



MACRON, DIPLOMAT

A New French Foreign Policy?

Edited by Thomas GOMART and Marc HECKER

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Ifri

27 rue de la Procession 75740 Paris Cedex 15 – FRANCE

Tél. : +33 (0)1 40 61 60 00 – Fax : +33 (0)1 40 61 60 60

E-mail : accueil@ifri.org

Website: ifri.org

Authors

Christophe Bertossi, Director of the Center for Migration and Citizenship, Ifri.

Corentin Brustlein, Director of the Security Studies Center, Ifri

Alice Ekman, Head of China Research in the Center for Asian Studies, Ifri.

Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega, Director of the Center for Energy, Ifri.

François Gaulme, Associate Research Fellow in the Sub-Saharan Africa Center, Ifri.

Thomas Gomart, Director of Ifri.

Marc Hecker, Research Fellow in the Security Studies Center, Director of Publications, Ifri, and Editor-in-Chief of *Politique étrangère*.

Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, Director of the Russia/NIS Center, Ifri.

Barbara Kunz, Research Fellow in the Study Committee on French-German Relations (Cerfa), Ifri.

Julien Marcilly, Chief Economist at Coface.

Carole Mathieu, Research Fellow in the Center for Energy, Ifri.

Laurence Nardon, Head of the North America Program, Ifri.

Françoise Nicolas, Director of the Center for Asian Studies, Ifri.

Julien Nocetti, Research Fellow in the Russia/NIS Center, Ifri.

Céline Pajon, Head of Japan Research in the Center for Asian Studies, Ifri.

Dorothee Schmid, Head of Turkey/Middle East Program, Ifri.

John Seaman, Research Fellow in the Center for Asian Studies, Ifri.

Hugo Sada, Delegate for Human Rights, Democracy, and Peace, International Organisation of La Francophonie until 2012.

Hans Stark, Secretary General of the Study Committee on French-German Relations (Cerfa), Ifri.

Matthieu Tardis, Research Fellow in the Center for Migration and Citizenship, Ifri.

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Introduction

Thomas Gomart

How can we define Emmanuel Macron's foreign policy since he took office? After Nicolas Sarkozy's brazen style of "gutsy diplomacy" and François Hollande's "normal diplomacy", the eighth president of the Fifth Republic seems to have opted for an agile classicism. In substance, he makes no claim to any radical break with the past, but sees his approach as being in line with historical tradition. In relation to his predecessors, he has adjusted the balance between alliances, values, and interests in favor of the latter, while giving his policies an unambiguous European orientation. Formally, his approach is characterized by recourse to symbolism, strict control of communications, and an agile personal style. A term used within the business world to encourage organizations and individuals to adapt and innovate, "agility" also connotes a will to utilize and master new technologies.

Macron's commitment to Europe

Macron's position on international issues can be explained by the conditions under which he was elected, a fact that highlights the ever-tighter entanglement of "foreign" with "domestic" affairs. Observers will recall how little serious attention was paid to the complexities of foreign policy during the electoral campaign, with the four main candidates — François Fillon, Marine Le Pen, Emmanuel Macron, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon — seeking to differentiate themselves largely in reference to just two, somewhat interrelated, issues: France's relationship with Vladimir Putin, and the correct attitude to be adopted toward Bashar Al-Assad's Syria. As is often the case, the European Union (EU) was readily caricatured and presented as a straitjacket responsible for the nation's ills. Unlike the other candidates, Emmanuel Macron proclaimed his commitment to Europe throughout the campaign, along with his intent to revitalize the relationship between France and Germany. His current opponents, from Jean-Luc Mélenchon to Marine Le Pen and Laurent Wauquiez, continue to attack him over this, for political and economic reasons as well as reasons of identity.

Here is the paradox: Emmanuel Macron may be perceived overseas as pro-European and *de facto* as one of the principal leaders of the EU, but his election in no way indicates a conversion of the majority of the French electorate to the European project. It was the result of a twofold disruption: at home, the disruption of the traditional game of party politics — Emmanuel Macron created his *En Marche* movement in April 2016 — and abroad, the transatlantic context, with Brexit (June 2016) and the election of Donald Trump (November 2016). Some commentators have analyzed his victory as an ebbing of the wave of populism, a term that is really far too general to apply to particular national situations. In fact, the results of elections in Germany (September 2017), where the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party entered parliament, and in Italy (March 2018) where Matteo Salvini led his coalition to victory, give the impression that France is an exception. From this point of view, the European elections (May 2019) will be a decisive test of the pro-European orientation of Emmanuel Macron's foreign policy.

A deteriorating strategic environment

Beyond these situational aspects, two key tendencies seem to stand out at the end of Macron's first year in office. The first of these is the Élysée's reading of a rapidly deteriorating strategic environment that obliges Paris to raise its guard once more. This is how we should understand the forthcoming Military Programming Law (2019-2025), which emerged on the basis of the *Strategic Review of Defense and National Security* (Revue stratégique de défense et de sécurité nationale) and the *Strategic Review of Cyberdefense* (Revue stratégique de cyberdéfense). In concert with France's partners, this initiative aims to build European strategic autonomy while avoiding a militarization of international relations. Secondly, the advent of a multipolar world implies a weakening of multilateralism, in particular owing to the stances adopted by Russia, China, and the United States on various issues. Defense and the promotion of multilateralism constitute the two axes of French foreign policy, and a rallying point for countries that value respect for international law.

In the short term, two interrelated issues — Iran and Syria — will bring these two key tendencies into play. Even if Tehran implements the Vienna Agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) signed in July 2015 with the United States, China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany, according to Paris its activities in the region and its missile program are contributing to a deterioration of the strategic environment. At the same time, Donald Trump's hardening toward Iran and his rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and Israel will logically have to involve Washington's retreat from the JCPOA and a new raft of sanctions. In fact, a

complex transatlantic crisis is brewing (to the Iranian issue add protectionist decisions, along with the imposition of extraterritorial legislative measures against the EU); it may be the first major international crisis that Macron will have to deal with. Simultaneously, the use of chemical weapons in Syria may provoke some military reactions from the United States, and possibly from France.

Comprising fourteen short texts, this collective study contributes to the initiative launched by Ifri in 2016 to analyze French foreign policy, and follows on directly from the earlier study published on the eve of the presidential election.¹ It aims to give an update on the action Emmanuel Macron has taken on the principal international issues since his arrival in office. It should therefore be read not as an overall assessment, which would be impossible at this early stage of the presidential term, but more as an impressionist tableau giving a sense of an overall movement containing many different hues. Emmanuel Macron has four years left to perfect it.

1. T. Gomart and M. Hecker (eds.), "Foreign Policy Challenges for the Next French President", *Études de l'Ifri*, Ifri, April 2017, available at: www.ifri.org. See also T. de Montbrial and T. Gomart (eds.), *Notre intérêt national. Quelle politique étrangère pour la France ?* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2017).

The Economic Attractiveness of France: A Long-Term Project

Julien Marcilly

In 2017, the outlook for the French economy brightened: for the first time since 2011, GDP growth reached 2%, the unemployment curve has finally turned around, and the number of corporate insolvencies has decreased by 8%. On closer inspection, however, the picture is far from idyllic: France's trade deficit has grown by 25% over the past two years, to the point where it shaves 0.6 points per year off French growth.

France's low economic attractiveness

The trade balance reflects a mismatch between domestic production and demand in the economy. A chronic deficit like France's indicates that production is insufficient to respond to demand. The reasons for this inability of companies to produce enough are of course many and various. But obviously one of them is the economic attractiveness of France — that is to say, the country's capacity to attract the factors of production (labor and capital) that will generate new economic activity to respond to demand.

The latest available indicators of attractiveness (collected prior to the 2017 elections) do not show any recent progress in this respect: foreign direct investment flow into France dropped by 40% in 2016, and there are only a third as many exporting companies as in Germany, half as many as in Italy. Certainly, France has a recognized weakness in terms of small companies. But contrary to common belief, large companies do not make up for a shortfall in smaller ones.

Many of the perceived shortcomings of France are nothing new: the tax system (according to 55% of directors interviewed for the Baromètre EY France Attractiveness Survey), the lack of simplification of regulations (46%), labor law (39%), and the cost of labor (31%) are still seen as the principal brakes on competitiveness. More worryingly, some of what have traditionally been assets of the French economy are gradually becoming

liabilities: the skill level of the workforce, hitherto spoken of highly by employers, may not be so in the years to come if France continues to fall behind in the international rankings. For example, France's performance in the OECD's Program for the International Evaluation of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is below average for the twenty-four countries studied. Improving the economic attractiveness of France will therefore be a long-term project.

Grounds for hope

Luckily, there are grounds for hope. Firstly, a number of French assets such as quality infrastructure, dynamism of company creation, and capacity to attract research and development projects, are still in place.

In addition, many recent reforms are favorable to business: The employment tax credit (Crédit d'impôt compétitivité emploi, CICE) and the Responsibility and Solidarity Pact have contributed to a 5.5% improvement in cost competitiveness between 2014 and 2016. Reforms passed by the Édouard Philippe government, such as the reform of the labor market, are also helping improve the economic attractiveness of the country.

Finally, the decisions of overseas company leaders on whether or not to invest and recruit in France also depend upon their perception of the stability of the political, institutional, and social environment. And stability has become increasingly rare in today's world: President Trump's protectionist measures in the United States, the vagaries of Brexit in the United Kingdom, the independentist proposals of a certain section of the Catalan population in Spain, the fragmentation of the political scene and the rise of anti-system populist parties in Italy, and even the viability of the new coalition in Germany all represent sources of uncertainty for businesses. With its pro-European, trade-friendly government confirmed with an absolute majority until 2022, France offers a clearer political horizon, and is coming to be seen as a refuge for businesses.

Defense: Presidential Ambition Meets Reality

Corentin Brustlein

Like most of the candidates in the presidential election, during the electoral campaign Emmanuel Macron championed great ambitions for French defense. Following a period characterized by operational overload in response to an increasing number of threats, almost all the candidates shared the diagnosis that a budget increase was necessary.

Crisis of confidence

The first steps of the President of the Republic were punctuated by symbolic gestures testifying to his will to live up to the role of commander-in-chief of the armed forces: Macron chose to ride in a military vehicle on the day of his inauguration, visited French forces deployed in Mali less than a week after the second round of elections, and had already visited both components of France's nuclear deterrent at the Brest and Istres military bases within just over two months after being elected.

And yet the presidential term soon gave rise to a clash with the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Pierre de Villiers. Faced with an unexpected budget cut, at the beginning of July 2017 the government took a decision forcing the Ministry of the Armed Forces to compensate for the overspend on overseas operations, effectively cutting the armed forces equipment budget by €850 million — repeating a reflex gesture that, it had been hoped, was definitively in the past. The first chance for the new government to prove the sincerity of its commitment to defense thus led to the opposite result: publicly disowned by the president, the chief of staff, who had expressed his anger during a parliamentary hearing that was subsequently leaked to the press, resigned on July 19. Since this crisis the Élysée Palace and the government have made efforts to restore a bond of trust with the armed forces.

Strategic autonomy and European renewal

Commissioned by Macron, over the summer the Minister of the Armed Forces rapidly conducted a *Strategic Review of Defense and National Security* whose aims were framed from the start by three presidential priorities: advocacy for the renewal of the European project, a budgetary target raising defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2025, and the preservation of the current model of the armed forces and two components of nuclear deterrence.

Published in October 2016, the *Strategic Review* put forward the diagnosis of a challenged international system (owing to the weakening of multilateralism and the European security architecture); unsurprisingly, it concluded by reaffirming the importance of France's twofold ambition for national and European strategic autonomy – thus attempting to convert into positive and collective energy the shock treatment of Brexit, the election of Donald Trump, the immigration crisis, and the strategic resurgence of Russia.

Regeneration of military potential

A true expression of the president's ambitions for defense comes in the form of the Military Programming Law (Loi de programmation militaire, LPM) 2019-2025 submitted to parliament in mid-February 2018. It features budget increases on a scale unseen since the end of the Cold War: a rise of €1.7 billion per year for the first four years and then €3 billion between 2023 and 2025, bringing the defense budget to €50 billion, 2% of GDP, by 2025.

Even a budgetary effort of such proportions cannot instantaneously erase the effects on the armed forces of having been underfinanced and overstretched for many years. In point of fact, what many hoped would be an “LPM for resurgence”, bringing with it a higher level of ambition, is really an LPM for recovering potential. This orientation is visible both in the official speeches presenting it as an LPM “on the human scale”, and in the prioritizing of the most urgent needs: accelerated replacement of ground equipment, improvement of military life, infrastructure development, the reduction of bottlenecks in overdue equipment programs, etc. In addition, the law details extra investment in domains that are crucial for France's strategic autonomy and its capacity to bring together partners for coalition operations. Thus there is a particular focus on the strategic role of “knowledge and anticipation” (drones, satellites, personnel).

Ultimately, the choice to preserve the model of a balanced armed forces, and therefore to renew both France's nuclear deterrent and its capacities for external action, almost completely absorbs the room for maneuver that the budget rise to 2% of GDP had seemed to offer. And ultimately even this prudent choice remains at the mercy of future government challenges to an extremely ambitious budget path – all the more so given that, like the preceding LPM, this one calls for most of the effort to be made after the 2022 elections. Presidential leadership will be crucial for the implementation of this ambition. It remains to be seen whether Macron's determination to move toward 2% of GDP will ultimately come into conflict with his will to honor another campaign promise: the reintroduction of a compulsory national service, whose characteristics are yet to be fully defined, but whose costs – direct and indirect – may prove difficult for the defense budget to absorb.

Emmanuel Macron, or Antiterrorism *En Marche*

Marc Hecker

Emmanuel Macron's victory speech, given in front of the Louvre pyramid on May 7, 2017, was perceived by many commentators in terms of monarchical symbolism. But counterterrorism specialists read it as a symbol of resilience. Three months earlier, a terrorist had attacked soldiers patrolling, as part of *Opération Sentinelle*, beneath this very pyramid. The electoral campaign was then marked by another attack: the assassination of a policeman on the Champs-Élysées three days before the first round of voting. But this tense situation could not put off a huge crowd from coming to celebrate the victory of the *En Marche* candidate.

The creation of the National Counterterrorism Center

As far as the fight against terrorism is concerned, five indicative aspects of Emmanuel Macron's first year in power can be highlighted. Firstly, the new President of the Republic ushered in an institutional reorganization with the creation of a National Counterterrorism Center (Centre national du contre-terrorisme, CNCT), under the authority of the national intelligence and counterterrorism coordinator. This new body — attached directly to the Élysée Palace — testified to a certain presidentialization of counterterrorism.

Ending the state of emergency

Subsequently, Emmanuel Macron sought as quickly as possible to lift the state of emergency declared following the attacks of November 13, 2015. In order to do so, a new law was voted in on October 30, 2017 which, in practice, reiterates many of the principal elements of the state of emergency, alongside democratic guarantees that defenders of individual liberties did not find entirely reassuring. For example, administrative searches have been replaced by "visits" which — unlike in the period of the state of emergency — must be authorized by a judge. Another example is that house arrests have been replaced by "individual surveillance and control measures". Persons

against whom such measures are taken are obliged to remain within a given geographical zone, which cannot be smaller than the territory of a commune, and must present themselves regularly to the police or gendarmerie.

A continued high level of military engagement

The third salient point is the continuing high level of troop commitments in the war against jihadism. All of the major operations by François Hollande have been honored — from *Opération Chammal* in the Syria-Iraq zone to *Opération Barkhane* in the Sahel, and *Opération Sentinelle* within the national territory. France thus made a contribution to the territorial collapse of ISIS, which successively lost its Iraqi “capital” (Mosul) and its principal stronghold in Syria (Raqqa).

The uncertain fate of French jihadists

The fourth point is linked to the downfall of ISIS, and concerns the fate of French jihadists involved in this organization. The government has stood firm on this question. Beginning with the Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly, politicians have repeatedly expressed that the best solution would be for jihadists to die in combat. When it turned out that several dozens of French citizens were being held prisoner by Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian confirmed that repatriation for these persons had been ruled out, except in the case of minors. Minister of Justice Nicole Belloubet stated that France “would intervene” if any French citizens were sentenced to death.

The new national plan for the prevention of radicalization

The last highlight is the adoption of a national plan for the prevention of radicalization, unveiled by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe at the end of February 2018. This plan follows in the footsteps of those presented by Bernard Cazeneuve in 2014 and Manuel Valls in 2016. It has five main objectives: protecting against the spread of radical ideologies; meshing together detection and prevention; understanding and anticipating future developments in radicalization; professionalizing local actors and evaluating their practices; and developing techniques for disengagement. The word “disengagement” is employed rather than “deradicalization”, which is rarely used by French specialists any more. It expresses a more realistic objective:

to encourage radicalized individuals to renounce violence, rather than seeking to deeply modify their worldview.

Unlike the preceding plans, this one is focused less on the war on terror, and is instead designed to enable society to develop “antibodies” that will allow it to resist extremist ideologies. While the term “intelligence” was omnipresent in the 2016 plan, it is mentioned only once in the 2018 plan, and then only in an appendix. Instead the emphasis is on education and on the preventive role played by local actors. “Centers for individualized treatment” will be opened for legally detained radicalized persons. Prison inmates sentenced for terrorism or identified as radicals will be separated from the rest of the prison population so as to avoid the effects of contamination.

Ultimately, Emmanuel Macron has proved active on the counterterrorism front over the first year of his term, and has acted globally in continuity with his predecessor. Since the May 2017 election two lethal attacks have taken place on French soil – in October 2017 in Marseille and in March 2018 near Carcassonne. What’s more, several planned attacks have been thwarted, and French interests have been targeted abroad. One does not have to be a great expert to know that we will see further attempts over the coming years.

“Make Our Planet Great Again”: Macron’s Leadership on Climate Issues

Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega and Carole Mathieu

The climate emergency is real, with a trend of record high temperatures over the last few years and a further increase in greenhouse gas emissions in 2017. President Macron has taken the situation on board in full, preaching to his guests at the One Planet Summit in Paris in December 2017: the world is losing the battle against climate change, and we must move faster and include climate constraints as a factor in every decision we make. Such sentiments express Macron’s deep conviction that climate change threatens the stability of the world. It is wreaking havoc in Africa, where it intensifies the breeding ground of the ills afflicting the continent — forced migrations, conflicts over territory and resources, terrorism —, and increasingly in Europe. At the same time, the issue of adaptation to climate change can be a strong lever for sustainable growth.

Donning the mantle of guardian of the Paris Agreement negotiated under the French presidency of the UN, Macron has been unstinting in his efforts to avoid the feared American withdrawal, seeking to establish a personal relationship with Donald Trump. While the United States played a key role, together with China, in making the agreement possible, Macron has managed to limit the political damage caused by the American withdrawal by appropriating the slogan of candidate Trump, telling the Hamburg G20 summit that the text adopted in Paris is irreversible and non-negotiable. He seems to have achieved his objective of holding together the Paris Agreement, and the One Planet Summit allowed Macron to maintain his place at the heart of the global agenda, to confirm once again the essential role played by non-state actors, and to mobilize major French economic actors and the nation’s cities around ambitious commitments.

A mammoth task remains, though, to ensure that states go beyond merely espousing their unified stance and actually increase their commitments for COP24, which will be held at the end of 2018 under the Polish presidency. Maintaining the trust of vulnerable countries also

requires that issues of adaptation are not neglected, which calls for continuous diplomatic pressure, an influencing strategy, and close cooperation with India and China to ensure that their priorities are not limited to reducing pollution in cities, but form part of a coherent scheme for the reduction of emissions both on the domestic front and in terms of their strategies and commitments abroad, for instance in Africa and in the many countries involved in China's Belt and Road Initiative. Following through on the Paris Agreement also implies fully taking account of the industrial race for low-carbon technologies, currently led by China, and for which the European Union (EU) and France have no strategy as yet.

On the national scale, President Macron has not yet given any clear impetus toward promoting France as a unanimous model for low carbon transition. From the start he boosted his environmental credentials by naming Nicolas Hulot as Minister for Ecological Transition, who is overseeing the implementation of the 2015 energy transition act. The challenge resides in the fact that France is currently at an advantage because of the dominance of nuclear power in the country, which means that it boasts one of the least carbon-intensive energy mixes, but that it must redouble its efforts to develop other sectors and technologies on both the supply and demand side, while adjusting the share of nuclear and ensuring that this production tool remains a long-term asset. Having postponed the target date of 2025, the government has defended its pragmatic approach to reducing the share of nuclear to 50% of electricity production as soon as possible, keeping in mind the economic, technical, and climate constraints. Renewable energies are being promoted more, as is energy efficiency, and the phasing out of coal and of the sale of diesel vehicles has been confirmed. At every stage the government is seeking to implement concrete and practical measures in order to facilitate development: retraining schemes for communities hit by the closure of coal-fired power plants, for example, or simplification of administrative requirements to accelerate the realization of renewable energy projects. Although a great deal of effort has been devoted to the eventual ban on hydrocarbon exploration, this seems a marginal issue compared to the real priorities that will be listed within the framework of the next Multiannual Energy Plan (PPE), expected at the end of 2018: a clean mobility strategy, the management of peaks in electricity demand, the integration of intermittent renewable energies, practices of self-consumption, investments in networks and interconnections, capture and storage, and renewable gases.

President Macron's environmental credibility will ultimately depend upon his ability to bring the European states together over ambitious energy efficiency and renewable energy objectives for 2030, and above all

to convince Germany and certain other states to rapidly put in place a carbon price floor for the electricity sector in order to accelerate fossil fuel phase-out. Reform of the carbon market remains insufficient, and the new clean energy package seems to raise as many questions as it brings solutions, in particular as far as the organization of the European electricity market is concerned. Ten years were lost between the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement; France, Germany, and the EU cannot afford to lose any more time.

Emmanuel Macron and the Migration Question

Christophe Bertossi and Matthieu Tardis

Curiously enough, the presence of a Front National candidate in the second round of voting in the 2017 presidential election did not lead to immigration becoming a central question for French voters. This is all the more striking when we compare the situation in France with the elections that have recently taken place in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and Italy.

Emmanuel Macron was not elected on this issue, then. Nevertheless, the beginning of his term in office was strongly marked by the asylum issue, in a general context of tension over questions of immigration in Europe, linked to the 2015 European migration crisis.

The continuity of French policy

From the first weeks of his term of office, the President of the Republic found himself confronted with the reality of migration in France, as embodied in the situation of migrants in Calais, in Paris, and on the French-Italian border.

Faced with this situation, the policy implemented by the new government did not indicate any new departure. The president's speech emphasized a so-called necessary "balance" between the objective of "humanity" (respect for France's international obligations in the matter of asylum law) and that of "firmness" (coercive measures, particularly in the matter of expulsions). But French policy on migration has been based on the same claim for the last forty years.

Even though substantial reforms on asylum had been passed three years earlier, in February 2018 the Minister of the Interior presented a new project for "controlled immigration and effective asylum rights" with a rather restrictive tone. The problem here is the legislative inflation characteristic of migration policies: this new project is being announced before the effects of the 2015 reform have been evaluated. It also runs the risk of rapidly becoming obsolete because of the negotiations underway on a Common European Asylum System. The Council of State hinted at this in

its opinion of February 15, 2018, when it was asked about the appropriateness of a new law.

A renewal on the European scene

What is really new in this domain, no doubt, is the president's visibility on the European and international scenes, for it is here that France's position can potentially make an impact on migratory flows and governance.

Indeed, as a candidate, Macron was already seeing these questions largely through the European prism, calling France to play its part in welcoming refugees in view of Chancellor Angela Merkel's actions in Germany.

Since his election, Macron has fully involved himself in the European debate, profiting from Germany's fading into the background during negotiations on the governmental coalition following the German elections. Immigration emerged as all the more of a priority for the French president given that the principal route of entry for migrants had moved toward the central Mediterranean, after the March 2016 agreement between the European Union and Turkey and the closure of the Eastern Mediterranean route. France now finds itself second in line, just after Italy.

A fragile balance between the national and the international

Because of its continued links with African countries, France also intends to play a part in partnerships to strengthen border control in the south of Libya. The presence of French troops in the Sahel is contributing to this through police and military means, in collaboration with the security forces of countries in the region.

The President of the Republic invited Germany, Italy, Spain, Niger, Chad, and Libya to Paris on August 28, 2017 to discuss this issues. Subsequently he announced the resettlement in France of 10,000 refugees, 3,000 from Chad and Niger, and took on the chair of a European working group on the resettlement of refugees on the central Mediterranean route.

France is yet to fully define its ambitions for this aspect of foreign policy and the form it will take. More specifically, it needs to find a balance between, on one hand, the objectives announced in the domestic political debate (an end to irregular immigration and increased returns of migrants) and, on the other hand, issues related to France's relationship with African countries, particularly in terms of the stabilization of their institutions and their social, economic, and human development.

By progressively externalizing European border controls to the South, European policies risk destabilizing movements that are largely intra-regional and increasing the volume and hazardousness of northward migration. This could lead to a slowdown of social and economic development in the regions of departure, more insecurity and trafficking on the migrant routes, and more candidates for irregular immigration into Europe, not to mention the increased vulnerability of populations in need of international protection who find themselves in these zones.

A fragile political equation, then: French public opinion has to understand that seeking short-term results may go against the interest of the countries of departure and transit and destination alike, since they are all a part of the same complex and interdependent migratory system.

The Digital Domain: Between Protection and Ambitions for Leadership

Julien Nocetti

Emmanuel Macron arrived at the Élysée Palace in what was, to say the least, a climate of tension fueled by digital technologies. The presidential campaign, and then the vote itself, had brought with it a growing consciousness of the phenomenon of fake news, in the wake of an American election where the problem had escalated into a national security issue.

The war on information manipulations

In France, as a candidate, Macron was personally targeted by digital subterfuges designed to destabilize his campaign. Once in power, the new president replied in two ways, by sharply rebuking the Russian state media outlets RT and Sputnik when Vladimir Putin was received in Versailles on May 30, 2017, and by opening up a broad consultation on methods to counter information manipulations, in particular through legal means.

The Act on Confidence in the Digital Economy (Loi de fiabilité et de confiance de l'information) will have three strands: it will enable the Audiovisual Council (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel, CSA) to suspend or revoke the license of any media channel judged to be under the control of a foreign state, force social networks to show greater transparency in regard to sponsored content, and, finally, establish procedures to rapidly prevent the circulation of a piece of fake news. Yet the French response on this matter seems less hardline than that of Germany, where large media platforms can now incur a significant fine if they do not take down illegal content within twenty-four hours.

Adapting to the cyber threat

The context within which Emmanuel Macron's election took place was also marked by cyber threats on a new scale. Within the space of two months — between May and June 2017 — two cyberattacks of unprecedented intensity

once again raised the specter of an ever-mutating cyber-conflict. First, the malware WannaCry was used in the largest ever “ransomware” attack in the history of the internet. Subsequently, NotPetya, primarily targeting Ukraine, aimed to destabilize and weaken the state.

Faced with growing numbers of cyberattacks of increasing sophistication, France embarked upon an effort to bring its security, defense, and intelligence capabilities up to date. A dedicated budget for defensive and offensive information warfare will be stipulated in the next Military Programming Law (2019-2025), in particular providing for the recruitment of 1,000 “cyber-combatants” in addition to the 3,000 already in place. The creation of a cyberdefense command (ComCyber) in 2017 completed the institutional cybersecurity architecture. Unlike that of the American and British, the French “model” makes a distinction between active information warfare and intelligence, and cyber protection (detection of cyberattacks, and so on).

The past year has also helped establish basic doctrinal principles. In France’s International Digital Strategy (*Stratégie internationale de la France pour le numérique*, December 2017), and especially in its *Strategic Review of Cyberdefense* (February 2018) the emphasis was placed on the ability to attribute the source of cyberattacks. This very delicate problem is not just a matter of analyzing technical traces, but also depends on human intelligence. Like many other states, France is reluctant to publicly announce findings that would reveal its cyberdefense capabilities. Paris is therefore keener on deterrence than on public attribution, in contrast to the United States, which has been quick to denounce Russian and North Korean attacks.

Confirming allegiance to Europe

Europe is suffering in the digital domain: American and to a lesser extent Chinese hegemony is weakening the continent, which in this sphere can barely call itself a first rank industrial power. The United States can claim a total of 42% of worldwide tech capitalization, Europe only 3%. Conscious of what is at stake here, the initial efforts of the French executive have been oriented toward platform regulation on both a national and European scale. Wider consultation has begun on trust and algorithms, to make sure that technology does not undermine democracy.

At the same time, France has made no secret of its aspiration toward digital leadership in Europe. The presentation of an ambitious French strategy for artificial intelligence on an industrial scale plays in this register. Although this strategy is focused on financing the most innovative

ecosystems and attracting talent, it does not neglect its European and global environment. France will have to do its best to influence the European strategy to be published by the Commission next year. From this point of view, particular attention must be paid to integrating an industrial strategy for data with the regulatory framework of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that will come into force across Europe in May 2018.

Francophonie According to Macron

Hugo Sada

Since his election, Emmanuel Macron has thrown himself into promoting francophonie. “The teaching of the French language will be a priority of our diplomacy and our influence”, he announced in Tunisia in February 2018, insisting that there would be no budget cuts in this domain. A proliferation of declarations, announcements, and initial actions followed, leading up to a major speech given on March 20, 2018 on the occasion of International Francophonie Day.

Emmanuel Macron’s enthusiasm for francophonie

The new President of the Republic swiftly incarnated his vision by naming as his personal representative for francophone affairs Leïla Slimani, a thirty-six-year-old French-Moroccan writer, to support a new drive in favor of a more useful and pragmatic French. This was followed by worldwide francophone advocacy. For example, in New York in September 2017 he extolled “both the language of Shakespeare and the language of Molière”, announcing the creation of a French Dual Language Fund for American public schools. At the Sorbonne on September 26 he stressed that multilingualism is a crucial issue, and proposed a network of European universities teaching in at least two languages. In October 2017 at the Frankfurt Book Fair, he stated:

The identity of the French language can only be fully understood and lived in its confrontation with other languages, with their translations, their knowledge.

And in Abu Dhabi in November:

I want a strong francophonie because I want a francophonie that will join you in this fight in Africa, in the Near and Middle East, a fight against obscurantism [...]. Francophonie can no longer be a language of complexes — either those of the colonizers or those of the decolonized.

Still in November 2017, Macron's protracted speech in Ouagadougou ended with a long tirade situating the future of francophonie at the heart of an Africa with high demographic growth:

This francophonie is not French francophonie, no; it has long escaped France's control. I want a strong, influential francophonie which is a beacon, which conquers because it belongs to you, use it with pride...

We could also cite Dakar, where Macron declared that the epicenter of francophonie "is somewhere near the Congo basin, no doubt about it!"

At the beginning of 2018, the Congolese writer Alain Mabanckou refused an invitation by the president to take part in his consultation on a renewed francophonie, citing divergent visions on the issue. He signed an open letter with Achille Mbembe, who was more aggressive in his criticisms, denouncing a vision still too beholden to the colonial heritage and too complacent in relation to African autocracies. Did this succeed in tempering the president's enthusiasm? No, we are assured by the Élysée: the two visions are not totally divergent.

The two components of Macron's vision

It seems that Macron's vision for francophonie centers on two major components. Firstly, on the national scale, it calls for a greater consciousness of the value of the French language, its importance and its cultural, intellectual, political, and diplomatic power. Secondly it focuses on an international revitalization of francophonie that will help spread the French language via francophones other than the French, especially in Africa.

This policy is concentrated in the domains most connected to the French language — teaching, education, and artistic creation — but it will also have to mobilize other promising actors such as leaders in fashion and gastronomy, capable of building new bridges between the French and other francophones — hence the recognition of the importance of multilingualism and translation. Other major challenges to be dealt with include reconnecting francophonie with young people, in particular African youths.

Concrete actions for francophonie

Numerous concrete actions and many new initiatives have already been undertaken. A website called "*Mon idée pour le français* [My idea for French]" has been launched to collect ideas and proposals. An international conference on the French language is to be held in Paris in February 2018 in the presence of three ministers, concentrating on the themes of school,

the digital domain, culture, and translation. The Château de Villers-Cotterêts, where Francis I signed the 1539 edict requiring all official acts in the kingdom to be written in French, is to be restored as a symbolic site of the French language.

A far-reaching reform of the network of French overseas schools (Réseau des écoles françaises à l'étranger, AEFÉ) has been initiated by Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Education has been declared an important aspect of development policy. On February 8, 2018 the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development stated that it would be “[s]upporting the initiatives of the institutions of *La Francophonie* to promote the French language and consolidate opportunities for quality education that is accessible to everyone in French.”

A francophone dictionary that will be “richer and broader than one containing just French from France” is to be compiled by the Académie française. Additionally, a season of African culture in France will be organized in 2020.

Thus President Macron has set out, with true conviction it seems, his francophone policy. He has progressively put in place the puzzle pieces of his francophonie, a francophonie with a small “f” borne of an approach that is ambitious and above all linguistic: “We have a linguistic space of unequalled power across all continents, and especially Africa” (speech in Ouagadougou, November 2017). But doubts (and worse) have been raised in relation to Francophonie with a capital “F”, the institutional version represented by the International Organization of La Francophonie (Organisation internationale de Francophonie, OIF) which, for two decades now, has involved itself in highly political actions (the Bamako Declaration and the Saint-Boniface Declaration). This Francophonie is still trying to find its way between the idea of an agency of cultural cooperation for which the means are lacking, and an international organization that currently brings together eighty-four member states and observers on five continents, but which can only be a kind of “secondary UN”. Nevertheless, the issue of cultural and linguistic diversity has become eminently politicized, and the ambition for a francophonie that is both more popular and more credible needs the kind of political traction incarnated by the likes of Habib Bourguiba, Léopold Senghor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and Abdou Diouf.

France and Germany: Starting Over against a Background of Divergence

Hans Stark

The privileged partnership between France and Germany has always been slow to get back up and running following presidential elections. Emmanuel Macron's predecessors have often been tempted to bypass Berlin so as to form alternative alliances, at least for a while. The new president has not yielded to this temptation. From the start he placed emphasis on a stronger cooperation with Germany. By appointing to key posts in government and at the Élysée Palace political leaders and senior officials who speak German and have a comprehensive knowledge of the neighboring country, Emmanuel Macron has highlighted just how important he thinks Germany is.

A German partner paralyzed for the duration

Germany was slower to react. Emerging weakened from the September 2017 federal elections, it took Angela Merkel six months to form a government, months during which she was unable to respond with certainty to Emanuel Macron's proposals for a "relaunch" of the European project. Nevertheless, the fact that Merkel, and above all the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), are still in power, in charge of foreign affairs and finances, opens the way to a closer dialogue that the planned revision of the 1963 Élysée Treaty will have to reflect. This fourth term of office will no doubt be the last in which the Chancellor will be able to make her mark on the European project, in the hope of leaving a legacy that consists of more than just the policy of austerity. Still, Brexit may have brought Paris and Berlin together, but their margin for maneuver remains small. Firstly, the economic chasm between Germany and France is far from having been overcome, even though the economic reforms launched by Macron command respect in Germany. Similarly, the weakening of the chancellery, overt discussion of the coming "Post-Merkel" era, the rise of the far right in Germany, and the defeat of the

SPD in the September 2017 elections has tied the federal government's hands, particularly as far as the consolidation of the eurozone is concerned. The first chapter of the coalition contract between the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and the SPD may have been dedicated to European questions, but differences remain. Macron wants to *relaunch* the European Union, a project which, according to him, has not had a proper long-term vision for many years now. Whereas the German Chancellor, who, let us not forget, has been a key force in shaping the EU since 2005, wants to "*safeguard* the EU as a successful project for peace". Are they even talking about the same Europe?

Paris favors a multi-speed Europe. This call for a differentiated Europe was not echoed in the coalition contract, which instead emphasized the importance of French-German cooperation, while recalling "at the same time" the importance Germany places on a good relationship with Poland, and even Great Britain... In his speech at the Sorbonne, Macron pronounced himself in favor of a more integrated Europe, custodian of the sovereignty of its member states, a Europe that protects against the external world. But in Germany there is no parliamentary majority in favor of additional transfers of sovereignty; and a country that exports as much as Germany does not feel the need to be protected against the external world, if protection implies protectionism...

Persistent differences over eurozone reform

Opposition between France and Germany is especially likely to crystallize around the question of eurozone reform. Macron has declared that he favors the appointment of a finance minister and a specific budget for the nineteen member states of the eurozone (higher than that of the EU 27), with this budget being set by a eurozone parliament. With these propositions, Paris risks crossing a number of red lines drawn by Germany, even if the liberals of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), very critical of the French propositions, are ultimately not part of the federal government. The Germans fear that a eurozone budget would have no other purpose than to allow financial transfers to the indebted countries of the eurozone, a prospect to which Merkel's party remains hostile. Similarly, a eurozone parliament responsible for the control of this budget would deprive the Bundestag of control of public spending, a prospect to which Berlin is also opposed. As for a finance minister for the eurozone, Berlin seems less hostile to this suggestion, providing that the role of such a minister is to ensure respect for budgetary discipline – which is perhaps not the principal role France has in mind. Nonetheless, the chancellor wishes to maintain French-German dialogue on

the future of the eurozone (in view also of the nomination of a new president of the European Central Bank...). She says she favors a “specific line” in the European budget dedicated to the protection of the eurozone countries against external shocks. In addition, Germany has committed itself to contributing proportionally more than its partners toward compensation for the budgetary shortfall that will result from the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU — two ultimately rather minor concessions that have, however, precipitated a wave of protest within the CDU. France and Germany still have lengthy discussions about the future of the eurozone ahead of them.

Macron, Germany, and the Relaunching of a Europe of Defense

Barbara Kunz

In Berlin the election of Emmanuel Macron was welcomed with much relief. Germany had hoped that the next French head of state would be both pro-European and ready to launch structural economic reform in his own country, and the new resident of the Élysée Palace fulfilled both criteria. But what did not necessarily feature on Berlin's wish list was the new President's ambition to relaunch a "Europe of defense". Today cooperation on defense — both bilateral and within the framework of the European Union (EU) — is once more at the heart of the Franco-German agenda.

***En Marche* again, the Franco-German motor**

Since the Brexit referendum, Paris and Berlin have pushed for advances in the domain of defense. Most of the measures taken within the context of the "global strategy" — most recently the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) — would doubtless have proved impossible without Franco-German leadership. Paris and Berlin have proved equally ambitious at the bilateral level, as attested by the joint declaration that followed the Franco-German Ministerial Council of July 13, 2017, where among other things France and Germany proposed the creation of the Sahel Alliance, emphasized their support for PESCO, and announced their cooperation in the industrial domain, in particular through the development of a "European air combat system".

Defense and European integration

Yet French and German objectives — regardless of the political parties in power in Berlin — do not necessarily coincide. The situation could be summed up in a somewhat simplistic formula: for the French, the Europe of defense is a matter for defense policy, whereas for the Germans it is a

question of European integration. This explains, for example, their disagreements over PESCO. Whereas Paris wants ambitious cooperation and reduced costs so as to ensure maximum efficiency, Berlin has lobbied for an “inclusive” PESCO with the maximum number of participants. The PESCO that was ultimately announced in December 2017 resembles the German preferences far more than the French ideas, although the latter are found again in a project outside the EU, the “European Intervention Initiative” proposed by Macron in his September 2017 speech at the Sorbonne. Since only a vague outline has been given thus far, Berlin is waiting to hear the details before making any statement as to its interest in this proposal.

As illustrated by the example of PESCO, divergences between France and Germany are still on two levels. The first concerns the opportunity and means for a potential future military intervention. On the German side there is persistent skepticism about military solutions, and the 2018 coalition agreement even suggests that Berlin will insist more strongly on the civil dimension over the next four years, notably announcing its intention to create a “civil PESCO”.

The second level concerns the question of the framework within which cooperation takes place. Despite talk of a European Union of defense, in reality the Germans have very little appetite for a “true” Europe of defense, perhaps intended to one day replace the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Whereas Paris banks on pragmatism and a “whatever works” approach to achieve its objectives regardless of the institutional framework, the German preference for NATO remains solid. It may even become stronger in view of the recentering of German defense policy around territorial defense toward 2032.

Strategic challenges in perspective

In other words, differences in strategic culture between France and Germany persist, and may even be widening. In Berlin it has taken a while for it to be understood that, though he may be pro-European, Macron is not a German-style “post-modern” president; his discourse falls within the De Gaulle-Mitterrand tradition. Equally, it does not always seem easy for Paris to appreciate changes in German strategic culture: change does not necessarily mean automatic convergence with the French vision. Add to this the two countries’ traditional mutual incomprehension of the functioning of each other’s political systems.

In order to relaunch the Europe of defense, then, both France and Germany will have to overcome numerous obstacles. To move forward with this, it is first of all crucial to open up a genuine strategic dialogue on the role and place of Europe in the world of tomorrow. Development projects and operational cooperation are no substitute for a common response to the fundamental questions that face not only Paris and Berlin, but the whole of the European Union.

Trump and Macron: The Wager of Entente

Laurence Nardon

After a bumpy start, relations between Donald Trump and Emmanuel Macron have improved. Can we count on this yielding beneficial results for France, even though the Franco-American relationship remains structurally asymmetrical?

Prospects for an *entente cordiale* between a populist, nationalist, and above all mercurial American president and a younger, intellectual, and rather liberal French president did not seem particularly auspicious. Their first meeting, in Brussels in May 2017, saw a robust handshake that many interpreted as the establishment of a tense relationship. However, the French presidency then invited Donald Trump to the Bastille Day ceremonies in Paris. The American president declared himself dazzled by the military parade in which American troops took part to commemorate the centenary of the American entry into World War I. The French president will play host to his American counterpart from April 23-25, 2018, the first state visit of the Trump era.

A European context favorable to a Franco-American rapprochement

Paris's relations with Washington benefit from a very particular European context: the US's two other major traditional European allies are in trouble. Angela Merkel's chancellery has been weakened by the legislative campaign, followed by an electoral result that left Germany without a government from September 2017 to March 2018. And Theresa May, especially, has not managed to install herself as a privileged interlocutor with Washington. This departure from the "special relationship" between the two countries is, all the more remarkable in that it takes place in the context of Brexit, which has seen Great Britain succumb, like the United States, to a wave of populism. As for the countries of central Europe, today ideologically close to Trump's America, they have welcomed the American president with enthusiasm. At a moment when Polish leaders are the object of sharp criticism within the

European Union (EU), Washington may seek to bolster Warsaw's strategic weight. But these countries are not traditionally first-tier allies of the United States.

Thus an opportunity has opened up for France to establish strong and unique relations with an American leader who is held in low esteem overseas. Extending this hand of friendship may lead to the possibility of more productive discussions with the American president. Points of agreement – on the strategy to be adopted in Syria and Iraq, on North Korea, or on support for the G5 Sahel – may be reinforced, all the more so given that military officials of the two countries are striving to collaborate as normal, including with Great Britain within the framework of the “P3”. This new Franco-American couple may also carry greater weight in the evolution of relations with Russia, in relation to Germany and Poland, and within NATO.

Persistent points of disagreement

Could this entente also contribute to the resolution of disagreements? As president Macron has said repeatedly, the French government hopes that the United States will go back on its decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. It also seeks the continued support of the United States for the deal on the Iranian nuclear program (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA). More recently, American plans for trade tariffs on steel and aluminum and the EU's response to them threaten to unleash a transatlantic trade war.

There is no denying that, so far, French protests have had no impact on the American president's stance. His controversial decisions have been adopted for reasons of domestic politics, so as to prove to his electorate the strength of his ideological convictions (anti-environmentalist, protectionist, anti-Iran, and pro-Israel). He is unlikely to change tack with the US mid-term elections coming up in November 2018.

We will therefore have to wait until the end of 2018 or early 2019 for any hope of a new inflection on the American side. Apart from President Trump's versatility, the possibility of such a development also depends upon the presence of more “reasonable” counselors in his entourage. His daughter Ivanka is sensitive to environmental concerns; general James Mattis (secretary of defense) is conscious of the risks connected to a withdrawal from the JCPOA. The Republican Party establishment is largely in support of free trade. However, the dismissal in March of State Secretary Rex Tillerson and National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster, and their replacement by Mike Pompeo and John Bolton, who are both considered as

hawkish or even interventionists, leaves very little hope for a rapprochement in the foreseeable future.

Even though it was the sensible thing to do at the time, the bet on friendship may not yield many results after all. The new tough foreign affairs team around President Trump may be in place for a long period of time. Given the weakness of the Democratic Party, the nonexistent opposition to Trump within the Republican Party, and the fact that, at this stage, impeachment remains a remote prospect, the 2020 reelection of the White House troublemaker remains an open possibility.

France and Russia: The Limits of Bilateral Cooperation

Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean

Clearly the Russian authorities did not bet on the right candidate in the French presidential elections of 2017, as was evident in their overt sympathy for the Republican candidate François Fillon and Vladimir Putin's warm welcome to the Front National leader Marine Le Pen a few weeks prior to the presidential elections. Emmanuel Macron was meanwhile the object of a campaign of defamation and denigration in the Russian media. And yet the Russian president was the first head of state welcomed by President Macron when he took office, received at Versailles at the end of May 2017.

Curiously, the welcome that Macron reserved for the Russian president gave satisfaction to both critics and admirers of Putin. The speech he gave in the Galerie des Batailles indicated Macron's firm intention to defend democratic values throughout the world (including minority rights, particularly those of homosexuals in Chechnya) and the rejection of interference (criticisms of the Russian media outlets RT and Sputnik). At the same time, overtures were made on the questions of Syria, Ukraine, and bilateral relations. Less than a year later, one of the initiatives announced at this meeting has come to fruition: the Trianon Dialogue seeks to strengthen exchanges between Russian and French civil societies via a digital platform which, in its first year, will focus on the theme of the "city of the future".

Economy first?

Given the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West (following the annexation of Crimea in 2014) and difficulties in coming to an agreement on strategic issues, economic relations have become the main pillar of bilateral relations, despite the existence of sanctions. After a decline of 35% between 2014 and 2015, Franco-Russian trade is now increasing again. Since 2015, France has been the foremost foreign investor in Russia (notwithstanding offshore tax havens) in terms of flow, and the second, after Germany, in terms of stock. Sanctions have obviously hindered some projects and made French banks very cautious for fear of American

reprisals; yet of the more than 1,000 French businesses operating in Russia, none has left the country.

Many strands of economic co-operation between France and Russia are of strategic importance, including aerospace, civil aviation, and energy. In December 2017, Vladimir Putin himself inaugurated the Yamal LNG project, 20% owned by Total along with the Russian company Novatek (50.1%), the Chinese CNPC (20%), and the Silk Road Fund (9.9%). The project was realized thanks to Chinese financing, but with a guarantee provided by France via Coface. Total is now negotiating LNG 2, while Engie is promoting the Nord Stream 2 project. The classic approach of the business world is to try and loosen the vice of the sanctions imposed by the authorities for strategic reasons. This is a tendency Vladimir Putin encourages, of course: in January 2018 at a meeting with French entrepreneurs in Moscow, he boasted of his economic partnership with France and declared that he expects to sign new contracts at the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg the end of May, where Emmanuel Macron is planning to attend.

A fine political line

Emmanuel Macron also fueled hopes for the improvement of political relations with Russia by publicly condemning the neo-conservatism often associated with the diplomacy of Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande and announcing a return to the “De Gaulle-Mitterrand tradition”. So it should come as no surprise that his former detractors in Russia now praise the qualities of this pragmatic man of state who, when it comes to developing relations between the European Union (EU) and Russia, has a greater margin of maneuver than Angela Merkel, weakened by the last elections at the Bundestag.

Russia’s hopes, however, may be disappointed. Positive developments in the economic and cultural domains have taken place against the background of a stalemate on the principal strategic issues, which extend well beyond the bilateral framework and touch upon what, for France, are key alliances: the EU, the French-German tandem, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and transatlantic relations. The declared objectives of the French president, as far as international politics is concerned, resemble those of Vladimir Putin in his third term: to bring his country into the center of the international diplomatic process. But their methods are different: for Russia, this is to be achieved via frontal opposition to the Western camp, or even its weakening, whereas on the contrary for Macron — elected on a European agenda — it is to be achieved via strengthening the West.

Bilateral relations between France and Russia will therefore advance in so far as they neither endanger these other alliances nor threaten to marginalize France within the West. There is still concern within the French administration on the use of the military, the Russian methods of “hybrid warfare”, and the change in Russia’s nuclear stance, as well as the blockages that it creates within the United Nations Security Council through repeated use of its power of veto. The conversion of bilateral economic and social progress into multilateral political and strategic progress is far from being automatic. This is all the more true in the current context of renewed tensions following the poisoning of the former Russian spy Serguei Skripal in London and the chemical attack in Douma, in eastern Ghouta, Syria, which killed 48 people, including children. Now, the challenge for the French president is precisely his ability to deliver positive results on the two issues most prominent in the media, Syria and Ukraine, and this within a multilateral framework along with his partners. Otherwise these issues will supply fuel to sovereigntist, Eurosceptic, and anti-American currents within French society that are calling for a “great shift” towards Russia. They will no doubt organize and make themselves heard in the next European elections.

The Middle East: All-Out Involvement

Dorothee Schmid

Much was expected of Emmanuel Macron on the Middle East, where the French presence is being undermined by an extremely conflictual and ever-changing situation. Every French president leaves his mark on this issue: after an offensive Nicolas Sarkozy, charged with neo-conservatism by his adversaries, François Hollande retreated, overwhelmed by the Syrian crisis which overshadowed the end of his term in office. France could hardly come to terms with the domestic, societal issues raised by the Arab springs of 2011, or adjust itself to the new power relationships within the region.

New energy, classic stance

The founder of *La République en marche* presented himself as a new man, determined to take on crucial responsibilities: an incarnation of generational change and pragmatism, capable of abrupt changes in tone — as symbolized especially by a heavily debated campaign statement on French colonization in Algeria (a “crime against humanity”). The intentions set out in his program reveal a rather classical stance, however: assessing the general instability and taking into account the possibility of new crises, France must “find its place once more” in the Middle East. The president has thrown himself into doing so for the past year, adapting the Macron style to some difficult terrains.

The “Jupiterian” president seemed rather at ease in all of this. The Middle East offers a kind of personality test for French politicians: here, diplomacy rests upon close relationships. Flexibility is necessary, but so are firmness and the ability for strategic projection, now that France has military commitments to operations whose outcome is uncertain (in Iraq and Syria). Macron has been hyperactive, rapidly moving from one issue to the next, seizing every opportunity to make himself useful — and to make sure everyone knows it. After the grand gesture of bringing together the Libyan competitors in July 2017 at La Celle-Saint-Cloud, the most photogenic operation was the rescue *in extremis* of Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri, who in November was extracted from Riyadh where he had undergone

an unwanted session of Saudi reeducation. The president involved himself personally in this crisis, and the dinner organized in the aftermath at the Élysée Palace, with the cameras looking on, illustrated his desire for exposure: media-friendly mediation in the spotlight.

Economic diplomacy in mind

Macron may be a reformist-modernist, but he must also be selective, if not in respect to the weighty legacy of “French Arab policy”, at least regarding the choices made by his predecessors. In the Gulf, after Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Macron’s France has chosen as champion the United Arab Emirates (UAE), described as “the epicenter of this world in which globalization is accelerating”. The completion of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project at the end of 2017 gives us a spectacular symbol of the surpassing of the old orientalist reflexes. A certain conspicuous ease with Egypt also confirms the overcoming of the post-Arab revolution debate: the new regime must be given a chance, as it promises to stand firm against Islamist terrorism. If critical voices see this as supporting reactionary forces, the real political test is taking place elsewhere: the idea of leaving the fate of French jihadists captured in Raqqa to the unrecognized authorities of Rojava has aroused controversy.

The president is also a capitalist realist, fond of economic diplomacy. Infrastructure, civil aviation, weapons: the whole range of French goods is presented wherever there is demand in the Middle East. After the GCC crisis of June 2016, Paris managed the tour de force of continuing to supply arms to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt on one hand, and Qatar on the other. Post-conflict situations are also seen as opportunities: at the conference on the reconstruction of Iraq in February 2018, Jean-Yves Le Drian expressed his absolute confidence in the potential of the market, however fragile it is at present.

Can we talk to everyone, and in the same way?

The qualities and the limits of the Macron Method are already becoming visible. The president advocates “talking to everyone”, but a diplomacy based on talking to them all “*at the same time*” (the president’s favorite expression) can prove rather fragile in situations of acute tension. The French position on Iran is uncomfortable, between the defense of the nuclear agreement and an obligatory discussion on the increasing military might of Tehran. On Syria many anticipated a rebalancing in favor of Assad, but Paris took a different tangent, reaffirming a red line on chemical

weapons that will be difficult to enforce, and clinging to a humanitarian discourse that is a mask for a lack of means and a certain political indecision. Macron has shown himself to be firmer with Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan than with Abdel Fattah Al-Sissi on the question of human rights; but the necessity of cooperation in Syria forced the Élysée Palace to adapt its comments on Turkey's military operation in Afrin. France thus seems trapped by the obligations of power in the Middle East while being less active on Maghreb — where the Tunisian state of emergency validates a solidarity approach that rings a little hollow at this stage.

Macron and Africa: A New Approach for a New Era

François Gaulme

The first months of Emmanuel Macron's five-year period in office have revealed two apparently contradictory but strategically complementary orientations in relation to Africa: the maintenance of the security-based approach of his predecessor in the Sahel, and the inauguration of a far-reaching reform of development aid.

There is no better illustration of the current tendency in French-African relations than the symbolic importance taken on by Ouagadougou, the modest capital of the small landlocked country Burkina Faso. This was the city chosen by the new president as the place where, on November 27, 2017, he would declare to an audience of students his break with the "African policy of France", and present new options inspired by a "Presidential Council for Africa" drawn from civil society, in particular the cultural and sporting domains. But on March 2, 2018, following the terrorist attack against the French Embassy and the national army headquarters in Burkina Faso's capital, Macron had to reaffirm his personal support for the military's *Opération Barkhane* launched by François Hollande and supported since 2014 by a new Sahel coalition of the "G5" countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad).

French-African relations focused on security

The confirmation that French-African relations would be dominated by security and the Sahel is a sign which emphasize a new era: Macron is the first French president who has had to decide, as soon as he enters office, whether or not to maintain an offensive ground deployment of more than 4,000 troops in an African theatre of operations. Thus the specific nature of the postcolonial relationship between France and its former African possessions, still characterized principally by direct military support and the monetary guarantee of the CFA franc, may have changed in its concrete expression, but its deeper nature remains the same.

The new president's apparently unhesitating acceptance of François Holland's military legacy no doubt bespeaks a kind of realism in regard to the current security situation in the South Sahara, now that the confrontation seems more uncertain. The reorganization of networks favors the ubiquity of the terrorist threat, which may strike at any point on a continent in rapid transformation, with explosive demographics, encouraging conflicts and migrations of all sorts across spaces which are difficult to control. Similarly, Macron has apparently adopted his predecessor's security-focused vision of migration issues.

Development aid reform

For all this, the new president of the republic has not limited himself to managing the security emergencies in West Africa where French influence remains the strongest. He has already taken the initiative to put a new vision of Franco-African relations into practice by way of a reform of development aid. The Ouagadougou speech, and then the decisions made in Paris in February 2008 in this domain, testify to an ambitious reformist agenda. For the first time since the beginning of the fifth Republic, the president has no minister responsible for development, with new directives instead transmitted directly from the Élysée Palace to the French Development Agency (Agence française de développement, AFD), a body that is technical rather than political. The new inflections are set as follows: a continental approach to Africa, with no separation between the sub-Saharan zone and Mediterranean Africa; sectorial priority given to "security" (in the broad sense in which development agencies speak of "human security"), justice, and education; and greater recourse to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for an implementation that is faster and closer to the populations. French aid is being normalized in relation to that of other donors: it will firstly target poor countries and "fragile states and societies" via a policy of donations, unlike in the past, when loans were the favored instrument. The complementarity of the "3 Ds" (diplomacy, defense, and development) will thus be reaffirmed more strongly, with development aid taking up the baton from military action in view of establishing lasting peace.

Although this is undeniably a new look at development, the diplomatic agenda on Franco-African relations remains among the most difficult to decipher. The heavy system of Franco-African summits seems obsolete and totally unsuited to this transition into a new era. But there is nothing yet to replace it, under the leadership of a president who seems to want to go beyond privileged relations with a ruling class as a guarantee of predominantly formal relations between states. Moreover, even if the term "economic diplomacy" is constantly spoken, it seems that the priorities are

not entirely the same as they were under François Hollande and Laurent Fabius. Macron's speeches now suggest that support for small and medium-sized enterprises is a priority.

Constancy and Diversification in France's Asia Policy

Alice Ekman, Françoise Nicolas, Céline Pajon and John Seaman

At the end of his first year in power President Macron's Asia policy has yet to be outlined with any precision, priority having been given to Europe, and to a lesser degree Africa. Certain presidential speeches did however suggest that the broad principles of Macron's foreign policies would also apply to Asia: a security that meshes with global stability; an independence that makes it necessary to rethink the terms of sovereignty, including European sovereignty; and an influence that goes hand-in-hand with defense and universal common goods.

France must therefore be present and must carry weight on the major regional issues. As a nuclear power and a member of the UN Security Council, France has taken a firm position on the North Korean question, calling for the denuclearization of the country and the strict application of international sanctions, and entreating its European partners to take additional measures to bring Pyongyang to the negotiating table — all while discouraging unilateral measures that may increase instability. The French appeal for increased multilateralism, the other great axis of Macron's foreign policies, also applies to the wider region, from North Korea to territorial disputes in the South China Sea — with France underlining the importance of respecting international treaties and of resolving crises together diplomatically. Paris has also emphasized the principle of the diplomatic resolution of crises when faced with the worsening situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar, calling for the United Nations to intervene to put an end to military operations, permit humanitarian access, and re-establish the rule of law.

Finally, France has appealed to the countries of the region to seek a multilateral resolution to fundamental issues that have repercussions beyond the region alone, such as the fight against climate change (with China, and also India, supporting the implementation of the Paris climate agreement) and Islamist terrorism (organization of a conference for mobilization against the financing of terrorism bringing together a number of Asian countries).

China, a key partner

President Macron opened the Asian chapter of his five-year term by traveling to China at the very beginning of the year for a three-day official visit. Making the most of the power vacuum in Germany, in Beijing he presented himself as the leader of a more ambitious Europe. This visit, like most of his other overseas visits during the course of the year, would be an opportunity for French diplomacy to reaffirm the foremost position of France, but also of Europe, on the international scene.

Referring to the Chinese “Belt and Road” project, the president made it explicitly known that he expected more reciprocity in the project’s development and, more generally, in access to the Chinese market, as well as respect for fair competition. The president’s firm tone and that of his ministers on economic issues heralded a realist, pragmatic defense of French interests over the coming years, with Macron saying that he expects to visit China “at least once a year”.

This more realist approach to China is increasingly emerging at the European level as well: alongside Germany and Italy, France has taken the initiative to promote a European mechanism for screening foreign (non-European) investments that could compromise national security and public order. Although China is not the only target of such measures, the fact that there is a greater convergence between Beijing’s industrial strategy and overseas Chinese investments — particularly in advanced technology and in some critical infrastructure in Europe — has begun to prompt questions and concerns in a growing number of member states. Even if divergences remain, positions in relation to Beijing in western European capitals have tended to converge in recent years, whether in relation to Chinese investment strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative, or the refusal to grant China “Market Economy Status”. China’s changing political context and its lack of respect for human rights is also a source of growing concern in Brussels and in many European capitals.

Diversification of partnerships

Although Beijing is an indispensable partner for Paris, the concern for a diversification of partnerships, instigated under the presidency of François Hollande, has been reaffirmed by Macron, notably in his speech for the lunar new year on February 16, 2018.

Firstly, France sees itself as a privileged partner of major countries such as India, Australia, and Japan, supporting collective security initiatives and sending its navy to participate in joint exercises with the aim of promoting

freedom of navigation in the region. Paris supports the “free and open” Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by Tokyo and backed by Washington, as well as the quadrilateral strategic dialogue relaunched in November 2017 by Tokyo, New Delhi, Washington, and Canberra, although France has not formally joined this group, conscious as it is of preserving its strategic independence. In fact, France today is one of the only European countries (along with the United Kingdom) that can claim to be a key security actor in Asia, given its capacity for military force projection in the region, and strategic partnerships and arms agreements with many countries in the region. If we are to believe the official declarations, French diplomacy also harbors the ambition to strengthen its relations with Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia in the coming years, but it is too early to know what form relations with these partners might take. President Macron’s visits to the region, particularly to India at the beginning of March, and those of his Asian counterparts to Paris (in particular Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae-In) should bring some clarification on France’s Asia policy.



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