

Chapter 4

France's Role Within NATO: Realism Through New Relations With Russia – Franco-Russian Relations: A Significant Element

Karim Belgacem

Sciences Po Grenoble, France

ABSTRACT

NATO is “brain dead.” With these statements, President Macron shocked most of the member states of the Atlantic alliance. But wouldn't this observation be tinged with realism with the announced withdrawal of the United States from this alliance? The recent attempt at rapprochement between the French President and Vladimir Putin confirms the change of the French paradigm and the will of its president to “move the lines.” Russia's annexation of Crimea and NATO's potential extension to Ukraine have only strained NATO-Russia relations further. This chapter will analyze France's role within NATO since its creation, Franco-Russian relations since the tenure of General de Gaulle in 1958, and the arrival of Emmanuel Macron in 2017. It will put reintegration into perspective of France in the integrated command of NATO, and its two-headed attitude, namely the transatlantic rapprochement but also a realistic observation on the usefulness and the current role of NATO. Will France have an important role to play in the future of NATO?

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, the installation of the Cold War context has created an east-west bipolar system based on a political and strategic rivalry between Soviet communism and what is colloquially referred to as the West. On a strictly military point of view, the European continent was divided between the Warsaw Pact countries and the NATO member countries (except the non-aligned countries). It shows a French concept called “war impossible and peace improbable” (Aron, R 1948).

The relationship between France in NATO describes a relationship tinged with ambiguity and pragmatism. France's military might and its nuclear deterrent force make it a major part of NATO. But

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France, since General De Gaulle has always considered itself a country that is both aligned and not an ally of the United States. Its departure from the NATO integrated command in 1965 illustrates the will of an independent France, also turned towards the USSR of Brezhnev, the recognition of the Communist China of Mao Tse Tung and a French Arab policy distinct mainly from the Anglo-Saxons.

Since its return to the integrated command of NATO in 2008 by the will of President Sarkozy, France is often accused, rightly or wrongly, of having lost its independence and rallied to a tinged American foreign policy. imperialism, subjectivity and obsolete software. (illusion of cold war with Putin, latent Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Presidents Sarkozy and Hollande went against the grain of Jacques Chirac, worthy heir to General De Gaulle who, with his refusal of the war in Iraq via the application of France's veto to military intervention in 2003, wanted to be the representative of an aligned but independent and pragmatic France.

The arrival of Emmanuel Macron in 2017 was meant to be a new era shrouded in modernity, nobody will forget the "frank" handshake between Trump and Macron on May 25, 2017 that will mark the spirits (Cresci, E. 2017). Vladimir Putin's invitation to Versailles was also an opportunity for him to affirm a renewal in Franco-Russian relations, already very affected by European sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Ukrainian Crimea in 2014. Macron thus wishes for a movement diplomacy breaking with that deployed in recent years.

Macron increasingly irritates his Western partners by declaring, of NATO, that the latter is "brain dead". With these statements, he shocks most of the member states of the Atlantic alliance. But it unwittingly brought him closer to Trump and his desire to stop funding NATO on a large scale and Putin, who welcomed and endorsed this statement (Erlanger, L. 2019).

Russia's annexation of Crimea and the potential extension of NATO to Ukraine have only worsened NATO-Russia relations. In this conflict, France tried a pragmatic approach to the conflict through the Minsk 1 and 2 agreements in the "Normandy" format. But the results are more than mixed.

The recent attempt of reconciliation between the French president and Vladimir Putin confirms the change of French paradigm and the will of its president to "move the lines". The reasons are at the same time historical, pragmatic and with a real desire to reaffirm France in the world. The objective of this article will be to analyze France's role within NATO since its creation. We will mainly focus on the historical relations between France and Russia, the influence of General De Gaulle and his Gaulian vision of French foreign policy, and the evolution of France's role within NATO since the return of command. integrated and we will explain how French foreign policy is clearly distinguished from other Western countries, but above all how is France situated between its membership in NATO and its relations with Russia?

FRANCO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT

To fully understand why France has often distinguished itself from its allies (mainly American) on the Russian question, it is necessary to analyze certain historical facts between the two countries.

Historical Links Between France and Russia

Victor Hugo had said so in his speech on "the idea of Europe" to the Peace Congress in 1849. The great writer put Russia at the same level as Italy, France, England and Germany (Scheer, F 2016). But we

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