

## **PRIORITY FRANCOUZSKÉHO PŘEDSEDNICTVÍ V OBLASTI BEZPEČNOSTNÍ POLITIKY EU\***

### **PRIORITIES OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY IN THE FIELD OF EU SECURITY POLICY**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured and glad to come to the University of Defence today. I would like to thank your rector, Brigadier General Urbán, for giving me the opportunity to present the priorities of the French EU presidency in the field of the European Security and Defence Policy.

First, I would like to remind you how much France wishes – since Nicolas Sarkozy's ascent to power – to build a much stronger political relationship with Central European countries and especially with the Czech Republic. In fact, our succeeding presidencies will give us an excellent opportunity to mutually strengthen our links in all fields and at all levels. This willingness to build a new and stronger relationship is illustrated by the *strategic partnership agreement* which was signed by our two countries in Prague last June. This agreement includes a defence and security aspect. As we will soon celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia, I would like also to remind you the role played by France in the creation of your State and in the creation of the Czechoslovak army after 1918. We still find this brotherhood of arms today in Afghanistan or in Kosovo. Our strong military bilateral cooperation was also illustrated last week by the training of Czech helicopter pilots to fly in mountain areas in order to be committed in Afghanistan.

#### **GENERAL APPROACH**

As you know, France has always supported the project of a strong European Defence. France believes in a Political Europe able to act alone – or complementarily to other organizations – for its own security and also able to contribute to peace in the world.

So during its presidency, *France would like to give a new impetus to the European Defence Policy*. What has been achieved during these last years in the area of the ESDP is already of great importance since the EU has conducted around fifteen civil and military operations in Europe, in Africa, in the Middle East and in Asia. *These operations show that there is no competition or rivalry between the EU and NATO but rather that they complement each other*. France considers that putting the European Union and NATO against each other has no sense at all. We need both of them. We also consider that if the European Union gathers its forces, increases its capacities and organizes its own defence, it will benefit to the United States.

France wishes that we go forward towards *the strengthening of the ESPD on one side and towards the renovation of NATO and its relationship with the EU on the other side*. Thanks to the support provided by the Czech Republic and Sweden and by all its European partners, France

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wants to give priority to concrete projects. We would like to progress with pragmatism, with ambition but without any ideological a priori, having as our major concern the security of the western world.

However today, *European assets are not able to cope with present and future crisis and threats.* In addition, these assets don't correspond to the economic and technological level of development of the European countries (see the difficulties we had to launch an operation in Chad).

*The main reason is well-known:* in Europe, Defence budgets are scattered and too low. This leads to a deficit in numerous military capabilities, like for instance the area of strategic and tactical transport.

*So our main goal during our presidency is to define a strategic vision which will allow to overcome these shortcomings. Our goal is also to reinforce the military and civil capabilities available in Europe for the ESDP and for NATO.*

The Irish "No" to the Lisbon Treaty doesn't challenge this aim. Technically, our proposals were essentially built on the existing treaties. Politically, it strengthens our determination *to make European Defence the example of a concrete Europe* which answers the needs of its citizens.

## **FOUR MAIN OBJECTIVES DURING OUR PRESIDENCY IN THE FIELD OF ESDP**

### **1. An updated security strategy for the next ten years**

In 2003, the Europeans adopted a "European Security Strategy". This document mentioned the main threats and proposed a general orientation for the European external action.

Now an updating of this document is absolutely necessary because since 2003:

- The EU has grown from 15 to 27 members. So we need a strategy which reflects a common vision;
- The tensions created within the EU by the Iraq crisis are outdated;
- Around fifteen civil and military operations have been carried out in the framework of the ESDP. We now have to draw their consequences;
- Finally, the threats have evolved: they concern new areas that affect our security (ecology, cyber criminality, ...).

So our goal is *to update the common political vision of the Europeans and to adapt it to some new vulnerabilities: energy security, fight against terrorism, non-proliferation, climate change consequences, maritime piracy...*

In this context, the new French "White Book" on Defence and National Security, published in June 2008 and the very recent Czech Military Strategy, unveiled in July, constitute major national contributions to the work underway. Indeed, these two documents respond to similar security concerns. They are based on the same reading of present and future threats, taking into account the development of conventional or nuclear ballistic threat.

Mr Solana has been tasked by the European Council to lead this work. Our objective is to pass a new document by the 27 members during the European Council of the next December.

### **2. To strengthen the European military capabilities**

*While in most regions of the world, military budgets are rising, Europe can not neglect any longer its own security.*

Its defence effort must correspond to its economic and technological potential.

But, we are far away from this objective. ESDP has acquired an operational credibility thanks to its success on the ground. Nevertheless, *the European Defence effort is still inadequate,*

*scattered and unbalanced from a country to another.* However the needs are growing and the financial constraint is increasing.

NATO is in the same situation. The capability constraints faced by the Europeans in ESDP operations are the same when they participate in operations with their American ally in the framework of NATO.

*So the lack of Europeans capabilities is also a crucial issue for the Alliance's credibility and the strength of the transatlantic partnership.* The Europeans can only be a real strategic partner of the Americans if they give themselves the means of their ambitions. This idea is widely approved. President Bush spoke about it in strong words at the last NATO Summit in Bucharest.

France and the Czech Republic have drawn their conclusions at national level, as it is testified by the publication of their very recent security documents. Now it is time to draw such conclusions all together at the European level.

How can we do that, since Defence budgets are constrained everywhere in Europe and since needs are growing? We propose some lines of action:

- To spend money in a better way, through the *pooling* of the assets by a group of States.
  - We would like the Europeans to agree on a series of *new structuring capacity projects*. The whole 27 Member-States would support the principle of these projects, even though they were initiated only by some countries. For example:
    - In the air and maritime fields:*
      - A common fleet of A400-M planes for strategic transport
      - A European carrier-based task force, set up around a British or a French aircraft carrier
    - In crisis management:*
      - A capability for evacuating European nationals in situations similar to the one we had in Lebanon in 2006
      - A demining capability
- To boost up the European Defence Agency.
  - EDA must boost research and armament programs and become a real driver for the European cooperation. It has to be entrusted with structuring European programs (helicopters, spatial observation, UAV, maritime demining).
- To create a real internal European Defence market:
  - We have to make an important effort in the field of Defence industry: we must facilitate exchange within the EU in order to reinforce the European Defence industrial and technological base. France already works with the main European armament producing countries to achieve this goal and to meet the requirements of armament producers.
  - We would like to achieve a political agreement on the “Defence package” proposed by the European Commission. Such agreement will *boost the European market by liberalizing Defence procurement* (adoption of the defence procurement directive) and make progress on *liberalizing the intra-Community circulation* (draft directive on intra-Community circulation).

### 3. To develop the instruments of the European Defence

- *To promote exchange in officer training* (military “ERASMUS”): in order to improve the European armed forces’ ability to work together, we propose to step up the exchange between Defence academies through an *academic curriculum network*.

This “military Erasmus-style programme” will allow future officers to achieve part of their education in foreign military academies and higher military schools. The credits got during their studies abroad would be included in their national curriculum.

I know that the Czech Ministry of Defence is interested in this program. It will be launched during the seminar organised in October in France by the military Schools of Saint-Cyr-Coëtquidan. At the end, this military joint training network would be set up under the aegis of the European Security and Defence College. I hope that the University of Defence of Brno and the Military Academy of Vyškov will take part in this initiative. That will contribute to “europeanization” of the training of officers by organizing exchanges.

- To ensure our security in a better way: for example, we would like to progress on *maritime surveillance* and on *coordinating nationals’ evacuation operations*.
- To reinforce the *European Union’s capability for planning and commanding operations*. Concerning crisis management, you know that there are several options:
  - for some crisis situations, only NATO intervenes (such as in Kosovo in 1999);
  - in other cases, Europe intervenes with the means provided by NATO on the basis of the “Berlin +” mechanism (such as in Bosnia);
  - but in others situations, Europe intervenes by itself with its own assets, like in Congo in 2006 and now in Chad.

You are certainly aware of this issue because the Czech Republic has sent two officers to the operational headquarters Mont-Valérien responsible for the operation in Chad. Furthermore, setting up the European battle group (BG 1500) during the second semester of 2009 could give the Czech Republic the opportunity to intervene in the African theatre.

But to lead a specific European operation, the so-called “framework nation” has certain limits, especially as far as the budget and the capabilities are concerned. So we need to move forward to provide the best for the success of our operations. *This is why the EU needs to have, in Brussels as well as on the ground, a consistent military command structure* able to ensure also a close civil-military cooperation.

You know that since January 2007 there has been an Operational Centre in Brussels. Its capacities are for now embryonic and non permanent. Judging by our experience of EU operations, such a centre is crucial to enable the European operations to become autonomous. Today, Member-States have to use existing multinational operational centres (such as Mont-Valérien for EUFOR Chad and Potsdam in 2006 for Congo). To reinforce the European military operational centre in Brussels is the interest of the 27 Member-States. This centre must become a credible planning, command and control option for EU. We do not want to duplicate or challenge SHAPE. But we want to give to the EU the potential it needs to prepare and lead an operation by itself without being obliged to ask the assets of NATO if NATO doesn’t want to get involved in the operation.

### 4. Partnerships to promote security

The EU is not working alone. We would like to strengthen the EU’s key partnerships:

- *EU-NATO* partnership: 21 members out of 27 are also members of *NATO*. Our efforts will concern the operational cooperation on the ground. I am thinking for instance about Kosovo or Afghanistan, where both organizations are engaged side by side.
- Partnerships with *non-NATO countries* (including *Russia*) which want to *contribute* to EU operations: Russia announced it would contribute in Chad, but at the same time, we know that the partnership NATO/Russia is now under high pressure because of the Georgian crisis.
- Partnership with the *African Union*: the aim is to help Africa to bear its responsibilities in crisis management.

Here are the guide-lines France wants to set up in the field of ESDP during its presidency of the European Union. France wishes to work in an effective way with all its partners in order to promote these different concrete projects.

It is, of course, a long term work which goes far beyond the limited framework of a single Presidency. This goal could only be achieved thanks to a considerable and common effort.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention.