the realization that first, its abilities to influence NATO continued to be limited by its "special status", second,

actions by Bush reflected NATO's irrelevance to the U.S., and third, Europe needed to work even harder to forge ESDP in light of NATO becoming less important to the U.S.

Seeing the effects of 9/11 and having some time to reflect on his failed 1996 attempt to rejoin NATO, Chirac continued to shed more Gaullism by continuing "creeping reintegration". In 2002 France became the largest contributor of soldiers for the NATO Response Force (NRF). He also approved NATO's new Allied Command Transformation (ACT) concept. Finally, in 2004, Chirac detailed 280 officers to cooperation duties to NATO commands (100 to SHAPE, 100 to ACT, 80 elsewhere). (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 98) Thus, by the end of Chirac's presidency, France's relations with and contributions to NATO had grown significantly, but still it was left outside of the alliance's military structure.

Why Now?

France's stance towards NATO has changed over the course of time, almost always reflecting efforts to maintain its influence both within the alliance and amongst its European allies. By the end of Chirac's term, France had moved ever closer to fully reintegrating into NATO and ESDP was slowly maturing after the watershed moment at St Malo. So what inspired Sarkozy to move France the final step back into NATO's integrated military command structure? Why now? Certainly, France's aspirations for Europe to have the capacity to handle the full range of Petersberg missions including peacekeeping, humanitarian, crisis management, and peacemaking missions without the U.S.'s help or influence were a part of it.

We argue that France's newest stance towards NATO is linked to the status of European security cooperation. Is France rejoining NATO to facilitate the

Europeanization of NATO while simultaneously trying to enhance ESDP? (Bozo, 2008, 9) Although France has always been suspicious of U.S. hegemony within the alliance, 9/11 led to the U.S. being consumed in two wars, leaving Bush open to welcoming France back into the military structure of NATO since the U.S. realized it would need its allies for the future. By facilitating the Europeanization of NATO, the European allies and, in particular, France, the U.K. and Germany, hope to build a true partnership within NATO, not just from a one-sided American point of view. Or, because of the remaining uncertainty (in spite of the Lisbon Treaty) with ESDP, does France need to secure its influence and options to act globally (security, power, etc.) via NATO? (Herpen, 2009, 2) Before weighing these two questions it is helpful to briefly examine Sarkozy's two demands prior to France consummating its reintegration. On face-value, each of Sarkozy's demands seems to support a different interpretation.

Sarkozy's bid to rejoin NATO was different from Chirac's. Rather than placing all his emphasis on the 'reward' of a certain NATO command, Sarkozy learned from Chirac's mistakes. His first demand was true NATO reform. Sarkozy's speeches and interviews all point to the need for an in-depth overhaul of the military structure that transforms NATO from a legacy Cold War-era organization. He felt that a significant reduction in the oversized military apparatus, geared not toward large-army central-Europe engagements, but rather, more flexible, modular and expeditionary in order to meet new strategic threats. (Bozo, 2008, 8) Will serious NATO reform lead to greater French influence within the alliance? Is France's vision for the future of NATO compatible with the U.S.'s vision? Perhaps Sarkozy's call for major reforms in NATO

coupled with French reintegration, will allow France to actively shape these long-overdue changes. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 101)

Sarkozy's second demand in order for France to reintegrate into NATO was ESDP commitment, both from his European allies, in particular the U.K., as well as the U.S. As Sarkozy said during his speech before the U.S. Congress in November, 2007, "The more successful we are in the establishment of a European Defense, the more France will be resolved to resume its full role in NATO. (Sarkozy, 2007) Will ESDP really be enhanced by France's new NATO policy?

Support for the first proposition, that France reintegrated to Europeanize NATO while enhancing ESDP, consists of three elements: trying to regain some semblance of a balance of power between the U.S. and Europe; giving France influence within NATO commensurate with its most recent contributions and "creeping reintegration" moves; and seeing NATO and ESDP as complementary (thus, beneficial to both) and not in competition (meaning detrimental to each other). We shall explore these elements now.

First, reintegrating with NATO, has France attempted to create a counterweight against U.S. authoritative leadership? French strategic diplomacy since 1949 has been an unending quest for greater balance across the Euro-atlantic area. (Howorth, 2002, 2) U.S. support of a strengthened ESDP also tends to shift the political balance of power within NATO away from Washington and London toward the main centers of power within the EU: Paris, Berlin, and Brussels. (Gardiner and McNamara, 2009, 3) And as Paris has been pushing since the beginning of the alliance, trying to exert a collective European influence in NATO, will France's reintegration increase the capacity of Europeans to exert a collective influence within the alliance? Will this meet France's desires to

transform an asymmetrical alliance built around the American “hegemony” into a balanced institution organized around two pillars: one American and the other European? (Bozo, 2008, 8) Certainly being reintegrated back into NATO gives France and Europe a chance to counterbalance the alliance, an opportunity never to be realized had France maintained its “special status” in relation to NATO.

Second, Bozo and Müller state, prior to Sarkozy, France’s “creeping reintegration” into NATO resulted in French participation in all out of area NATO operations since 2003 coupled with contributing the third-largest array of troops and fourth-largest financial support. France rightfully felt the cost-benefit calculation within NATO was negative (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 98) leaving it with an “unsatisfactory role” within the alliance, since the “involvement of France at decision-making levels is still proportionally much less than its operation participation.” (Bozo, 2008, 6) Thus, by reintegrating back into NATO Sarkozy wished to eliminate France’s “unsatisfactory role”, and at the same time further promote the Europeanization of NATO by allowing France to exert its influence as a fully integrated member of the alliance.

Third, by promoting a stronger ESDP as a guarantee of Europe’s ability to act independently from the U.S., Sarkozy’s new NATO policy could enhance ESDP as well. For a long time, French priorities have been Europe-centric with France having a much different view, shaped by ambitions for its own European project, than the U.S. and other key EU allies. (Bozo, 2008, 15) Sarkozy’s proclamation that both ESDP and NATO can be complementary and not in competition with one another (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 81) was a huge step in attempting to persuade its allies that France was less inclined to be promoting a purely Europe-centric stance. Similarly, the U.S. wants a strong European

partner that can address new threats and challenges such as Chad and Congo, so the U.S. can address other threats and challenges. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 87) By seizing the synergies from both organizations, both NATO and ESDP could benefit.

To reintegrate into NATO, Sarkozy proposed a dual arrangement tied to certain conditions. Insisting on a more powerful ESDP working as a partner with NATO inevitably increases Europe's standing within NATO and is also welcomed by the U.S. Remodeling NATO not only updates its structures to face current threats, but also makes Europe more of an equal partner within NATO. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 101) Having France assume command of ACT, the first strategic headquarters commanded by a non-U.S. flag officer, is a step towards this rebalance and the Europeanization of NATO.

Now for the second interpretation, we need to more closely examine ESDP and European security cooperation in general. Because ESDP has had so many difficulties gaining momentum (for instance, setbacks due to 9/11) since St Malo, perhaps France concluded that NATO offers it the best insurance policy regarding defense and security should ESDP ultimately fail? A lot has been written about the grim prospects for an autonomous European defense in the short or long term. There has also been a lack of support for ESDP, in particular, from the U.K., Germany and newer EU members. The intergovernmental (versus supranational) system in security matters has made it hard to find solutions to enhance ESDP, especially now with 27 EU members; more members make agreements more challenging. Finally, regardless of the future of ESDP, France stands to gain some benefits with reintegration into NATO; thus France's new NATO policy may have been for the sake of France's own self-interest.

Why do so many think that true autonomous European defense will remain so elusive? One obvious example has to do with declining budgets for national defense. European members' defense spending continues to decline in the decade since St Malo. (Gardiner and McNamara, 2009, 2) Additionally, France's increasing lack of influence (both within the EU and NATO) due to increasing memberships of both the alliance and EU and the propensity of new members being more pro-American than pro-European (tipping the transatlantic "balancing game" more towards the U.S and less towards Europe) (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 79) hasn't boded well for ESDP either. And finally, "although Europe has all the political means – the full spectrum of instruments – needed for an effective security policy, it suffers from two serious deficiencies: 1) It lacks the will to act quickly and decisively and 2) Its military capabilities are inadequate." (Naumann, 2009, 61) Thus Naumann and other European experts have concluded "The autonomous European defense of EU territory is not doable over either the short or the long term." (Naumann, 2009, 60) Thus, since a lot of scholars and experts continue to have doubts about the future prospects of ESDP, why should France feel any different?

There are many reasons explaining the lack of support for relaunching ESDP. Despite the rhetoric from Sarkozy, newer members of the EU along with the U.K. are still leery that a stronger European defense policy comes at the expense of a weakened NATO and further damaging relations with the U.S. Gordon Brown was less supportive of ESDP than his predecessor. Also, Chirac-Schröder relations were much different from Sarkozy-Merkel. "Franco-German cooperation has lost the warmth and centrality it enjoyed under Chirac and Schröder." (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 83) Finally, the EU

Operational Headquarters (EU OHQ) project suffers from the divergence of point of view between France and the U.K.

ESDP will continue to be mostly intergovernmental despite the inclusion in the Lisbon Treaty of the so-called Permanent Structured Cooperation, making further maturity of ESDP more challenging. For one, the EU lacks an equivalent of the U.S. National Security Council and since European nations will not agree to further reductions of national sovereignty, ESDP, along with foreign and security policy, will continue to suffer. (Neuss, 2009, 117) More recently, there is greater potential for a negative ripple effect into ESDP as Germany and France feud over solutions for the Greek debt crisis. (Erlanger, 2010) Another blow to the prospects of ESDP strengthening any time soon is when “very few European countries see the role of the EU as a power since member states still like to defend and pursue their own national interests rather than subsume them in a multinational body.” (Robinson, 2010, 3)

Self interest may well have played an important role in Sarkozy’s decision to rejoin NATO, given the uncertainty of ESDP’s future. The direct benefits to French reintegration into NATO are threefold. First, NATO membership enhances the interoperability of the French army with U.S. and other NATO members. Second, joint training with the U.S. will enhance the modernization of the French army. Third, full NATO membership eventually gives the French armaments industries access to the large U.S. defense procurement market. (Herpen, 2009, 4) These huge windfalls both militarily and economically certainly played into the equation leading up to Sarkozy’s decision for reintegration.

Whether France's newest stance towards NATO is to benefit both NATO and ESDP or because France wished to seize the opportunity to secure its influence within the alliance and globally while the future of ESDP unfolds, only time will tell. What is certain is that France's new NATO policy is explained by European security cooperation. How France is able to exert its new influence both within NATO and within Europe will most certainly have an effect on the future of security and defense for the North Atlantic as well as determining how and if a transatlantic rebalancing of power is feasible.

What does this mean?

In September, 2009, French General Abrial assumed command of ACT in Norfolk, Virginia. Meanwhile, since NATO's 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl summit, when Sarkozy consummated France's reintegration into NATO's integrated military command structure, France has begun the journey of filling its 1200 positions within the Peacetime Establishment (PE). With France back in, what are some possible effects on NATO, the transatlantic link and ESDP?

Change is in the air for NATO as the alliance works towards a new strategic concept, to be unveiled later this year at the Lisbon Summit. One key aspect the alliance is currently wrestling with is whether NATO needs to move towards being a global security agent or to stick with Article 5 as the "heart" of its mission. Some have called for NATO to act more globally: "NATO's real power derives from the fact that it combines the United States' military capabilities and economic power with Europe's collective political and economic weight (and occasionally some limited European military forces). Together, that combination makes NATO globally significant." (Brzezinski, 2009, 10) Brzezinski concludes that France's re-entry underlies NATO's

vital political role as a regional alliance with growing global potential. But Sarkozy has stressed that NATO is not to become a rival to the UN. (Bozo, 2008, 8) And as demonstrated at the 4-5 February 2009 Munich Security Conference, Sarkozy and Merkel have a shared opposition to transforming NATO into a global security agency as the U.S. proposes. (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 106) With French integration, this issue could be more contentious.

How NATO engages with Russia is another issue the alliance is grappling with. Russia is likely to continue to promote division between the U.S. and Europe and, within Europe, between old and new members. (Brzezinski, 2009, 16) France's reintegration should help alleviate some of these potential wedges Russia may hope to exploit.

Sarkozy has stated that forging a clear EU space policy is a high French priority - mainly in electromagnetic military intelligence and satellite imagery and to provide to the EU an independent GPS other than the U.S's. giving Europe a measure of autonomy. The U.S. has viewed EU space initiatives as redundant and costly. French reintegration could make this issue less contentious, provided the U.S., EU, and NATO space policies are coordinated. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 88) The need for continued access to space on both sides of the Atlantic might be compelling enough to encourage a coordinated space policy effort.

Geographic scope and openness of new members to NATO is also being debated with the new strategic concept. While the U.S. favors broad geographic scope and sees increased membership as important, France and some new NATO members favor limiting NATO's geographic range. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 88) With French reintegration, it is likely debates on these issues will be more hotly contested.

How the “comprehensive approach” concept is woven into NATO’s new strategic concept will also be tricky. NATO’s experiences in Afghanistan have proven the need to better integrate military-civilian operations. But there are vast differences on how this should be accomplished. What does General Abrial, the new Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), bring to the table and how will he sort this out, given France’s position that NATO should lead the military tasks while the EU should lead the civilian tasks? In correspondence to NATO’s Secretary General after his first 90 days in command, Abrial states “I intend to position ACT as the catalyst for making the comprehensive approach operational.....Finding synergy among the major stakeholders - governmental as well as non-governmental – is a challenging prerequisite to achieve an effective resolution to a crisis.....This can be attained by promoting a shared understanding of the military role as an “enabling force” within a framework on which both military and civilian contributors can agree.” (Abrial, 2009) Although Abrial has been forthright in claiming the need for a comprehensive approach, how NATO sorts this out with the political implications and tensions between the EU and NATO is anyone’s guess.

Turkey’s relations within NATO and with the EU have now changed. France, no longer having the luxury of blocking stronger EU-NATO ties (from its EU perch), now isolates Ankara and this newfound isolation will put pressure on Turkey to rethink its opposition (from its NATO perch) for closer NATO-EU relations. (Valasek, 2008, 5) Whether this will improve Turkey’s relations within NATO and with the EU remains to be seen. Clearly, French reintegration has changed the dynamic for Turkey.

France's reintegration has already brought more Europeanization to NATO. One of the effects of Europeanization is France's assumption of command of ACT. It is also extremely symbolic to have a non-American NATO Strategic Commander on U.S. soil. Perhaps NATO transformation initiatives will gain more traction coming from a European commander rather than an American. The current PE of 15,000 positions is currently under review with a target of reducing this number to 13,000; will France be able to successfully influence this reduction? Regarding other NATO transformational issues/challenges, it will be interesting to see what the Abrial effect will be; will he be wearing his French or NATO hat on these controversial issues?

France's return should have some important impacts on the transatlantic link. France's new status should be a step in the right direction for beginning to repair the damages stemming from the Iraq War and Bush's policies. France will need to play a more forceful role in keeping the U.S. engaged and interested in Europe. "Europe must see to it that America remains committed to Europe." (Neuss, 2009, 122) Additionally, the EU must make proper contributions to burden sharing, and show it is capable of making decisions and taking actions. Only then will the real meaning of the conclusion drawn in the European Security Strategy 2003 "the transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable" be attained. (Neuss, 2009, 122) The role France plays to lead this European effort could be crucial.

The balance of power between Europe and the U.S. could change with France's new NATO policy. With French reintegration, Paris seeks to "limit the growing politicization of the alliance to prevent it from becoming the cornerstone of international order, one dominated by the U.S." (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 102) At the 4-5

February 2009 Munich Security Conference, Sarkozy and Merkel called for joint decision making within the alliance (EU and U.S.) since “one-sided moves would be contrary to the spirit of partnership.” (Muller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2009, 106) Naumann sums up the desired balance of power between Europe and America by saying “Resolutions to conflicts will require American leadership and European involvement.” (Naumann, 2009, 59) Whether or not France can help shape NATO into a better European-American partnership remains to be seen.

France’s return to NATO and its effects on ESDP are still to be determined. On one hand, France’s return has alleviated some fears (from the U.S., the U.K., Germany, and newer EU nations) that ESDP is counter to NATO. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 86) Still, will the EU invest monetarily and with conviction in ESDP? Conflicts over NATO priorities versus EU priorities make increases to member-states military strengths difficult and challenging. (Valasek, 2008, 6) As previously noted, 10 years of EU security initiatives have actually seen a decrease in European defense spending. Given the global economic crisis coupled with the increasing debt of major European powers, European defense spending is unlikely to increase and probably continue to decline. All these make the initial prognosis for ESDP not so bright.

ESDP is still lacking an EU operational headquarters, leaving Europe incapable of doing any autonomous detailed planning. “With France’s reintegration into NATO, the underlying controversies over a European military component, either independent or linked with NATO, should now be settled.” (Neuss, 2009, 122) But, one year after Strasbourg/Kehl, no such headquarters is even on the horizon. Can France’s new relations with the U.K., Germany, and the U.S. make such a headquarters a reality?

How ESDP and NATO can combine energies to further the comprehensive approach is difficult to predict. The EU has many civilian capabilities NATO lacks, especially in the stabilization and reconstruction phases of peace operations. (Ghez and Larrabee, 2009, 87) Most likely, the new strategic concept will shed more light on how the EU and NATO will address and handle a true comprehensive approach for future crises’.

Conclusion

European security cooperation played a key role in determining France’s new NATO policy. With the future of ESDP uncertain, France most likely chose to secure its influence and options to act globally by reintegrating into NATO’s military command structure early in Sarkozy’s presidency. The opportunity must have seemed even more interesting to Sarkozy, given President Bush’s recognition towards the end of his presidency, with the U.S. bogged down with two wars which garnered little allied support, that the U.S. was also looking for opportunities for renewed partnerships (and hopeful of increased burden-sharing) with its European allies.

France’s reintegration has changed the security and defense landscape, both within Europe and NATO. Clearly, France now has more political leverage than before along with more options to shape both NATO and ESDP, separately as well as concurrently. The weaker role of the U.S. in Europe now allows France to mold both NATO and ESDP complementarily.

The full impact of France’s new NATO policy will not be felt for years. But, even now there are some important positives. Having all 28 members of the alliance under the same tent is good for NATO. France’s final commitments to the alliance, both in people

and resources, should better enable NATO to deal with today's threats. With the significance being placed on the upcoming new strategic concept, having all 28 members fully participate only strengthens the implementation of the final document.

However, some underlying tensions within the alliance are only exacerbated by France's new NATO policy. These stresses, now ever sharper with France a full member, include what global role NATO wishes to play in the future, how a true comprehensive approach in harmony with both the EU and NATO can be achieved and how effective NATO reform will be this time around. As in any family, there will always be disputes, but now having every member at the table should be beneficial for the overarching good of the alliance.

Finally, new relationships between France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. will now be formed due to France's new status in NATO. How these relationships evolve will be critical for the alliance, for the transatlantic link, and for ESDP. France's influence surely will be felt; to what degree this influence will shape these new relationships is the question.

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