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OF NEW
EUROPE

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY INVOLVEMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Global military engagement corresponds with pursuing objectives by deterring, countering, or combating threats. Through the use of the military at several levels, the French Republic forms its aspirations. First of all, it maintains independent troops in subordinate overseas departments and territories of foreign countries on the basis of bilateral agreements, as well as using military missions within the framework of international cooperation. Furthermore, it is a leading member of many alliances, playing a key role in particular in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which enables it to contribute not only to the national security strategy of the French Republic but also to influence the security status of other actors, significantly influencing the situation in the international environment.

The vision of a *Great France* is up-to-date, and the Republic's current foreign policy should be seen as a signal that its needs and goals are becoming increasingly ambitious. In addressing the subject of the international military engagement of the French Republic, it is fundamental to illustrate where and to what extent its military structures operate and what the actual aspirations in the global struggle for hegemony may be. Currently, there are nearly 20,000 troops under official activity and a continuously maintained military infrastructure in South America, Africa, Australia and Oceania, Europe, and the Middle East. Moreover, the navy is regularly engaged in the course of naval missions or exercises in the Indo-Pacific region. Not only in territorial approach but also in terms of technological development and weapons, France owns all the tools to have a significant impact on global security and to create a geopolitical environment that will be conducive to the achievement of its objectives.

The French Republic is one of the world's great powers, repeatedly cooperating – and at the same time competing – with the United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China. French international engagement, whether of a political or military nature, is regularly used by Paris to remind of its constant presence among the most influential powers. This manifests through the strengthening of the international potential in a process described as *l'art de la diplomatie*, where anyone can become a partner as long as such cooperation serves France's current or prospective interests. Conducting a multi-vector foreign policy does not negate maintaining good relations and profiting from simultaneous contacts

with the U.S. and Russia in the areas of France's interests, as it tries to have a real influence on, the currently taking place, the economic, political or military changes ¹. With many contemporary interdependencies that often force the undertaking of cooperation with particular countries in order to achieve one's own benefits, France demonstrates that it is possible to pursue interests in every corner of the world, by turning the vector towards the key partners and investments of that particular moment.

The issue of French influence in the regions of former colonies very often determines the analysis of historical events and then leads to accountability for conflicts, mistakes and dominance. It is true that the actions in Africa and Asia, which made significant territorial expansion possible, repeatedly bore the hallmarks of war crimes. However, by judging the international situation on the basis of military-political actions, all global colonization led to fighting and unlawful takeover of assets from the succumbing subjects. Thus, one should have assessed the independent and influential states of both former and current times with reference to the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, or Ukraine, among others. Despite the lessons learned from the historical struggles for independence of many states in Africa, South America, and Asia, contemporary conflicts once again bring to mind colonial struggles for territory and influence. Moreover, there are currently dozens of states and international organizations involved in foreign military operations that are unable to stop the collapse of governments and the suffering of populations, even though they operate under international law which is designed to protect individual lives. Accordingly, the issue of the historical visions and forms of France's colonial policy implementation is not an element of consideration in this report, but it constitutes a starting point for further analysis. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind the areas in which the Republic has dominated in the past, as this is the starting point for the use of contemporary military forces abroad, which are one of the greatest assets in capacity building on a global scale.

The modern-day war against terrorism is one of the key reasons for the international activity of France, which is the most frequently attacked state of the European Union by terrorists in the 21st century. Therefore, actions aimed at combating terrorist threats are carried out simultaneously in all regions of presence, which allows identifying potential dangers and

¹ S. Pezard, M. Shurkin, D. Ochmanek, *A Strong Ally Stretched Thin. An Overview of France's Defense Capabilities from a Burdensharing Perspective*, RAND Corporation 2021.

their rapid neutralization. Nowadays, the country responds to terrorism of both domestic and international character, which requires the involvement of practically all entities in analyzing and responding to threats, as well as in organizing and reorganizing the system of combating them. This process not only involves entities strictly focused on fighting against terrorism, but also the entire state apparatus, which includes in its competences, among others, elements dealing with issues of migration, economy, deradicalization, resocialization, culture, and religion. The multidimensional nature of the terrorism phenomenon and the persistent threat to France lead to the expansion of military capabilities (defensive and offensive) beyond the country's borders.

It is worth keeping in mind that there are many more aspects and reasons that make the French military maintain increased activity. France has to operate in several directions at the same time, and in addition to terrorism more and more challenges are emerging, not only in the field of security, but also in the field of diplomacy and economy. Therefore, the French Republic pursues a twin-tracked policy in its foreign military missions. Firstly, it pursues interests by maintaining influence in its strategic regions; moreover, it seeks opportunities to intensify its presence, such as participating in exercises in the Indo-Pacific. Secondly, it oversees and invests in operations carried out so far, which require constant management and review of emerging opportunities and challenges. In this regard, the French Republic takes upon itself the responsibility for both its own security and that of other territories in which it is present. In this view, it is an asset that allows it to verify threats before they reach the state, but at the same time it necessitates perpetual control and immediate response.

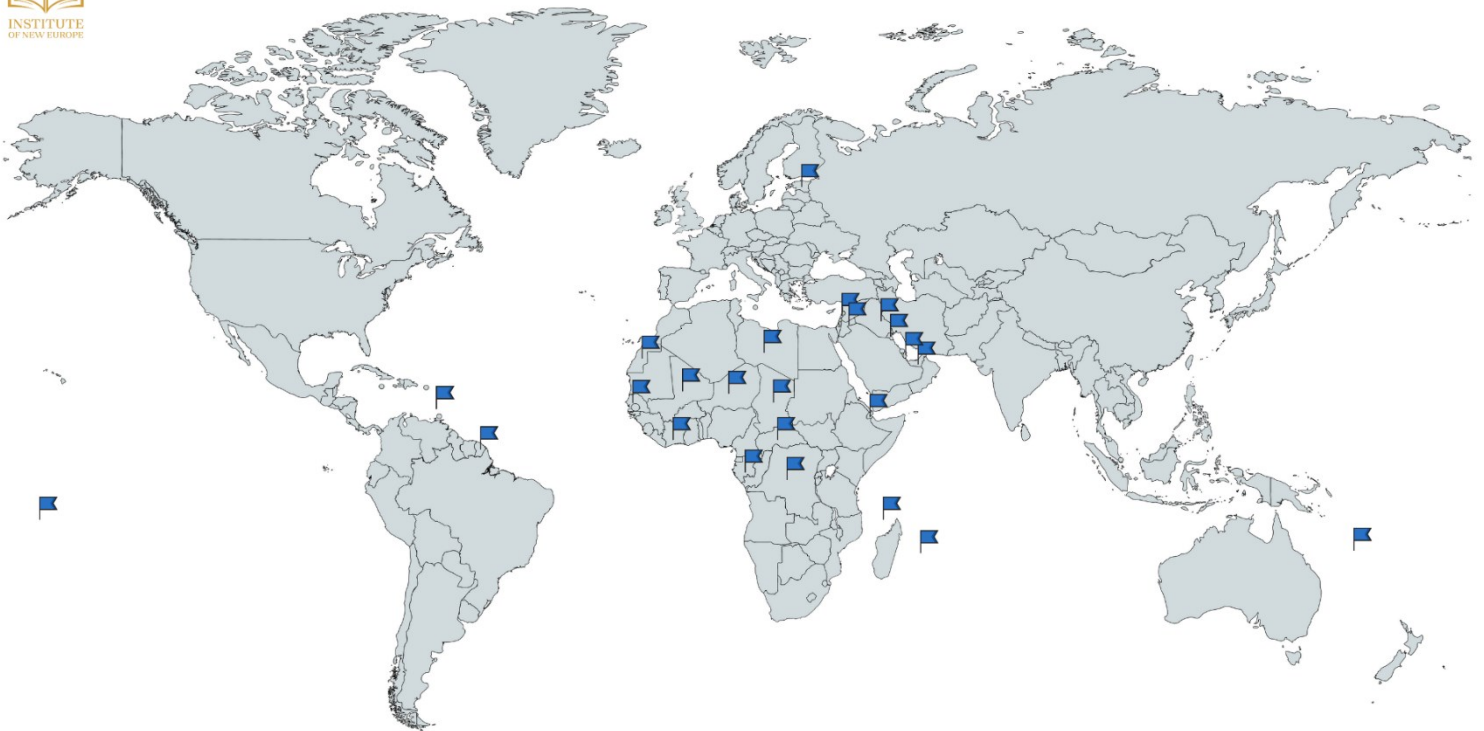
This report aims to identify the contemporary military activity of the French Republic outside its borders, which is a strategic element for strengthening its position on the international arena. The community of scholars and experts, not only in Poland but also abroad, should pay special attention to France's capabilities in military and political matters, as it is one of the main actors in the global game of influence. Very often, the French Republic is not placed equally alongside the United States, China, and Russia, and from the European perspective - especially in the context of the EU and NATO - it should be perceived as one of the countries that has the potential to compete and pursue an independent foreign policy, and, as a consequence, to become the fourth power in the world. Moreover, a detailed analysis of France's international military engagement has not previously been the subject of studies neither in Polish nor English language. Although the matter of French foreign policy has been

portrayed in numerous studies (in both of the aforementioned languages), to this day there has been no study on how precisely missions are conducted. In view of the above, it is necessary to reconsider the issue of France's military presence outside its borders, pointing to contemporary goals, challenges and threats for the French Republic, which, in the authors' opinion, are of fundamental importance for international security.

A number of strategic documents made available by the French Ministry of the Armed Forces (fr. *Ministère des Armées*) were analyzed in the course of this study, although some data differed depending on the language version (French and English) and the publication date of the studies.



Foreign and overseas military bases of the French Republic



CHARACTERISTICS OF TROOPS OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC PARTICIPATING IN MISSIONS OVERSEAS

Troops of the French Republic carrying out missions abroad have different characteristics depending on the type of tasks and the environment in which they operate. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish the Pre-positioned Forces of the French Republic (fr. *les forces prépositionnées*, Pre-positioned forces), consisting of sovereignty forces (fr. *les forces de souveraineté*), permanently based in the French dependent territories; and the armed forces – presence forces (fr. *les forces de présences*), operating in selected countries under bilateral agreements. Pre-positioned Forces of the French Republic report to the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. In accordance with the guidelines of the White Paper on Defence and National Security (fr. *le Livre Blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité Nationale*) and the Strategic Review of Defence and National Security (fr. *la revue stratégique de défense et de sécurité nationale*) the military performs strategic functions, i.e. deterrence, prevention, protection, intervention, acquisition of knowledge and forecasting. The sovereignty forces are stationed in overseas departments and communities belonging to France and are focused on sovereignty issues. Due to possessed overseas departments, France has earned the title of second maritime power in the world². The armed forces operate in Africa and the Middle East, aiming at maintaining regional stability. Currently, these forces consist of approximately 11,000 troops³.

The task of the Pre-positioned Forces of the French Republic is to supervise the designated Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP), to defend the territory and interests of France and Europe, to respond to military threats, to prevent and manage any crisis and to ensure regional security cooperation. They were deployed in areas considered strategic for France. Each unit is on constant alert for independent operations not only in its areas of responsibility, but also beyond them. In addition, the area of operations of

²Le Monde, *La France deuxième empire maritime mondiale*, https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/08/11/la-france-deuxieme-empire-maritime-mondial_5498495_3210.html, accessed: 17.03.2021.

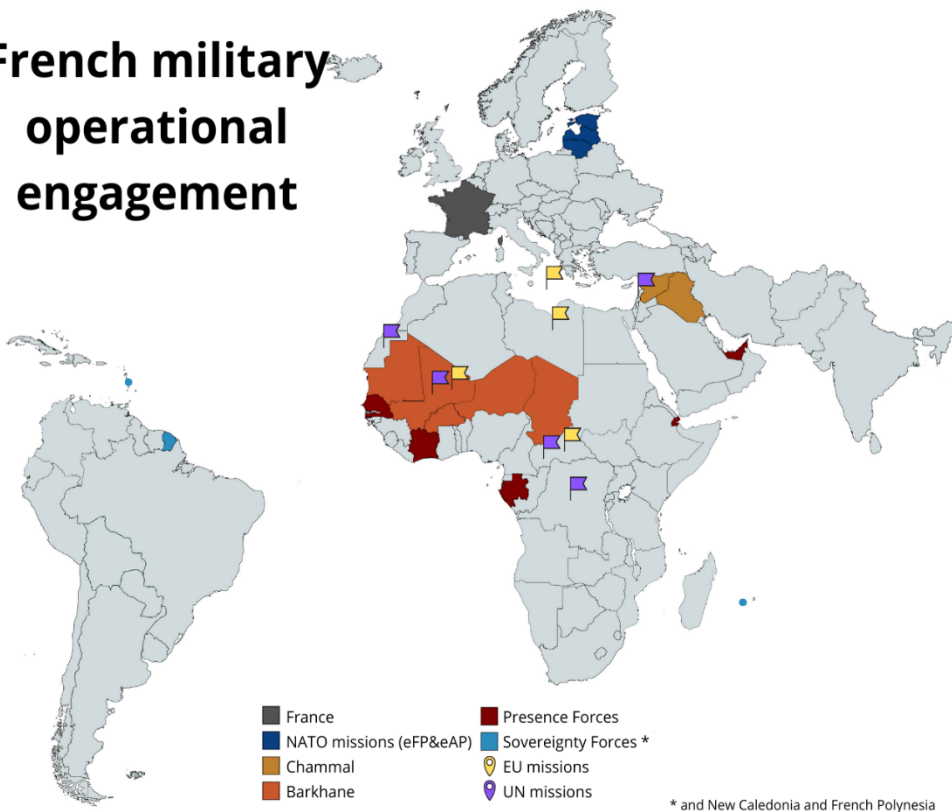
³ Ministère des Armées, *Les forces françaises prépositionnées*, <https://www.defence.gouv.fr/content/download/466302/7428994/DOSSIER%20-%20Forces%20pr%C3%A9positionn%C3%A9es.pdf>, accessed: 08.06.21.

the presence forces is organized around specific "theaters" of war or operations (fr. *théâtre*) - the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, which makes it possible to narrow the field of operations and focus on security and defence issues of the selected territory.

In addition to the above, the French Republic also participates in overseas operations (fr. *les opérations extérieures*, OPEX), United Nations missions (fr. *Organisation des Nations unies*, ONU), European Union missions (fr. *Union européenne*, UE), NATO missions (fr. *Organisation du traité de l'Atlantique nord*, OTAN), maritime missions (fr. *les mission maritimes*) and uses its military capabilities for deterrence (fr. *la dissuasion*).

The Military Programming Law (fr. *Loi de programmation militaire*⁴) for 2019-2025, which was published in 2018 and provides guidelines for the equipment and budget of the armed forces, underlines the need to have significant troops overseas in order to maintain the security of the French Republic and its territories in view of emerging challenges and threats of an international character.

French military operational engagement



The number of French forces	
France	13 000
NATO missions (eFP&eAP)	400
Chammal	600
Barkhane	5 100
Presence Forces	3 750
Sovereignty Forces	7 150
EU missions	150
UN missions	740
total 30 890	

⁴ LOI n° 2018-607 du 13 juillet 2018 relative à la programmation militaire pour les années 2019 à 2025 et portant diverses dispositions intéressant la défense, NOR : ARMX1800503L, JORF n°0161 du 14 juillet 2018.

Foreign military missions of the French Republic

ACTIVITIES	MISSION	NUMBER OF FRENCH SOLDIERS
sovereignty forces	Armed Forces in the Antilles (fr. <i>les Forces armées aux Antilles, FAA</i>)	1000
sovereignty forces	Armed Forces in French Guiana (fr. <i>les Forces armées en Guyane, FAG</i>)	2100
sovereignty forces	Armed Forces in New Caledonia (fr. <i>les Forces armées en Nouvelle-Calédonie, FANC</i>)	1450
sovereignty forces	Armed Forces in French Polynesia (fr. <i>les Forces armées en Polynésie française, FAPF</i>)	900
sovereignty forces	Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone (fr. <i>les forces armées dans la zone sud de l'Océan Indien, FAZSOI</i>)	1700
armed forces	French Forces stationed in Djibouti (fr. <i>les Forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti, FFDj</i>)	1450
armed forces	Military units in Gabon (fr. <i>les Éléments français au Gabon, EFG</i>)	350
armed forces	Military units in Senegal (fr. <i>les Éléments français au Sénégal, EFS</i>)	350
armed forces	French Forces in Côte d'Ivoire (fr. <i>les Forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire, FFCI</i>)	950
armed forces	Forces Stationed in the United Arab Emirates (fr. <i>les Forces françaises aux Emirats Arabes Unis, FFEAU</i>)	650

NATO	NATO Enhanced Forward Presence, eFP	Total involvement of French soldiers in NATO missions – 400
	Enhanced Air Policing (eAP)	
Anti-terrorism mission in the Middle East	Chammal	600
UN	<i>United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)</i>	Total involvement of French soldiers in UN missions – 740
	Daman (cooperation with UNIFIL)	
	Peacekeeping operations in Mali, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Sahara	
European Union	EU Liaison and Planning Cell (EULCP)	Total involvement of French soldiers in EU missions – 150
	EUTM Mali	
	EU advisory mission the Central African Republic EUAM RCA	
	Naval Force Operation “IRINI”	
	Atalanta	
	Althea	
Training mission	JEANNE D’ARC 2021	800
Maritime mission	CLEMENCEAU 21	1200
Maritime mission	CORYMBE	250
Anti-terrorist mission in Sahel	Barkhane	5100

ANTILLES

The Antilles is an archipelago located in the Caribbean region that ranges from the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico to the coast of Venezuela. The islands, occupying an area of approx. 221,000 km² are divided into 13 countries and 9 dependent territories. They are geographically seen as a sub-region of North America.

Currently, the armed forces of the United States, the Netherlands, Great Britain and France are stationed in the Antilles. Troops of all the above-mentioned countries are located in their dependent territories. Since 1946, there are two overseas departments in the region that belong to France, namely Guadeloupe and Martinique, as well as two overseas communities, Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Martin. The history of the relation between France and the Antilles dates back to the first half of the 17th century, i.e. the period of colonial expansion by European countries, and it is strongly related to activities aimed at weakening the position of Spain, combating piracy, and ensuring the trade freedom for France⁵.

Armed Forces in the Antilles

(fr. *les Forces armées aux Antilles*)

The Armed Forces in the Antilles (fr. *les Forces armées aux Antilles*, FAA) belong to the sovereignty forces of the Territory and at the same time form a defence zone for the French Antilles. The FAA commander (fr. *le commandant supérieur des forces armées aux Antilles*, COMSUP FAA) and the Defence Base commander (fr. *le commandant de la base de défense*, COMBdD) report to the Chief of the General Staff of the French Army⁶. The FAA consists of three units:

- **33rd Marine Infantry Regiment** (fr. *le 33e régiment d'infanterie de marine*) based in Fort Desaix in Martinique. It consists of a command and logistics company, two combat

⁵ *Quand et comment les Antilles deviennent-elles françaises?*, Futura Sciences, <https://www.futura-sciences.com/sciences/questions-reponses/epoque-moderne-antilles-deviennent-elles-francaises-9525/>, accessed: 08.03.2021.

⁶ *Le contre-amiral Jean Hausermann devient le chef de l'Armée aux Antilles Françaises*, <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/martinique/contre-amiral-jean-hausermann-devient-chef-armee-aux-antilles-francaises-745565.html>, accessed: 09.03.2021.

companies, a reserve company and a maritime training center (fr. *le Centre Nautique d'Entrainement en Fôret*, CNEF) in Martinique⁷. The regiment also has a reserve company based in Guadeloupe⁸.

- **The Naval Base** located at Fort Saint Louis (fr. *la base navale implantée dans le Fort Saint Louis*) in Martinique. Two light frigates “Germinal” and “Ventôse” are stationed there alongside the coastal tugboat “Maïto”⁹.

These ships are mainly used in case of natural disasters¹⁰. FAA is also equipped with two patrol ships: “La combatant” and “Villette”. The latter is stationed in Guadeloupe and belongs to the Marine Gendarmerie. Moreover, the navy also has a support ship destined for overseas missions (fr. *le bâtiment de soutien et d'assistance outre-mer*, BSAOM)¹¹.

- **The Air Force Base** - the National Air Pole (fr. *le pôle aéronautique étatique*, PAE) is located at the Aimé Césaire airport in Lamentin¹². PAE consists of the French aviation units of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, whereas the Ministry of Economy and Finance along with the Ministry of the Internal Affairs provide logistical support for planning and delivering aid from France or French Guiana by airways¹³. It focuses on rescue operations and also supports the fight against drugs or arms trafficking. The air force is equipped with two helicopters: “Panther” and “Alouette”¹⁴.

The Desaix and Saint Louis forts were built between the 17th and 18th centuries, i.e. during the colonial period. They were established to enable an immediate reaction in case of

⁷ Ministère des Armées, *Les forces armées aux Antilles*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/forces-armees-aux-antilles/dossier-de-referenc / les-forces-armees-aux-antilles>, accessed: 08.06.2021.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ *Un nouveau navire renforce les capacités d'action des forces armées aux Antilles*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/actu-marine/un-nouveau-navire-renforce-les-capacites-d- action-des-forces-armees-aux-antilles>, accessed: 09.03.2021.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ *Les forces armées aux Antilles*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/antilles/dossier/les-forces-armees-aux-antilles>, accessed: 03.09.2021.

¹² FAA , *Les Services de l'État en Martinique*, <https://www.martinique.gouv.fr/Services-de-l-Etat/Defense-et-anciens-combattants/FAA/FAA>, accessed: 09.03.2021.

¹³ *Les forces armées aux Antilles*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/forces-armees-aux-antilles/dossier-de-referenc/les -forces-armees-aux-antilles>, accessed: 27.04.2021.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

an attack by enemy troops or local pirates. Thanks to these units, the French government managed to keep the islands in possession for many years. Contrary to the above-mentioned forts, the Antilles Defence Base was created in January 2011 as an entity supporting operational units in organizational matters.

Currently, 1,000 soldiers are part of the Armed Forces in the Antilles¹⁵. The established tasks of the FAA among others, include, regional security cooperation, defence of the territory, protection of the interests of France and its citizens, maritime surveillance and the fight against drug and arms trafficking. In a crisis situation they are also responsible for leading rescue operations, including humanitarian aid or assistance in case of natural disasters. When necessary, troops in the Antilles are able to lead, support or participate in the deployments of French special forces. Furthermore, the Armed Forces in the Antilles, together with the Armed Forces in French Guiana, create a joint air-maritime system in the Gulf of Mexico and an Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP).

In 2020, the Armed Forces in the Antilles cooperated with 14 countries, organizing nine regional conferences and participating twice in military exercises with the United States¹⁶. The FAA has been used many times for rescue and support operations. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, which killed around 300,000 people¹⁷, the forces launched *Operation Séisme Haïti 2010*, that aimed at helping the affected population. Its priority constituted medical care, assistance in the search for missing persons, repatriation of French citizens, and the preparation of humanitarian aid. As a result of the actions, there were 800 people in urgent need of medical care transported to mainland France and 1,700 French citizens were repatriated¹⁸. Moreover, the navy enabled transporting nearly 60 vehicles, food, etc. to answer to the needs of the Red Cross. FAA soldiers also helped rebuild damaged buildings¹⁹. Since March 2021, the Armed Forces in the Antilles have been making efforts to combat COVID-19,

¹⁵ Ministère des Armées, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/dispositif-operationnel-francais-deploie-a-travers-le-monde, accessed: 27.04.2021.

¹⁶ Assemblée Nationale, op. cit.

¹⁷ *2010 Haiti earthquake*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake>, accessed: 03.10.2021.

¹⁸ *Opération Séisme Haïti 2010 - rétrospective*, [defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/operation-seisme-haiti-2010-retrospective](https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/operation-seisme-haiti-2010-retrospective), accessed: 10.03.2021.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

and the FAA's tasks include, among others, transporting needed products to islands, transporting patients between hospitals and delivering food²⁰.

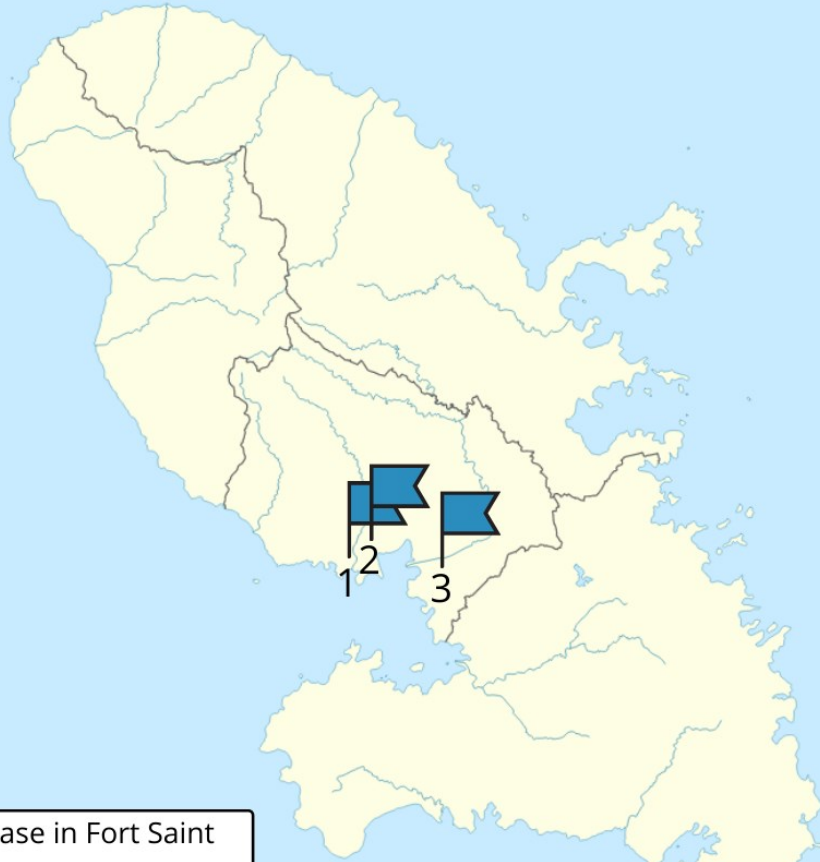
Conclusions and recommendations

The Caribbean region remains a space for competition between superpowers, and one of the challenges is the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC), which aims to deepen relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries. The activities of the PRC focus on investments, granting loans and establishing partnership and trade agreements with the region, thus increasing its political and economic role, as well as the dependence of these countries and territories on each other. Thus, the PRC's efforts create a threat to the interests of France which, in this situation, should not only develop its diplomatic engagement in the region, but also focus on strengthening bilateral partnerships aimed at the regional integration of several countries under French sovereignty. The French budget does not allow for such large investments that the PRC makes, therefore the French government should focus especially on issues that have a direct impact on the quality of life of the inhabitants, such as climate protection, biodiversity loss and rising sea levels. In addition, the FAA, through cooperation with neighbouring countries, can counteract threats such as drug trafficking, illegal fishing or uncontrolled migration.

The Armed Forces in the Antilles react primarily in the event of natural disasters, and thus do not perform the tasks assigned to the military missions of the French Republic, which have a much wider scope. Rather, this is due to the characteristics of the region where natural disasters are the main threats instead of military challenges, such as drugs or arms trafficking. There are also no permanent anti-terrorist or special operations. Following the above, the French administration should reflect on the future of the FAA. Activities limited to logistical support, medical assistance or the supply of food, which may be carried out by forces from the Metropolitan France or neighbouring countries, do not justify maintaining a constant, costly military mission. Instead, emergency aid should be considered, which would be humanitarian, and not military, as it is now. Therefore, in the future, completely different components of the French army would be delegated to the Antilles.

²⁰ *Déclaration de Mme Florence Parly, ministre des armées, sur l'armée aux Antilles, à la Martinique le 10 décembre 2020*, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/277755-florence-parly-11122020-antilles>, accessed: 10.03.2021.

Antilles



- 1 - Naval Base in Fort Saint Louis
- 2 - 33rd Marine Infantry Regiment
- 3 - Air Force Base at Aimé Césaire Airport



FRENCH GUIANA



French Guiana is an overseas department of the French Republic, located on the Atlantic Ocean in the northeastern part of South America. In the second half of the 15th century, the first Spanish expeditions appeared on its territory, and between the 16th and 17th centuries, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and France successively colonized this area.

In the 19th century, a penal colony was established in the department. At the same time, there were numerous conflicts with neighbouring countries. As a result, French troops have been constantly stationed in French Guiana since the 19th century.

In 2010, this overseas department held a referendum in which almost 70%²¹ voters were against greater autonomy from France. This state of affairs may have been a result of concerns that a change in the department's status that would lead to less financial support from Paris.

Armed Forces in French Guiana

(fr. *les Forces Armées en Guyane*)

The Armed Forces in French Guiana (fr. *les Forces Armées en Guyane*, FAG) are part of the sovereignty forces and ensure the integrity of the French overseas department. The commander of the Armed Forces in French Guiana (fr. *le commandement des forces armées en Guyane*, COMSUP FAG) is the local representative of the Chief of the General Staff and exercises authority over the FAG. COMSUP FAG is also the commander of the defence base (fr. *le*

²¹ France 24, <https://www.france24.com/en/20100111-french-guiana-martinique-vote-against-more-autonomy>, accessed: 06.05.2021.

commandant de la base de Défense, COM BdD) and exercises authority over all formations, institutions and civilian employees of the FAG.

The Armed Forces in French Guiana includes the total of 2,100 soldiers and 200 civilian employees²². FAG consists of three types of troops - land, sea and air. Belonging to them are:

- **9th Marine Infantry Regiment** (fr. *le 9^e régiment d'infanterie de marine*), with its headquarters in the cities of Saint-Jean and Maripasoula. The Marine Corps conducts short and long-term missions. The branches also cooperate with the administration of local authorities in the fight against illegal gold mining.

- **3rd Foreign Infantry Regiment** (fr. *le 3^e régiment étranger d'infanterie*) located in Saint-Georges and Camopi. The regiment manages the Training Center in the Equatorial Forest (fr. *le Center d'entraînement en forêt équatoriale*, CEFE), established in September 1987. The task of the facility is, among others, preparing soldiers to conduct missions in the environment of tropical forests, training units to carry out border controls and search for illegal gold mining camps. CEFE also conducts training for French and foreign units, in particular from the countries of the region.

- **The naval base** (fr. *la base navale de Dégrad des Cannes*) is located in Dégrad des Cannes, the main port of French Guiana. The base is equipped with two patrol boats, two coastal patrol boats of the Marine Police and a boat to fight illicit fishing²³.

- **The Air Force base** (fr. *la base aérienne « Capitaine François Massé »*) is located at Cayenne-Rochambeau airport. It is equipped with three CASA CN-235 transport planes, five "Aérospatiale SA 330 Puma" maneuvering helicopters and four "Airbus Helicopters AS550 Fennec"²⁴. The base also includes a military command center at the Guiana Space Center in Kourou and the Mont Venus radar.

Since the year 2011, joint control over the permanent FAG's Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP) is being exercised together with the Armed Forces in the Antilles (fr. *les forces armées aux Antilles*, FAA). However, this is not limited only to the

²² *Les Forces Armées en Guyane*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/fre/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/guyane/dossier/les-forces-armees-en-guyane>, accessed: 05.01.2021.

²³ *Les Forces Armées en Guyane*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/forces-armees-en-guyane/dossier-de-reference/les-forces-armees-en-guyane>, accessed: 01.05.2021.

²⁴ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/forces-armees-en-guyane/dossier-de-reference/les-forces-armees-en-guyane>, accessed: 08.05.2021.

land, sea and air borders of French Guiana and the Antilles, but also includes the countries of the Caribbean Arc and the Amazon basin²⁵.

The activities of the FAG are aimed at supporting the interests and missions conducted by France, ensuring territorial integrity, maintaining security in the Caribbean region and protecting the Guiana Space Center. The activities of the FAG and the FAA cooperating with them focus mainly on combating illegal fishing and gold mining, as well as the plunder of marine resources. If required, the Armed Forces in French Guiana may conduct independent operations, support or participate in international exercises and disaster relief operations.

Currently, the most important FAG operations in French Guiana are: Harpie, Titan, and Polpeche. The first one started in February 2008. It is led by the Armed Forces in French Guiana with the support of the Maritime Gendarmerie and constitutes a continuation of the Anaconda operation carried out between 2002 and 2008. The task of the military services is to eliminate illegal gold mining sites by destroying the equipment needed for these activities. From October 2017, the scope of activities was expanded to include the judicial, economic and diplomatic aspects, not limited to the military activities of the FAG, but also involving the national police, customs and justice in the operations²⁶. The annual cost of the operation is € 55 million²⁷.

The purpose of Operation Titan is to protect the Guyanese Space Center. Although it has been ongoing since 1979, only in 2008 the operation was given the current title. The Center and its surroundings, i.e. an area of approx. 700 km², are subject to constant field, air and sea observation, in which approx. 50 soldiers of the 3rd Foreign Infantry Regiment take part. The FAG uses two military radars to constantly monitor air traffic over the facility. The soldiers responsible for the protection of the Space Center are prepared to intercept, neutralize and, in exceptional cases, eliminate intruders. Responsibility for fighting drones has been delegated to the Maritime Gendarmerie. The annual cost of the operation Titan is approximately € 37 million²⁸.

²⁵ *Les forces français prépositionnées*, Ministère des Armées, dossier de presse - Forces prépositionnées_v2-actualisé_validé final, accessed: 05.05.2021.

²⁶ *Les forces armées en Guyane: souveraineté et protection des ressources naturelles*, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r20-295/r20-295-syn.pdf>, accessed: 15.03.2021.

²⁷ Sénat, *Sur la mission de la commission effectuée en Guyane en décembre*, <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r20-295/r20-2951.html>, accessed: 10.06.2021.

²⁸ Ibidem.

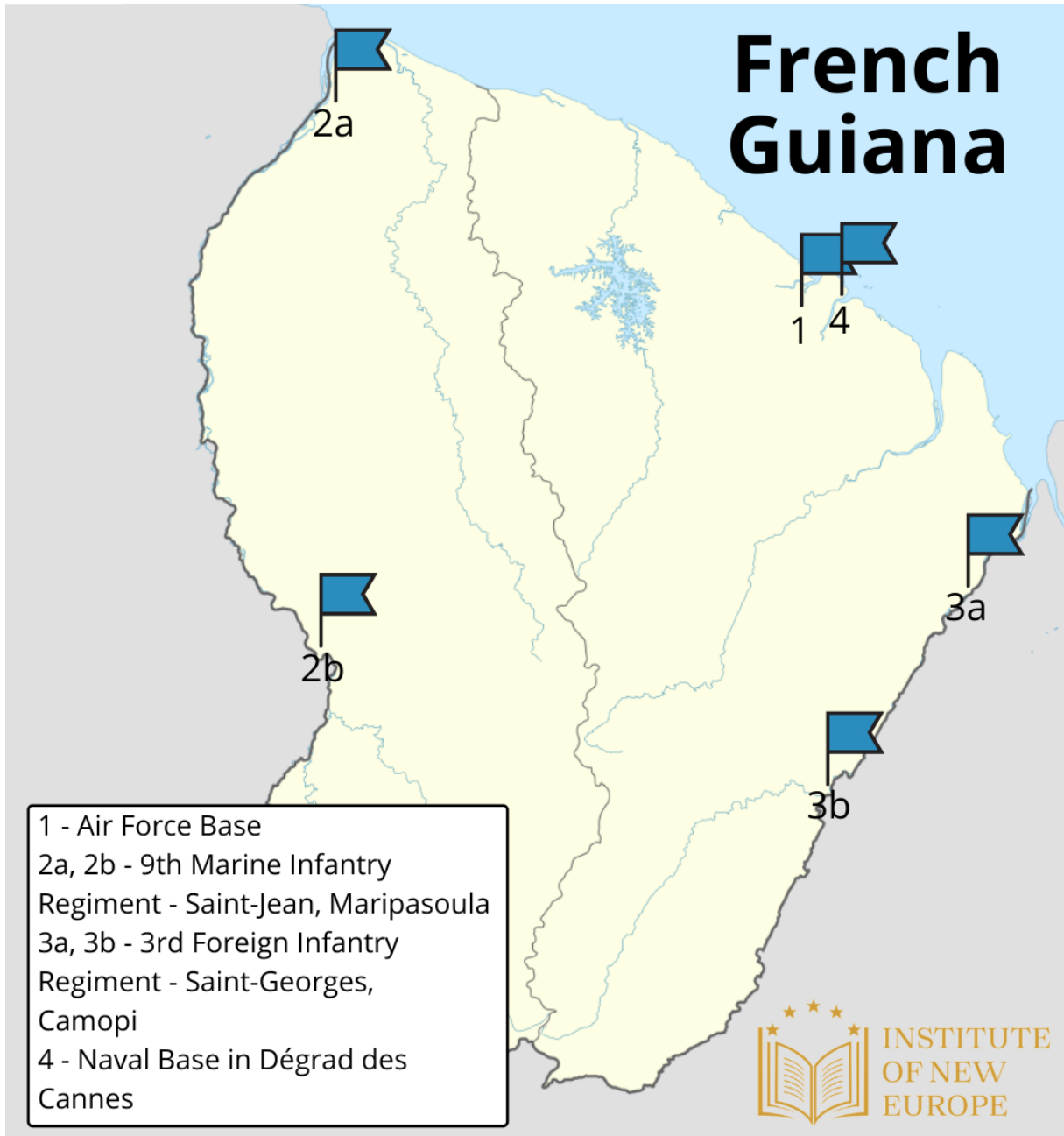
Operation Polpeche focuses on the observation of fishing activities, the detention of suspect fishing vessels and the questioning of crews, the verification of logbooks and fishing gear, and the detention of vessels and their equipment when necessary.

Conclusions and recommendations

Maintaining the FAG mission is of great importance to the interests of France and the European Union, in particular in the field of space activities. Until now, thanks to the constant presence of troops and involvement in local community issues, France has played a major political and military role in the Caribbean region. The activities of the French Armed Forces which focused on the fight against illegal drug and human trafficking made the European power an important and stable partner. However, the importance of France's role began to gradually decline as a result of the increased involvement of the PRC in the Caribbean region. Neighbouring Surinam cooperates with China in the framework of the One Belt One Road initiative. This cooperation covers areas such as energy, infrastructure, technology, agriculture and health care.

Organized drug trafficking networks, illegal gold mining, uncontrolled migration and illegal fishing pose another threat to the French mission. Criminal organizations are financed through such activities, leading to bigger crime in the overseas department.

As a military power, France should promote cooperation in the field of defence and response to natural threats in the region by establishing a common risk management system. France's activities should not be limited only on the issues of its own military operations, but should also focus on the political and economic support of French Guiana and neighboring countries. The proposed actions could reduce the growing importance of the PRC in the region, thus eliminating some of the threats to the interests of France, and moreover, strengthening its position in the north-eastern part of South America.



NEW CALEDONIA



New Caledonia is a French overseas territory made up of a group of islands located in the Coral Sea and the southern Pacific Ocean. Since 1840, the islands were a point of interest for France, which conducted religious missions in the region in order to spread Christianity in the occupied territories.

Under the agreement with Numea of 1998, New Caledonia has the status of an overseas community and partial autonomy in the fields of, among others, the state civil service, national defence, currency, the State Treasury, immigration control as well as higher education and research²⁹. In the 2018 and 2020, New Caledonia held referenda regarding the independence of the territory from France, in which more than half of the voters voted against independence from France (56.67%³⁰ and 53.26%³¹ respectively). In February 2021, for the first time since the

²⁹ Vie-publique.fr, *Le statute de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/fiches/20236-le-statut-de-la-nouvelle-caledonie>, accessed: 11.04.2021.

³⁰ *Résultats définitifs Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Haut-Commissariat de la République en Nouvelle-Calédonie, <https://www.nouvelle-caledonie.gouv.fr/content/download/5127/39664/file/R%C3%A9f%C3%A9rendum%202018%20-%2020R%C3%A9sultats%20consolid%C3%A9s%20synth%C3%A8se%20-%20Suffrages%20V07%2011%202018.pdf>, accessed: 11.04.2021.

³¹ *Résultats définitifs, referendum du 4 octobre 2020, Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Haut-Commissariat de la République en Nouvelle-Calédonie, <https://www.nouvelle-caledonie.gouv.fr/content/download/6849/53341/file/R%C3%A9f%C3%A9rendum%20du%204%20octobre%202020%20-%20R%C3%A9sultat%20d%C3%A9finitifs.pdf>, accessed: 11.04.2021.

signing of the 1998 agreement, pro-independence advocates won a majority in the collegiate executive body. Another referendum is planned for 2022.

Armed Forces in New Caledonia

(fr. *les Forces Armées en Nouvelle-Calédonie*)

The Armed Forces in New Caledonia (fr. *les Forces armées en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, FANC) are part of the sovereignty forces and are the main point of support for air-ground point of support (fr. *le point d'appui aéroterrestre*) in the Pacific region. FANC's tasks include protecting the sovereignty and interests of France, ensuring security in its overseas territory, and cooperating with the countries of the region. The FANC Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*) covers the territory of New Caledonia, its territorial waters, sea area and airspace, as well as the area of Fiji, New Zealand, Tonga, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

The commander of the FANC (fr. *le commandement des forces armées en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, COMSUP FANC) and the Defence Base (fr. *la base de défense*, BdD) is the local representative of the Chief of the General Staff of the French Republic (fr. *le chef d'état-major des armées*). He controls all FANC formations and advises local governors, especially on the preparation of territorial defence plans. In the FANC there are approximately 1,450 soldiers³², stationed in the cities of Noumea, La Tontouta, Plum and Bourail.

The task of the New Caledonia Defence Base (fr. *la base de défense de Nouvelle-Calédonie*), established in 2011, is to provide support to the operational units of the Ministry of Armed Forces stationed in New Caledonia. Moreover, as part of structured cooperation, FANC runs an Adapted Military Service (fr. *le Service Militaire Adapté*, SMA) under the supervision of the Ministry of Overseas Territories, i.e. a system of social and professional integration responsible for specialist training of volunteers aged 18 to 25. The SMA regiment is located in the city of Koumac, while the company is in Koné³³. Under the protocol and the operating agreement, the SMA may report to the FANC commander, but only at the request of the High Commissioner. FANC are subject to:

³² *Les forces armées en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/nouvelle-caledonie/dossier/les-forces-armees-en-nouvelle-caledonie>, accessed: 13.04.2021.

³³ Ibidem.

- **The Pacific-New Caledonia Marine Infantry Regiment** (fr. *le régiment d'infanterie de marine du Pacifique - Nouvelle-Calédonie*) consists of three units, stationed on the south of the island in the city of Plum, on its central part in Numea, and in the Nandaiï camp near the town of Bourail, which serves as an ammunition depot³⁴. In total, the regiment counts 600 soldiers³⁵.

- **The Naval force** with the Pointe Chaleix base located in Noumea. It is equipped with the observation frigate “Vendémiaire” with the helicopter SA.319B “Alouette III”, the patrol ship P400 “La Glorieuse”, maritime surveillance planes “Falcon F200 – Gardian” (from the 25F French Polynesian armed forces flotilla), as well as the patrol boat “FS Dumbéa” (P606) belonging to the Maritime Police³⁶.

- **The lieutenant “Paul Klein” 186 Air Force Base** (fr. *la base aérienne 186 « Paul Klein »*) stationed at Noumea-La Tontouta airport. The FANC air force has a transport squadron (ET52) with two tactical transport planes “Casa CN 235” and three combat helicopters “Puma”³⁷.

Together with the Armed Forces in the French Polynesia (fr. *les Forces Armées de Polynésie française, FAPF*), the Armed Forces in New Caledonia form the main point of support for the Asia-Pacific area. FANC ensures intervention capacity in the region through the use of their naval forces and it is particularly involved in missions related to state naval activities (including fleet protection, territory surveillance, fishing control, fighting water pollution and illegal trade). When necessary, the FANC has the capacity to conduct, support or participate in operational activities in the area.

In addition, FANC provides assistance to regional states in case of disasters of a natural or humanitarian kind. In February 2021, the Armed Forces in New Caledonia supported Loyalty Islands, the islands of Ouvéa and Tiga, affected by the cyclone Lucas. Similar assistance was provided to the French overseas community of Wallis and Futuna, as well as to the countries of the Pacific Ocean, in particular Australia and New Zealand³⁸. By March 2021, the FANC had

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ État-Major Spécialisé pour l'Outre Mer et l'Étranger, *RIMaPNC*, <https://www.emsome.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/fr/rimap-nc>, accessed: 10.06.2021.

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ In 1992, France, Australia and New Zealand signed the FRANZ Agreement governing mutual assistance in the event of natural disasters.

repeatedly been asked to undertake the transportation of civilians between the islands so that they could receive a better and more efficient answer to their needs and medical assistance³⁹.

In February 2021, FANC began operations as part of the *Trident* mission to ensure security in New Caledonia's exclusive economic zone. The P400 "La Glorieuse" patrol ship, belonging to the New Caledonian armed forces, executed two operational cruises at the ports of Tadine in Maré and Wadrilla in Ouvéa in the Loyalty Islands basin⁴⁰. The mission was supported by the 25F flotilla (fr. *Flottille 25F*)⁴¹.

Conclusions and recommendations

The stationing of the French Republic's forces in the Pacific is a strategic issue not only for the support given to local states, but also for the maintenance of security and stability in the region. Moreover, it ensures the safety of New Caledonia, which does not have its own armed forces.

New Caledonia is gaining of independence could lead to a risky situation where another external actor, such as China, would act to replace France's position. Beijing is already one of the most important trading partners of New Caledonia and one of the most active players in the Pacific region. Another failed attempt to gain independence temporarily took away China's chance to expand its influence, but the risk still exists.

What is important is that New Caledonia's uninhabited islands of Matthew and Hunter are subject of disputes between France and the Republic of Vanuatu, actively supported by China. In 2018, information appeared about Beijing's efforts to open military bases in the Vanuatu archipelago, but they were denied by both parties. However, China does provide military and financial support to Vanuatu, including taking a part of its public debt⁴². There are

³⁹ FANC - *Forces Armées de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, Les services de l'État en Nouvelle-Calédonie, <https://www.nouvelle-caledonie.gouv.fr/Services-de-l-Etat/Defense/FANC-Forces-Armees-de-la-Nouvelle-Caledonie>, accessed: 14.04.2021.

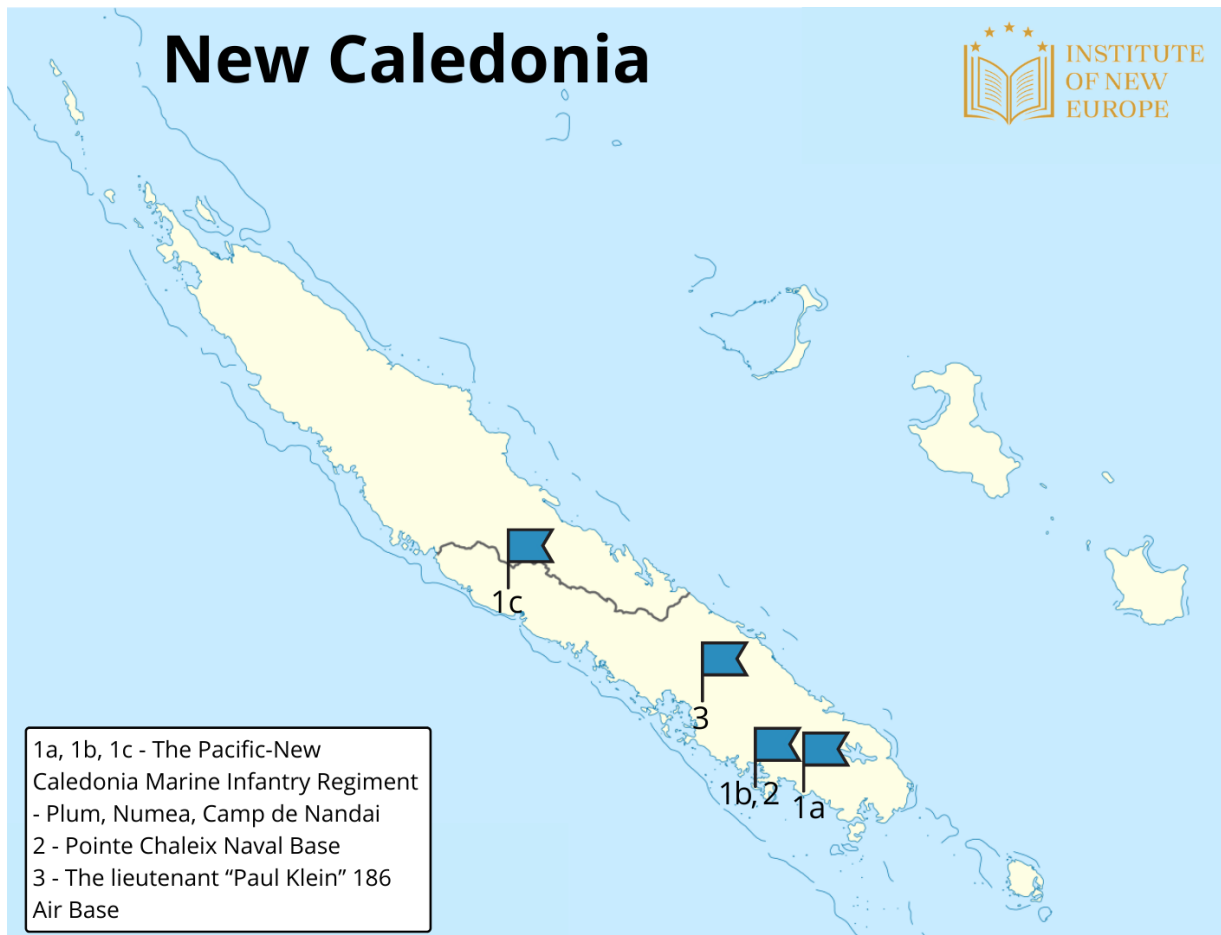
⁴⁰ Ministère des Armées, *FANC: Le P400 La Glorieuse rejoint la mission TRIDENT*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/nouvelle-caledonie/actualite/fanc-le-p400-la-glorieuse-rejoint-la-mission-trident>, accessed: 06.03.2021.

⁴¹ FANC *Forces Armées de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, <https://www.facebook.com/FANC.Officiel/posts/4105910256150784>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

⁴² IFRI, *Les bases militaires ultramarines françaises apparaissent vulnérables*, <https://www.ifri.org/fr/espace-media/lifri-medias/bases-militaires-ultramarines-francaises-apparaissent-vulnerables>, accessed: 11.04.2021.

concerns that the same action will be taken regarding New Caledonia and, discussed below, French Polynesia.

FANC participates in the dialogue on security in the Pacific region and the organization of an exclusive economic zone, initiated with the framework of defence cooperation forum QUAD (en. *Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*), i.e. an informal group, which includes representatives from the US, Japan, Australia and India. At the beginning of April 2021, the joint training mission of France and QUAD members in the Bay of Bengal, called La Pérouse, which aimed to conduct joint maneuvers, has been finalized⁴³. The French Republic was represented in the mission by the frigate “Surcouf” and the attack helicopter carrier “Tonnerre”. Subsequently, France participated in the Ex Varuna exercises, in which India and the United Arab Emirates also took part⁴⁴. Therefore, Paris cannot afford to lose its base as it is a focal point for capacity building in the Indo-Pacific region.



⁴³ Chapleau F., *L'Inde aux côtés de la France pour l'exercice naval « La Pérouse » dans le golf du Bengal*, Ouest France, <https://www.ouest-france.fr/europe/france/l-inde-aux-cotes-de-la-france-pour-l-exercice-naval-la-perouse-dans-le-golfe-du-bengale-7cdfb032-9787-11eb-8261-9f7819628c0a>, accessed: 20.04.2021.

⁴⁴ The Maritime Executive, French Ships Reach India for Quad-Plus Naval Exercise, [maritime-executive.com/article/french-ships-reach-india-for-quad-plus-naval-exercise](https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/french-ships-reach-india-for-quad-plus-naval-exercise), accessed: 26.04.2021.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

French Polynesia consists of five archipelagos comprising a total of 118 islands in Oceania. The first Europeans – the Portuguese – appeared on the territory of modern-day French Polynesia in 1521. Then, between the 18th and the 19th century, the land was an object of dispute between Great Britain and France due to the geographic location of the archipelago, which was a crucial stop for the trade routes in the region of the Pacific Ocean. The islands successively became French protectorate in 1842, its colony in 1880, and overseas territory in 1943. Whereas, as a result of an amendment to the constitution introduced in 2003, the islands were granted the status of overseas collectivity. Since 1984, French Polynesia has been autonomous when it comes to, among others, appointing its representatives, creating legal solutions, foreign policy or defence.

Geographical location, primarily the distance between the islands and the continent, has prompted France to run 193 atmospheric and underground atomic tests in French Polynesia in the years 1966-1996⁴⁵. The explosions have produced radiation clouds, which directly threatened the health and life of the local community. Over the duration of the tests, and after their completion, their actual impact on the region remained a closely guarded state secret. As a result of the nuclear testing, soil and rainwater are greatly contaminated⁴⁶.

In November 2018, during the United Nations forum, Oscar Temaru, a local politician and former president of French Polynesia, informed about filing a complaint to the International Criminal Court against France for committing a crime against humanity. According to the Polynesian Ministry of Health, between 1992 and 2017, a significant increase in the records of cancer was reported⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ K. Feldmann, *La Polynésie marquée à jamais par les essais nucléaires français*, Reporterre, <https://reporterre.net/La-polynesie-marquee-a-jamais-par-les-essais>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁴⁶ *Rapport sur les incidences environnementales et sanitaires des essais nucléaires effectués par la France entre 1960 et 1996 et éléments de comparaison avec les essais des autres puissances nucléaires*, Office parlementaire d'évaluation des choix scientifiques et technologiques, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/legislatures/11/pdf/rap-ocst/i3571.pdf>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁴⁷ K. Feldmann, op. cit.

Armed Forces in French Polynesia

(fr. *les Forces armées en Polynésie française*)

The Armed Forces of French Polynesia (fr. *les Forces Armées en Polynésie française*, FAPF) belong to the sovereignty forces and are the main point of marine support for the Pacific Ocean theater. Their fundamental task is to ensure the protection of French sovereignty and its interests in the region. FAPF, together with the Armed Forces in New Caledonia, create the main point of support in the Asia-Pacific area. The FAPF defensive base (fr. *la base de défense*) is located in the capital city of Polynesia – Papeete.

FAPF include approximately 900 soldiers across its ground, navy, and air force⁴⁸, whose task is to ensure the continuity of the missions. They are constantly supported by 300 reservists, recruited mainly from Polynesian inhabitants⁴⁹. While the military units are stationed in the northern part of Tahiti, a military training area and an ammunition dump are located in the South, respectively in Faaone and Papeari. FAPF consists of:

- **The Pacific-Polynesia Marine Infantry Regiment** (fr. *le régiment d'infanterie de marine du Pacifique-Polynésie*) with two bases in Tahiti. The main base, LCL Broche barracks, is located in Arue, whereas a rescue and protective dog missions training center is in Papearia⁵⁰. The regiment consists of two ProTerre companies (land defence), which attend short-term missions lasting up to four months. These include the command and logistic company and a reserve company, which are mainly composed of Polynesian volunteers⁵¹. The ground forces intervene in case of natural disasters, they remain present in the area of the former experiments ensuring its protection, monitor the conditions on the local seas, and cooperate with the neighboring countries' military forces.

⁴⁸ Ministère des Armées, *Dispositif opérationnel français déployé à travers le monde*, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/dispositif-operationnel-francais-deploye-a-travers-le-monde?fbclid=IwAR2zj9uUCitNi-CfXMozzo_5356sWtwHzxZpuH_YedkXexekMWDmzwpTIGo, accessed: 06.05.2021.

⁴⁹ D. Grivois, *Jean-Mathieu Rey : « Protéger la Polynésie et les Polynésiens »*, https://actu.fr/societe/jean-mathieu-rey-protoger-la-polynesie-et-les-polynesiens_35633167.html, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁵⁰ État-Major Spécialisé pour l'Outre-Mer et l'Étranger, *Le régiment d'infanterie de Marine du Pacifique-Polynésie*, <https://www.emsome.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/fr/regiments-ft-ome/190-rimap-p?showall=1>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁵¹ Haut-Commissariat de la République en Polynésie Française, *Les forces armées en Polynésie française*, <http://www.polynesie-francaise.pref.gouv.fr/Services-de-l-Etat/Defense/Forces-armees-en-PF>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

- **FAPF Navy** is located in Fare Ute, in the capital city of French Polynesia – Papeete. It consists of the observation frigate “Prairial” together with the “Aérospatiale Alouette III” helicopter, naval patrol vessel “Bougainville”, coastal patrol vessel “Arago”, coastal tugs “Manini” and “Maroa”, and patrol vessel “Jasmine”, belonging to the Maritime Gendarmerie⁵².
- **FAPF Air Force** includes integrated air force and navy units stationed in Faa’a, in the base of the Military Aeronautical Group (fr. *le groupement aéronautique militaire*) 190. The Air Detachment (fr. *le Détachement Air 190*), which base is located at the Faa’a Airport, consists of two units: 82 Maine Transport Squadron (fr. *l’escadron de transport 82 « Maine »*) equipped with two tactical aircraft of CASA CN235-200 type, and the military air stopover 1D190 (fr. *l’escale aérienne militaire 1D190*) supervising passenger service, logistic support transport, and French and foreign military aircraft maneuvers. Water-to-air units consist of: 25F flotilla with five “Falcon 200 Guardian” aircraft, whereas two of them are located in the Tontouta base, New Caledonia, 35F flotilla operating two “Dauphin N3+” helicopters⁵³, and 22S division with the “Alouette III” helicopter located on the observation frigate “Prairial”⁵⁴.

The FAPF commander (fr. *le commandant des forces armées en Polynésie Française*, COMSUP FAPF) answers to the Chief of a Defence Staff, of which he is a local representative. COMSUP FAPF is responsible for issuing the recommendations about security, particularly in the field of territory defence planning for the High Commissioner of the Republic in French Polynesia (fr. *le Haut-commissaire de la République française*). Moreover, the FAPF Commander supervises the Pacific Ocean and French Polynesia maritime zones, the Defence Base of French Polynesia (fr. *la base de défense des FAPF*), and the operations of the Pacific Experimentation Center (fr. *le Centre d’expérimentation du Pacifique*). The FAPF Commander also controls the

⁵² Haut-Commissariat de la République en Polynésie Française, *Les forces armées en Polynésie française*, <http://www.polynesie-francaise.pref.gouv.fr/Services-de-l-Etat/Defense/Forces-armees-en-PF>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁵³ Ministère des Armées, *Les forces armées de Polynésie française*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/polynesie-francaise/dossier/les-forces-armees-de-polynesie-francaise>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

⁵⁴ Haut-Commissariat de la République en Polynésie Française, *Les forces armées en Polynésie française*, <http://www.polynesie-francaise.pref.gouv.fr/Services-de-l-Etat/Defense/Forces-armees-en-PF>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

FAPF's Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*) covering the area of Asia and the Pacific Ocean, with particular reference to territorial lands, territorial seas, airspace, and the marine area of French Polynesia. As the Commander of the Pacific Experimentation Center, the FAPF Commander is responsible for the supervision and protection of the former areas of the atomic experiments.

COMSUP FAPF exercises its power on the entire area of the Pacific Ocean and coastal countries, excluding maritime zones of New Caledonia, Melanesian islands, Australia, and New Zealand, which are subject to the Commander of the Armed Forces of New Caledonia.

The declared FAPF missions consist of, above all, the protection of France's interests, ensuring French presence in the Pacific Ocean area, French Polynesian exclusive economic zone security, the local bodies support, and among others fighting with water pollutions, supervising fishery missions, and evacuating local community during military operations. Moreover, FAPF monitor former areas of experiments in search of radioactive or biological contamination. The French Polynesian Defence Base (fr. *la Base de Défense de Polynésie française*) created in 2011 is responsible for organizational support and the leadership of units undergoing the missions. The Defence Base Support Group of French Polynesia (fr. *le Groupement de Soutien de la Base de Défense – Polynésie française*) provides a general administration.

FAPF run a training center of the Adapted Military Service (fr. *le Service Militaire Adapté, SMA*) in Tahiti, i.e. a socio-professional integration system responsible for the youth training. It is located in the LCL Broche barracks⁵⁵. The professional training groups of young Caledonian volunteers are also located in Tahiti, Australian Islands, and the Marquesas Islands. According to the protocol and the operating agreement, in case of a natural disaster, SMA can be led by FAPF Commander, however only upon request of the High Commissioner⁵⁶.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Armed Forces in French Polynesia operate primarily in the field of information exchange and international cooperation towards combating drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal fishery, and providing support for the local community in case of natural

⁵⁵ *Le régiment d'infanterie de Marine du Pacifique-Polynésie*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ Ministère des Armées, *Les forces armées de Polynésie française*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/polynesie-francaise/dossier/les-forces-armees-de-polynesie-francaise>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

disasters. FAPF participate in most of the multilateral military events in the region, primarily in the strategic practices and forums, and they also maintain bilateral relations with neighboring countries, both with its closest partners (United States, Australia, Japan, and Chile), and island nations (Kiribati, Cook Islands, and Samoa). Chilean, Australian, and Japanese military vessels regularly participate in training missions organised in Papeete.

The troops in French Polynesia and New Caledonia maintain close relations and cooperate to secure civilians, maritime and land resources, and also to secure French interests in the Asia and Pacific Ocean zone. As a part of the collaboration between the forces, personnel is exchanged, military equipment is rented, and common missions are carried out.

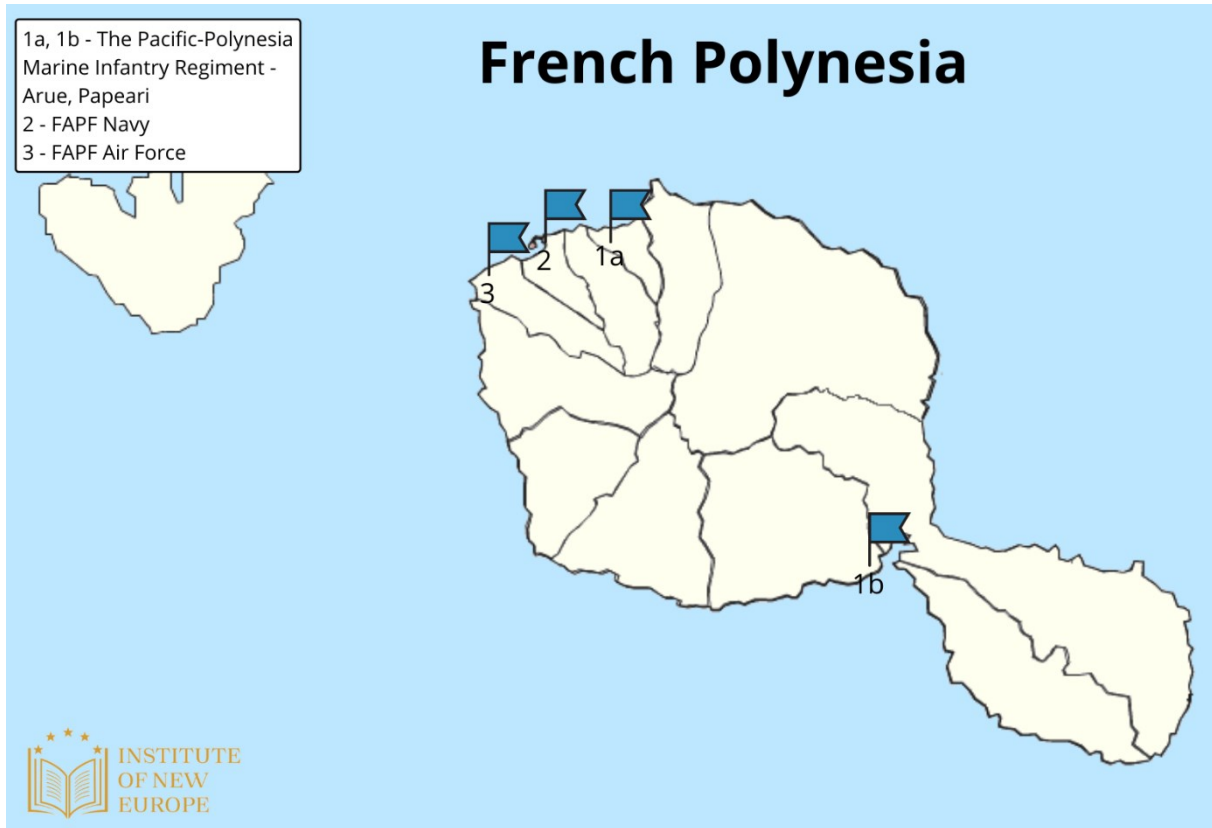
The French Polynesian region is a focal point on the strategic map of the French Republic. The increased Chinese presence in the region, and the activities aimed at making Fiji, Cook Island, and Tong Island economically dependent within the New Silk Road initiative⁵⁷, are one of the main arguments for increasing the French military economics investments in the Indo-Pacific region. A gradual increase of economic dependency may in the future result in Chinese military investments, which will directly influence the security of, inter alia, Australia, New Zealand, and France.

In 1992, the French Republic signed the FRANZ agreement with Australia and New Zealand. The aim of the agreement is to coordinate the activities among the countries with the scope of improving crisis management. In order to counteract the increasing economic threat caused by the intensified activity of China in the Indo-Pacific region, not only France but also Australia and New Zealand should consider supplementing the agreement to answer to new geostrategic challenges. Moreover, Paris should consider the intensification of military cooperation with the countries belonging to the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) by arranging joint training exercise and increased export of weaponry, as it is present in, among others, Malaysia⁵⁸. France should also reduce the costs of maintaining the military presence in the region by proposing military co-existence and sharing their infrastructure with allied countries, in exchange for their maintenance costs being divided. Such cooperation can be offered to, among others, QUAD group representatives.

⁵⁷ É.Tenenbaum, *Confettis d'empire ou points d'appui ? L'avenir de la stratégie française de présence et de souveraineté*, Focus Stratégique, <https://www.ifri.org/fr/publications/etudes-de-lifri/focus-strategique/confettis-dempire-points-dappui-lavenir-de-strategie>, accessed: 23.04.2021.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

The climate changes, which may significantly influence French military strategy, are also worth considering. As a result of global warming, the sea level increases by about 12 mm a year⁵⁹, which enhances the likelihood of natural disasters happening. That may threaten both marine and land French military missions.



⁵⁹ Ibidem.

THE FUTURE ROLE OF FRANCE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

For the countries in the region, France is a partner with a lot to offer in terms of diplomatic and economic support and safety. Parisian authorities consequently increase their involvement in regional partnerships, international dialogue, and training, avoiding, at the same time, the unambiguous choice of whether to side with the United States or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) in competitions with China. For this reason, Parisian authorities do not use the concept of “free and open Indo-Pacific” promoted by the USA and Japan, because it is regarded as overly anti-Chinese. France sees the risks arising from the increasing power of China, as evidenced by the symbolic missions on the South China Sea or on the Taiwan Strait and also by the frequent training missions with the regional countries’ navy. At the same time, Paris’ attitude demonstrates the necessity to pragmatically cooperate with the Beijing authorities, while exerting pressure for them to perform the function of a “responsible shareholder”. The pursuit of maintaining strategic autonomy in relation with the United States, as well as the choice of a less confrontational approach towards Beijing results in a more flexible position, definitely closer to the AESAN countries. France is a valuable political partner for all of the region’s countries, including China, given its crucial significance in the European Union politics formation.

The abilities of the French navy, its military bases at the two sides of Indo-Pacific, and military partnerships with the countries of the region predestine the country to an active role in maritime training and in crisis management operations. The complex approach of France towards the USA-China rivalry results in the training not generating excessive tensions in the contacts with Beijing. Relative to the growing tensions in the relations between the QUAD countries and China, it will become more difficult for France to maintain a flexible position. Full neutrality may hinder the relations with the USA’s allies, while an increased commitment towards a “free and open Indo-Pacific” will in all likelihood result in the growth of economic and political tensions with China.

Within the dimensions of diplomacy, France will pursue to develop strategic partnerships with Australia, the Indies, and Japan, and to promote active participation of the

French industry in the modernization of the region's countries' armed forces. From this point of view, it is crucial to secure the existing and future contacts with the Indies, Australia, and ASEAN countries, particularly Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The French technological potential within the scope of renewable energy, infrastructure, industry, and services will encourage investment coordination with the ASEAN and South Asia countries, which are on the verge of transport and energetic transformation. For the French companies, participation in the process of building high-quality infrastructure poses a chance for lucrative contracts and support for the foreign expansion of their own companies in the connectivity area.

REUNION & MAYOTTE

Reunion is a volcanic island located along the coasts of West Africa while the Mascarene Archipelago is in the Indian Ocean. The island has remained constantly inhabited until the 17th century, when the Portuguese, French, and Mangles settled down there. In 1638, France officially fielded claims for the island and 25 years later the colonization process began. In 1879 the island was ultimately given the name of *Île de la Réunion*. Until 1869, i.e. the opening of the Suez Canal, the island remained a stop on the West India trading route. However, after the launch of the Canal, maritime traffic decreased in the southern part of the Indian Ocean, and the strategic trading significance of the island was considerably diminished. Since 1946, Reunion has been the overseas department and the French administrative region.

The first Europeans arrived in Mayotte in the 15th century, and they created a place for supplying with necessities the merchants traveling to India. In 1841, Mayotte became a French colony, and since 1979, after numerous plebiscites and internal conflicts, it now has officially belonged to the French Republic. Its status was regulated only in 2011 when the island was given the title of the overseas department.

Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone

(fr. *les Forces Armées dans la zone sud de l'Océan Indien*)

The Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone (fr. *les Forces Armées dans la zone sud de l'Océan Indien*, FAZSOI) are subject to the sovereignty forces. FAZSOI guarantees safety of the above-mentioned area, and cooperates regionally with local countries within the framework of the Indian Ocean Commission (fr. *la Commission de l'océan Indien*, COI) and the Southern African Development Community (fr. *la Communauté de développement d'Afrique australe*, CDAA). FAZSOI forms the basis of the region's safety, providing supervision over the exclusive economic zones of the surrounding islands. FAZSOI dependent Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP) covers 10 countries of South Africa and 4 countries which are the members of the Indian Ocean Committee⁶⁰. In 2011, the Réunion -

⁶⁰ZRP consists of: Comoro Islands, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa Republic, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia.

Mayotte Defence Base (fr. *la Base de Défense La Réunion – Mayotte*) was created, supporting missions conducted by the FAZSOI. The Mayotte Gendarmerie Command (fr. *le Commandement de la gendarmerie de Mayotte*) consisting of 170 soldiers' functions on Mayotte ⁶¹.

FAZSOI includes three types of Armed Forces, where 1,600 soldiers and more than 300 civilian workers serve. The Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone consists of:

- **2nd Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment** (fr. *le 2^e régiment de parachutistes d'infanterie de Marine, 2^e RPIMa*), stationed in a base in Paola, Plaines-des-Cafres, Reunion.
- **Foreign Legion Detachment in Mayotte** (fr. *le détachement de Légion étrangère de Mayotte, DLEM*) garrisoned in Dzaoudzi.
- **Navy Base in Reunion** located in the city of Port-des-Galets, where a multipurpose vessel “Champlain” and two observation frigates “Nivôse” (F732) and “Floréal” with a “Panther” helicopter are stationed. Moreover, the French Army has an icebreaker “L’Astrolabe” and an arctic patrol vessel “Malin” to its disposition.
- **Navy Base in Mayotte** with two coastal motorboats “Verdon” (P602) and “Odet” (P611), transport houseboat CTM13, coastal tug “Morse” and interceptor boat “Vetiver”⁶².
- **Air Force Detachment DA 181** (fr. *le détachement air DA 181*) composed of a transport squadron ET50 (fr. *l’escadron de transport ET50*), equipped with two CASA C-295 aeroplanes stationed at the Roland Garros International Airport in Reunion.

FAZSOI also include:

- Adapted Military Service divisions (fr. *le Service Militaire Adapté, SMA*), located both in Reunion and Mayotte. They pose a social-professional integration system, which is responsible for youth training and preparation for military service.
- Reunion-Mayotte Defence Support Group (fr. *le Groupement de Soutien de la Base de Défense La Réunion - Mayotte, GSBdD*), which ensures operational and administrative coordination among all types of the FAZSOI armed forces.

⁶¹ Préfet de Mayotte - Les services de l’État à Mayotte, *Commandement de Gardarmerie*, <https://www.mayotte.gouv.fr/Politiques-publiques/Prevention-des-risques-et-securite/Securite/Securite-publique/Commandement-de-Gendarmerie>, accessed: 16.03.2021.

⁶² Ibidem.

- Tropical Retraining Centre (fr. *le Centre d'aguerrissement tropical*, CATR) with headquarters in Saline-les-Bains, where within the framework of the regional cooperation, foreign armed forces of inter alia Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Zambia are trained⁶³.
- Sailing Training and Retraining Centre (fr. *le Centre d'instruction et d'aguerrissement nautique*, CIAN), where the Navy units may develop their skills.

The main responsibilities of FAZOIS are: protecting French interests in its ZRP, ensuring the security of the southern part of the Indian Ocean, supporting civilians in the case of natural disasters, conducting training for French and foreign units in CATR and CIAN, cooperating with the countries of the region and participating in military operations. FAZSOI constantly control the surroundings of the remaining islands of the region, including those uninhabited, i.e. Europe, Juan de Nova, or the Glorieuses group of islands, in this way supporting the operations of the local police with the purpose of combating piracy, illegal fishery, and immigration, searching for and supporting missing people as well.

Unlike the Armed Forces operations in Antilles and Guiana, FAZOIS actively participates in attempts to address the political crises of the surrounding countries, among others, the Republic of Djibouti (Iskoutir Operation), Rwanda (Turquoise Operation), or the Union of Comoros (Oside and Azalée Operations). In 2000, FAZOIS lead assistance activities in Madagascar in the aftermath of Eline and Gloria cyclones.

The Atalanta mission has been ongoing since December 8th, 2008. Within the framework of the mission, FAZSOI combats piracy off the coast of Somalia. The Armed Forces of other countries, inter alia, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain or Portugal also participate in the mission. In December 2020, the operation was prolonged until December 31st, 2022, and extended its mandate with combating illegal weaponry and drugs trade and monitoring illegal activities on the sea. As a result of the mission, the number of piracy attacks has significantly decreased.

⁶³ Ministère des Armées – Communauté Défense, *FAZSOI : l'armée mauricienne en stage au centre d'aguerrissement tropical de La Réunion*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/communaute-defense/fazsoi-l-armee-mauricienne-en-stage-au-centre-d-aguerrissement-tropical-de-la-reunion>, accessed: 17.03.2021.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Because of economic reasons, the Indian Ocean is one of the key areas for France. It covers a vast area of the exclusive economic zone, which gives the French Republic control over all of the available natural and marine resources. Islands located on the Indian Ocean are crucial due to geostrategic reasons. On the account of a long-lasting rivalry between the United States, China, Russia, Australia, and the Indies, the French Republic undertakes activities to secure its interests and maintain stability in the region. That mainly includes the security of French population, ensuring the freedom to marine routes, and combating piracy. Furthermore, France cooperates with the Indies, and both countries organize common military training, conduct research aimed at the development of civilian nuclear technology⁶⁴, and exchange their experiences with regard to counter-terrorism.

Reunion and Mayotte are perfect points to navigate and reconnoiter the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Not having significant military components, but regularly controlling changes that occur near French bases, the commitment in the chosen theater of operation is possible. French activity is also connected to the humanitarian support, a special military mission and also with leading training with a foreign partner. This is particularly visible in both the types of French and locally trained armies, and in their equipment which enables working under all conditions, operating on the land and sea, and in the air. It may seem that these two French overseas departments are perfect not only for the permanent protective tasks but also for providing assistance to the countries of the region, which without a doubt have a positive influence on the international perception of France.

Basing on its strategic interests, in the western part of the Indian Ocean, France should intensify the maritime cooperation with Indies by offering, inter alia, joint manoeuvres in the Mozambique Channel, which is one of the main navigable routes between the Middle East and the Atlantic Ocean. Another important aspect for both countries is a common fight against piracy and ports control. However, the activity of the Fifth Republic cannot be limited to military matters, since an opportunity to establish closer economic cooperation between Reunion and Indies occurs. What is more, France may develop its economy globally through the use of overseas territories, getting involved in particular regions, not only militarily but also

⁶⁴ Ambassade de France en Inde, *Coopération nucléaire civile bilatérale*, <https://in.ambafrance.org/Cooperation-nucleaire-civile,7531>, accessed: 17.03.2021.

economically and socially. Aimed at maintaining its position, the French Republic should increase its presence on the Indian Ocean and specify how a potential conflict in this region, in which France would participate, would look like.

The southern countries of Africa are the first challenge. The consolidation of relations with the countries of southern Africa for the sake of regional situation control is an important matter for the French strategy. The collapse of Somalia and Yemen⁶⁵ has shown that China, Russia, and USA expand their area of influence through the deployment of their armies. The investments in the framework of the Chinese New Silk Road are an additional threat. The commercial cooperation and a great capital commitment make the participation of African countries dependent on the project, which in future may be exploited by the People's Republic of China. This phenomenon shows that, in the short term, France has to focus on military cooperation by engaging a great possible number of African countries. However, what is also crucial in the longer perspective are the economic investments that will significantly limit the Chinese investment strategy. The French Republic should also contribute to the consolidation and the development of the Indo-African economic relations, which will enable the creation of a stable regional structure. It is also crucial for France to solve the problem regarding the claims of African countries to their overseas territories, which are, in particular cases, supported by the United Nations⁶⁶, so as to enable a stable and long-term relationship establishment.

The second challenge is to increase the development of the Indies. The current Indo-French cooperation proceeds positively. It should be mentioned that, among others, common military training, intelligence exchange, sale of military equipment, as the "Rafale" fighter and the "Scorpène" submarine⁶⁷ as well as guaranteeing safety on the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea by both countries. However, it is worth broadening the cooperation into civilian matters, such as common investments of strategic companies of both countries, or the Indian Ocean countries student exchange⁶⁸, enabling the making of social connections. For those two countries, regulating the influence of particular regional powers, such as Iran, is also a crucial

⁶⁵ Association nationale des croix de guerre et de la valeur militaire, *L'Océan Indien : enjeux stratégiques et militaires*, <https://www.boulevard-exterieur.com/Les-territoires-francais-de-l-Ocean-indien.html>, accessed: 05.05.2021.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

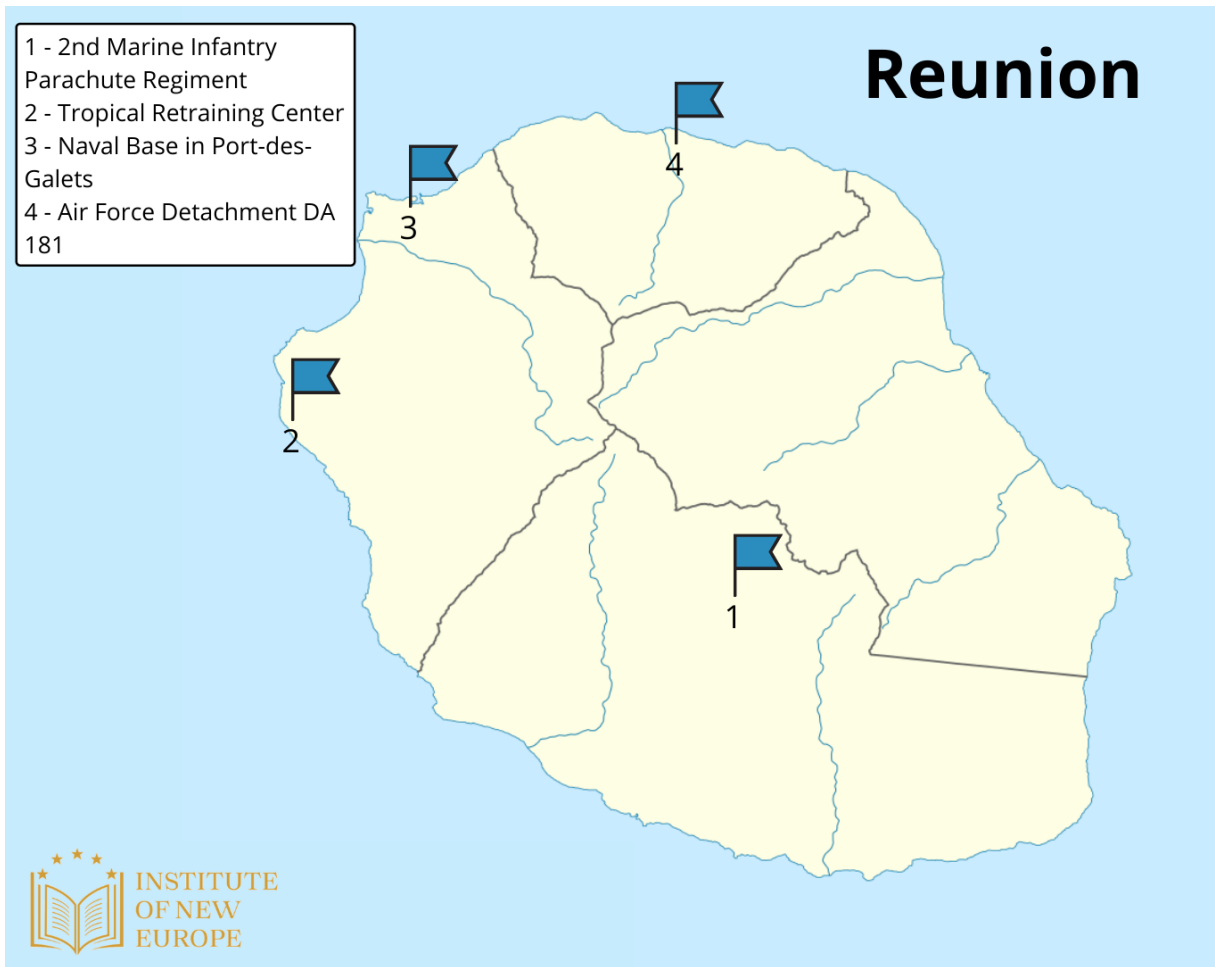
⁶⁷ Hérodote, *La France et les enjeux stratégiques de l'océan Indien*, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-herodote-2012-2-page-21.htm>, accessed: 05.05.2021.

⁶⁸ That is auctorial idea of French president Emmanuel Macron.

matter. It should be remembered that France maintains relations not only with the Indies but also with Pakistan, which suggests that it would, to a considerable extent, limit the escalation of the conflict between those two countries, especially in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, actions that shall be taken demand a very careful approach.

In conclusion, the more military, economic, and civil relations with the actors present in the Indian Ocean are created by France, the more these countries become interdependent. This automatically leads to stabilization, regional development, and increases French influence.





DJIBOUTI



Djibouti became independent from France in the year of 1977, following a national referendum. Approximately 94% of the population are Muslims⁶⁹ and the official languages are Arabic and French. Due to its unique location on the border of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, Djibouti is a world leader when it comes to the amount of foreign military bases present there. The armies of countries such as China, the USA, Italy⁷⁰, Japan⁷¹ and France all have a footing in the country. Djibouti's geographical location allows it to exert control over Central & Eastern Africa and the Middle East and it is a key logistics point for missions' implementation in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Despite its small area, Djibouti also plays a vital role in the international maritime trade, which again, is the result of its location near one of the most important trade routes which runs through the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Suez Canal. On

⁶⁹ Djibouti 2019 International Religious Freedom Report, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DJIBOUTI-2019-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>, accessed: 16.03.2021.

⁷⁰ Ministry of Defence, Minister Guerini concluded his two-day visit in the Horn of Africa, where he met with Somaly and Djibouti authorities, https://www.difesa.it/EN/Primo_Piano/Pagine/Minister-Guerini-concluded-his-two-day-visit-in-the-Horn-of-Africa.aspx, accessed: 03.06.2021.

⁷¹ Ambassade de France au Japon, *Entraînement franco-japonais d'intervention en milieu maritime à Djibouti*, <https://jp.ambafrance.org/Entrainement-franco-japonais-d-intervention-en-milieu-maritime-a-Djibouti>, accessed: 03.06.2021.

the other side of the Bab al-Mandab strait Yemen, a country which has been in a civil war since 2015 and is home to a great number of terrorist organisations. In 2018, a daily rate of 6.2 million barrels of crude oil, destined for the Europe, USA and Asia, have been shipped through the strait, constituting 9% of the total world maritime oil shipments⁷². What this means is that any blockade in the strait can lead to enormous financial losses for a range of countries and organisations.

French Armed Forces in Djibouti (fr. *les Forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti*)

France perceives Djibouti as a vital element in protecting trade routes running through the Red Sea and insuring their continued international influence. This matter was highlighted in the 2013 White Paper on Security and Defence⁷³, which mentions the region as one of France's key areas of focus. Initially the cooperation was based on the rules set out in 1977⁷⁴, currently it is based on a 2011 treaty on defence cooperation⁷⁵. The French Armed Forces stationed in Djibouti (fr. *les Forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti*, FFDj) are forward operations base (fr. *la base opérationnelle avancée*, BOA), thereby they have a possibility to immediately react to any crisis that occurs in the Indian Ocean or in the Middle East. As part of BOA, FFDjs activities are focused on:

- Assisting in any ground missions, particularly when it comes to helping secure the movement of French forces (transport, withdrawal, humanitarian aid),
- Providing logistical aid to the Djibouti Air Force and other foreign contingents stationed in the region,
- Military support in the case of a crisis in neighboring countries,
- Ensuring a military presence in the case of a need of supporting French citizens in the Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP) which extends over Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Yemen⁷⁶.

⁷² U.S Energy Information Administration, The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is a strategic route for oil and natural gas shipments, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=41073>, accessed: 19.03.2021.

⁷³ Livre blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité nationale 2013, p. 55, accessed: 09.06.2021.

⁷⁴ Assemblée nationale, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/rapports/annexe-r1714.pdf>, accessed: 18.03.2021.

⁷⁵ Légifrance, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000028937046>, accessed: 18.03.2021.

⁷⁶ Ministère des Armées, Les forces françaises prépositionnées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/466302/7428994/DOSSIER%20-%20Forces%20pr%C3%A9positionn%C3%A9es.pdf>, accessed: 07.05.2021.

The Chief of the General Staff of the French Armed Forces directly oversees the work of FFDj (fr. *le commandement des Forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti*, COMFOR) and the defence base (fr. *le commandement de la base de défense*, COMBdD). In 1978, the French armed forces in Djibouti consisted of 4,300 soldiers⁷⁷. However, over the years, their number has been gradually reducing. In the year 2000, it lessened to 2,000⁷⁸ (soldiers & civil staff) and today it is only 1,450⁷⁹. This is the result of the greater engagement of other countries in the region and greater reliance of the French republic on naval missions. The FFDj is formed out of the following military units:

- **5th Overseas Interarms Regiment** (fr. *le 5^e régiment interarmes d'outre-mer*, 5^e RIAOM), which comprises the “AMX 10 RC” reconnaissance vehicle, an armoured personnel carrier “Véhicule de l'Avant Blindé” and the MO-120-RT-61 heavy mortar. The regiment has been stationed in Djibouti since 1969 and has been stationed in Quartier Monclar⁸⁰ since 2011.
- **A unit of the French Army Light Aviation** (fr. *le Détachement de l'aviation légère de l'armée de Terre*, DETALAT), comprising 4 “Puma” and 3 “Gazelle” helicopters⁸¹.
- **188 Colonel “Emile Massart” Air Base** (fr. *la base aérienne 188*, BA 188) consisting of four “Dassault Mirage 2000-5” jet fighters, a single “CASA” transport aircraft and 3 “Puma” helicopters. The air base is located near the Ambouli International Airport in Djibouti.
- **Naval base of Héron** (fr. *la Base Navale du Héron Djibout*) with 100 sailors⁸² is a logistics point for naval units conducting missions in the Indian Ocean. A commando unit is

⁷⁷ Cairn Info, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-champs-de-mars-2018-1-page-231.htm#no2>, accessed: 19.03.2021.

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ Ministère des Armées, Carte des opérations et missions militaires, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/carte-des-operations-et-missions-militaires?fbclid=IwAR2zj9uUCitNi-CfXMozz0_5356sWtwHzxZpuH_YedkXexekMWDmzwpTIGo, accessed: 25.03.2021.

⁸⁰ État-Major Spécialisé pour l'Outre-Mer et l'Étranger, Ministère des Armées, <https://www.emsome.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/fr/regiments-ft-ome/135-5e-riaom?showall=1>, accessed: 26.04.2021.

⁸¹ Ministère des Armées, les forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-est/forces-francaises-stationnees-a-djibouti/dossier-de-referance/les-forces-francaises-stationnees-a-djibouti>, accessed: 26.04.2021.

⁸² Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/international/ffdj-la-base-navale-de-djibouti-point-d-appui-strategique-dans-l-ocean-indien>, accessed: 18.03.2021.

responsible for training and countering piracy in the ZRP. On the basis of bilateral cooperation, the FFDj navy also offers support to its Djibouti counterparts.

- **Combat Training Centre in the Djibouti desert** (fr. *le Centre d'Entraînement au Combat et d'Aguerrissement au désert de Djibouti*, CECAD), with its main aim being the improvement of combat abilities in desert environments. Armies from the countries such as Kenya, Uganda and the USA have participated in trainings organised by the centre⁸³.

Aside from ground and air forces, the FFDj also includes a wide range of support divisions and units:

- A branch of the Prévôtal Gendarmerie (fr. *la gendarmerie prévôtale*),
- The members of staff of the General Command of the French Armed Forces (fr. *l'état-major interarmées*, EMIA),
- The defence base support group (fr. *le groupement de soutien de la base de défense*, GSBdD),
- The Operational Management Branch (fr. *le détachement d'instruction opérationnelle*, DIO),
- The Operational Environment Section (fr. *la section d'environnement opérationnel*, SEO),
- Directorate for Defence Infrastructure (fr. *la Direction d'Infrastructure de la Défense*, DID),
- The Army Medical Corps (fr. *le Service de Santé des Armées*, SSA),
- Common Ammunition Corps (fr. *le Service Interarmées des Munitions*, SIMu),
- Joint Directorate of Infrastructure Networks and Information System (fr. *la Direction Interarmées des Réseaux d'Infrastructure et des systèmes d'Information*, DIRSI).

The FFDj activity is also spread out across other countries in the region, i.e. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Yemen, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Their cooperation is focused around ensuring the border integrity of aforementioned countries (land, naval and air) and supporting international initiatives, such as Operation Atalanta, which was launched by the EU in 2008 to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden. The FFDj has accepted both German and Spanish divisions

⁸³ Le Point, Le Centre français d'aguerrissement désert d'Arta, un test d'audace, https://www.lepoint.fr/societe/le-centre-francais-d-aguerrissement-desert-d-arta-un-test-d-audace-11-02-2021-2413606_23.php, accessed: 08.06.2021.

and the staff of the *Force HQ Support Area* part of the FFDj⁸⁴, whilst offering also support to other international vessels taking part in Operation Atalanta.

The French forces are also responsible for training and cooperating with the armed forces of partner countries. They are also responsible for training the armed forces of the countries included in the Area of Responsibility before they embark on international and peacekeeping missions. They inherited the above-mentioned task after the previous engagement of French armed forces involving the reinforcement of the capacities of African countries to maintain a long-lasting peace (fr. *le Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix*). Since 2006, the Operational management branch “DIO” of FFDj has been helping to prepare the Ugandan armed forces before the peacekeeping mission in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM)⁸⁵.

So far, the FFDj has taken part in range of missions⁸⁶:

- Operation Khor Angar, which is focused on securing the Djibouti coastline during the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea in the years 1999 and 2000,
- Aid operations following the terrorist attack on the United States guided missile destroyer USS Cole in the year 2000,
- The UN peace mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea between the years 2000-2001,
- The Lincoln peacekeeping mission supported UN activities in the Côte d'Ivoire in the year 2000,
- Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2003,
- Operation Béryx, which is focused on delivering aid following the December 2004 tsunami in Indonesia,
- Ponant, Carré d'As & Tanit focused on retrieving the naval vessels kidnapped by Somali pirates in 2008 and 2009,
- Providing aid during the food crisis in the Horn of Africa in 2011,

⁸⁴ Ministère des Armées, Les forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/espanol/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-est/forces-francaises-stationnees-a-djibouti/dossier-de-referance/les-forces-francaises-stationnees-a-djibouti>, accessed: 03.06.2021.

⁸⁵ Institut français des relations internationales, 2020, Confettis d'empire ou points d'appui? L'avenir de la stratégie française de présence et de souveraineté, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tenenbaum_avenir_strategie_2020.pdf, accessed: 16.03.2021.

⁸⁶ Ministère des Armées, Les forces françaises stationnées à Djibouti, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-est/djibouti/dossier/les-forces-francaises-stationnees-a-djibouti>, accessed: 14.03.2021.

- Operation Sangaris that took place in 2014 in the Central African Republic,
- Operation Chammal countering the expansion of ISIS in African countries between the years 2014 and 2015,
- The evacuation of Yemeni citizens in 2015,
- The anti-terrorist operation Barkhane in the Sahel region in 2015.

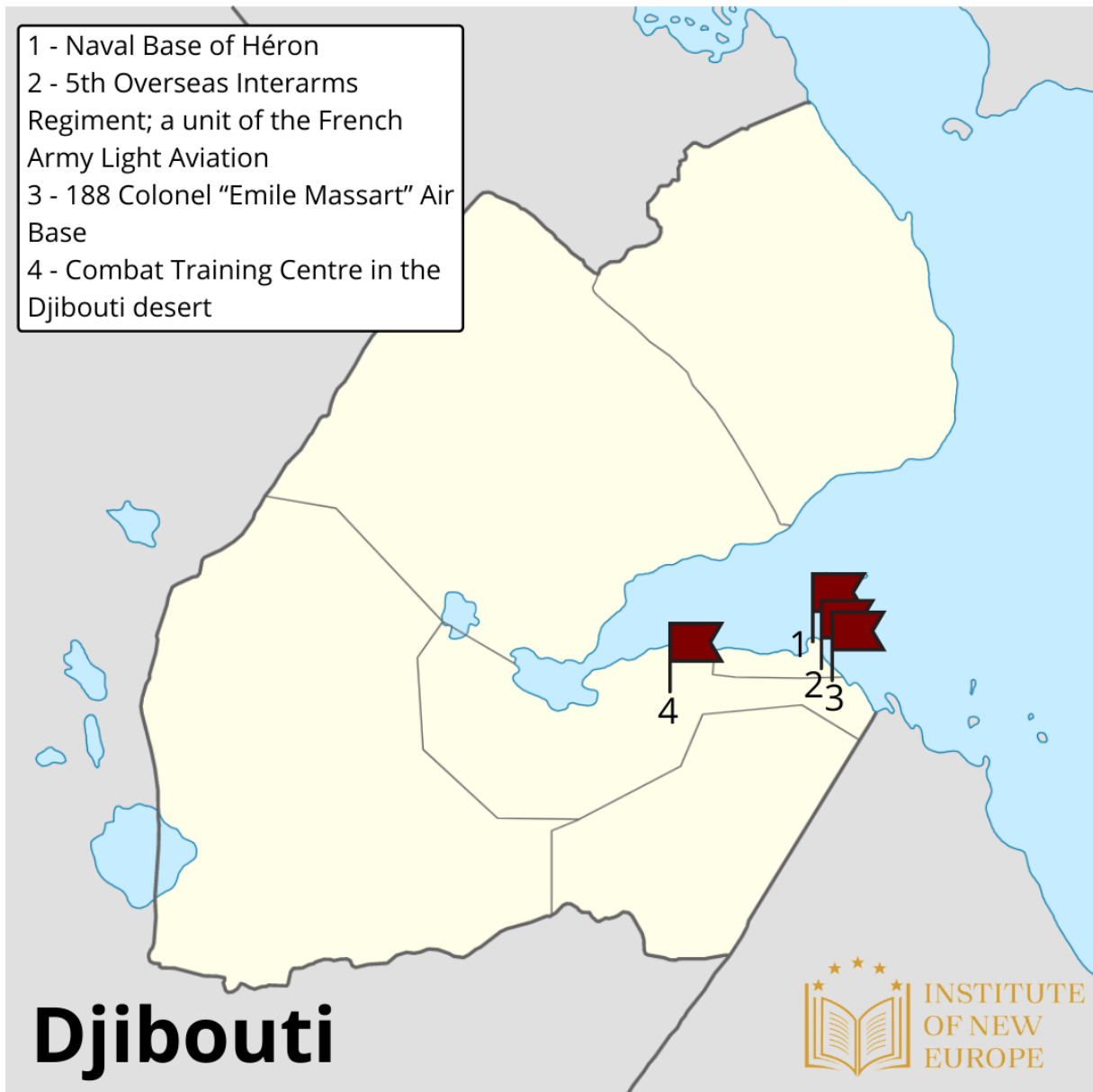
Conclusions and recommendations

Aside from conducting external operations, the presence forces were given 2 main aims. The first one is the ability to protect and intervene in naval trade routes. Djibouti's location between Europe, the Far East, the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa makes it one of the most important trade routes in the world. Secondly, the presence of French armed forces in the country is meant to ensure the interior security of the Western countries. In Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in Somalia and Yemen (both neighbouring to Djibouti) a wide range of terrorist organisations operate, which threaten the stability of the region as a whole. FFDj ensures a swift reaction in the case of an attack, supports international operations combating crime and terrorism in the region, which then limits the ability of terrorists to infiltrate Western countries.

As a result of being one of the least developed countries in the world, Djibouti allowed several foreign military bases to be placed in its territory, hoping that they will provide military support in the event of foreign aggression. However, during the clashes with Eritrea in 2008, neither the US nor the French army provided any substantial support. France agreed upon providing logistical and intel support, but the lack of any military support had a negative effect on the relationship between both countries. As a result, Djibouti's government began negotiations with other governments about locating their military bases in the country.

Over the years, France has been reducing the number of soldiers and civil staff present in the country from 4,300 to just 1,450. Such amount is not able to compete with the 4,000 US soldiers⁸⁷ present in Djibouti. Despite the recent reduction in size, the French forces are still able to conduct effective operations in the region, and in combination with other French units in Africa, are an important element of the armed forces of the Republic.

⁸⁷ France 24, *Djibouti-China marriage 'slowly unravelling' as investment project disappoints*, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210409-djibouti-china-marriage-slowly-unravelling-as-investment-project-disappoints>, accessed 03.05.2021.



GABON



The Gabonese Republic is a French speaking country on the west coast of Central Africa, with a population of 2.2 million⁸⁸, with the capital in Libreville. Gabon gained independence in 1960.

As the era of nuclear power began in 1942, bringing with it an imminent increase in nuclear related research, so did the demand for uranium rise. For France the main source of uranium came from its colonies, i.e. Niger and Gabon⁸⁹. France mined the Gabonese uranium deposits over the period 1957-1999, i.e. until the fell of the market price of the raw material, and nowadays France imports the needed, cheaper Uranium from Canada and Niger⁹⁰. In 2009, the French Commission for Independent Radiation Monitoring Group (fr. *la Commission de recherche et d'information indépendantes sur la radioactivité*) published a report in which it estimated that, following the year-long exploitation of Uranium deposits, the soil, ground water, forests and buildings in Gabon would be contaminated with radioactive elements. This is said to be a result of the dumping of mine tailings into the Ngamabougou river at an estimated amount of 2 million tons of radioactive waste, out of a total 7.5 million tons produced, being dumped into the aforementioned river.

⁸⁸ Worldometers, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/gabon-population/>, accessed: 07.03.2021.

⁸⁹ N. R. Pederson, The French Desire for Uranium and its Effects on French Foreign Policy in Africa, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/161954185.pdf>, accessed: 04.05.2021.

⁹⁰ Nuclear Threat Initiative, France, <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/france/nuclear/>, accessed: 04.05.2021.

French Armed Forces in Gabon (fr. *les Éléments français au Gabon*)

The armed forces are located in Gabon based on the 1960 defence agreement⁹¹. Even after the country's gain of independence, the French forces continued to reside in the country, mainly because of previously mentioned Uranium deposits and also rich oil deposits. In 2010, a new agreement was signed, forming a defence partnership, and strengthening the military cooperation between the two⁹².

Since September 1960, the French forces in Gabon has changed their names several times, starting off with the French Army in Gabon (fr. *les troupes français au Gabon*), then in 2007 changed to French Forces in Gabon (fr. *les Forces français au Gabon*) and finally in September 2014 to Military Units in Gabon (fr. *les éléments français au Gabon, EFG*). Together with the centre for operational cooperation (fr. *le pôle opérationnel de coopération, POC*), the EFG and the Senegalese armed forces constitute an operational and logistical support for West African countries. EFG is also responsible for providing support and training on collective security matters for countries that are part of the Economic Community of Central African States (fr. *la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique centrale, CEEAC*), ensuring stability in the region. The exact extent of the training is agreed together with the CEEAC member states. The Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente, ZRP*) incorporates all 11 countries of the CEEAC⁹³.

The Commander of Armed Forces in Gabon (fr. *le Commandant les éléments français au Gabon, COMELEF*) reports directly to the Chief of the Defence Staff (fr. *le Chef d'état-major des armées, CEMA*). Together with the heads of the diplomatic missions and the military attachés he is the messenger of the CEEAC and the Chief of Staff of the 11 member states. One of his main responsibilities is managing and developing the cooperation between the states that are part of the EFG's ZRP.

The EFG forces stationed in Liberville have a head count of 350 soldiers⁹⁴. Their support for the host countries' armed forces primarily takes the form of operational and technical

⁹¹ Sénat, Projet de loi, Portant approbation des Accords particuliers, conclus le 17 août 1960 entre le Gouvernement de la République Française et le Gouvernement de la République Gabonaise, https://www.senat.fr/leg/1960-1961/i1960_1961_0007.pdf, accessed: 01.03.2021.

⁹² Sénat, Session ordinaire de 2010-2011, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/l10-245/l10-2451.pdf>, accessed: 01.03.2021.

⁹³ Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Rwanda.

⁹⁴ Ministère des Armées, Carte des opérations et missions militaires, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/carte-des-operations-et-missions-

training that takes place both in Liberville and among the other CEEAC member states. For example, between November and December 2020 the EFG conducted training on the handling of the M21 Sniper Weapon together with the Cameroonian forces⁹⁵. The joint exercises aim to improve the operational abilities of the partner countries, improving defence abilities and the general levels of security, whilst also supporting peacekeeping missions such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The coordination and overlooking of the EFG's activities rests on the shoulders of the Office of the Cooperation of Activities (fr. *le bureau coopération activités*)⁹⁶.

Aside from conducting various training activities, the France and Gabonese armed forces cooperate on a range of other initiatives:

- Fighting local terrorist groups,
- Maintaining control of the land and sea borders,
- Peacekeeping missions,
- Preparing operational and tactical chains of command,
- Intelligence cooperation,
- Conserving technical equipment,
- Techniques of combat in jungle environments and in airborne insertion⁹⁷.

The military units in Gabon consist of the following:

- **6th Marine Infantry Battalion** (fr. *le 6^e bataillon d'infanterie de marine*), which has been stationed in camp Charles de Gaulle in Liberville since 1975. The battalion runs a centre focused on improving operational and general cooperation in Central Africa, working closely with all the CEEAC member states. It is a mixed battalion including infantry and armoured forces, as well as units specialising in jungle and air combat. It also ensures the

militaires?fbclid=IwAR2zj9uUCitNi-CfXMoZz0_5356sWtwHzxZpuH_YedkXexekMWDmzwpTIGo, accessed: 01.03.2021.

⁹⁵ Ministère des Armées, EFG : 21 cadres des forces armées camerounaises obtiennent leur diplôme « d'aide moniteur tir », <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/afrique/afrique-centrale/gabon/actualites/efg-21-cadres-des-forces-armees-camerounaises-obtiennent-leur-diplome-d-aide-moniteur-tir>, accessed: 01.03.2021.

⁹⁶ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.emsome.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/fr/regiments-ft-ome/189-6eme-bima?showall=1>, accessed: 21.04.2021.

⁹⁷ Ministère des Armées, Les éléments français au Gabon, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-centrale/gabon/dossier/les-elements-francais-au-gabon>, accessed: 01.03.2021.

protection of access rights for the EFG and defends the land infrastructure. It also runs a Training Centre focused on Preparing to Fight in Overseas and Foreign environments in the Gabonese forests (fr. *le centre d'aguerrissement de l'outremer et l'étranger en forêt gabonaise*), which provides training on areas such as disarming improvised explosive devices, airborne operations, and the activity of special forces⁹⁸. The intensive courses are aimed at preparing forces for potential conflicts in the region, enabling swift reaction and support in a wide range of missions (e.g. the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) and securing of land and sea borders, such as when fighting terrorists organisations such as Boko Haram.

- **The “Guy Pidoux” Air Base**, where the Air Unit 470 is based (fr. *les éléments Air 470, EA 470*), is located in the Leon M’ba international airport in Liberville. The unit offers logistical support for military airships. The unit comprises one “Fennec” helicopter⁹⁹.

Aside from the aforementioned military units the Charles de Gaulle camp in Liberville consists of several support units:

- Joint Directorate of Infrastructure Networks and Information Systems (fr. *la Direction interarmées des réseaux d'infrastructure et des systèmes d'information, DIRSI*).
- The Directorate of the Overseas Police Precinct in Gabon (fr. *la Direction du Commissariat d'Outre-Mer au Gabon, DICOM Gabon*).
- Directorate of Defence Infrastructure (fr. *la Direction d'Infrastructure de la Défense, DID*).
- Joint Medical Centre (fr. *le Centre Médical Interarmées, CMIA*).
- The Military Petrol Support Unit (fr. *le Détachement du Service des Essences des Armées, SEA*).
- Bureau of Protection and Defence Security (fr. *le Poste de la Protection et de la Sécurité de la Défense, PPSD*).
- A branch of the Prévôtal gendarmerie (fr. *la gendarmerie prévôtale*)¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ Ministère des Armées, Les éléments français au Gabon, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-centrale/gabon/dossier/les-elements-francais-au-gabon>, accessed: 01.03.2021.

¹⁰⁰ The formation of the French National Gendarmerie is responsible for the policing of civil and military matters in French overseas territories or international military bases and works closely with the French armed forces. Its responsibilities include overseeing compliance with internal security laws, gathering intel, keeping track of crimes committed by or against the French armed forces and carrying out investigations into the culprits. The Gendarmerie is under military authority.

The military units in Gabon offer operational and logistical support for the armed forces of the Republic of France (fr. *la Base de Soutien Interarmées de Théâtre*) in Central Africa when it comes to military operations and the movement of units¹⁰¹. The main responsibility of the forces is training conducting for CEEAC member states and preparing them for potential military engagement. The cooperation on the operational level is in-line with attempts to reinforce the capacities of African countries to maintain long-lasting peace (fr. *le renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix*) and it is meant to enable the African Union and other subregional communities to maintain military units that are well-trained and can react swiftly in case of danger, African Standby Force (fr. *la Force Africaine en Attente*).

Conclusions and recommendations

France continuously maintains a military presence in Gabon since the year 1960, which is the longest lasting mission of the country on the African continent¹⁰². France's continued engagement is a result of Gabon's geographical location, which enables a swift intervention in case of danger in all corners of the continent. Two of the main threats are the numerous terrorist organisations that are present in the region, that over-time could expand their activity into Europe. The second threat is any potential impact on maritime trade. In France, maintaining a military presence in Gabon is a case of keeping national interests in Central Africa.

Although the amount of military and civil personnel of Permanent Forward Presence Forces has declined over the years, there are no plans for a total retreat. One of the main reasons is France's engagement in UN missions on the African continent. Furthermore, thanks to training the Gabonese armed forces, France can employ them in missions in other countries, without directly engaging themselves. Gabon continues to play a key strategic role in maintaining control in Central Africa and enables France to directly respond to any challenges to its strategic priorities.

¹⁰¹ Ministère des Armées, EFG : Formation des futurs prévôts gabonais de la MINUSCA, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-centrale/gabon/actualites/efg-formation-des-futurs-prevots-gabonais-de-la-minusca>, accessed: 05.03.2021.

¹⁰² Sénat, Rapport, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/l09-639/l09-6391.pdf>, p. 12, accessed: 04.05.2021.



SENEGAL



Being located on the westernmost point of the continent and the nearby numerous trade and tourist routes, Senegal is often called the “Gateway to Africa”. In colonial times the area played an important strategic role for the European countries due to the ease of mooring of ships and access to the inland, being a source of conflict between the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain.

French forces have been present in Senegal since the 17th century. Initially that was due to the international slave and gold trade. In 1814, Senegal was incorporated into France based on the Treaty of Paris, to later on gain independence in April 1960.

Senegal’s (and many other ex-French colonies in the region) currency is the CFA franc¹⁰³. It was created in 1945 by France and was tied with a fixed exchange rate to the French franc and later to the euro. As a result of bilateral agreements, the countries using the CFA franc did

¹⁰³ CFA franc is used in: Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic, Togo, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau.

not have the possibility of exporting at a lower price, while France was able to easily promote its products in the various countries.

Military Units in Senegal (fr. *les Éléments français au Sénégal*)

The French armed forces did not offer military support immediately after Senegal's independence. However, they supported the Mali Federation, a short-lived alliance (lasting only until August 1960), between the French colonies of Sudan and the Republic of Sudan in West Africa. The only support offered was focused towards the countries that were in the process of creating common armed forces, as well as including cooperation in the delivery of natural resources (i.e. liquid, gaseous hydrocarbons, uranium), the preparation of joint defence plans and cooperation on external matters¹⁰⁴. The cooperation was limited to protecting only from external threats.

The armed forces arrived in Senegal only in 1974 because of a defence agreement signed between both countries. The agreement set-out the rules of the aid and support between the 2 countries in the matters of defence and authorised France to locate 1,350 soldiers on the Cape Verde Peninsula¹⁰⁵. In 2011, following a renegotiation of the agreement, the French Cape Verdean Armed Forces (fr. *les Forces françaises du Cap-Vert*, which were set up in 1974) were replaced by the Military Units in Senegal (fr. *les éléments français au Sénégal*, EFS)¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, under the new agreement, the 23rd Marines Battalion (fr. *le 23^e Bataillon d'infanterie de marine*, BIM) and the 160th Dakar-Ouakam airbase (fr. *la base aérienne 160 Dakar-Ouakam*) were supposed to be dismantled and the number of soldiers was to be reduced to 365. Aside from the full-time military personnel (of around 350¹⁰⁷), the EFS employs 40 civil servants and 166 Senegalese employees¹⁰⁸. The aforementioned changes followed the recommendations of White Paper on Defence and National Security from 2008 and were in-

¹⁰⁴ Accords signés ou paraphés le 4 Avril 1960 entre la République Française et les Gouvernements de la République du Sénégal, de la République Soudanaise et de la Fédération du Mali, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44824252?seq=1>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

¹⁰⁵ Sénat, Première session ordinaire de 1975-1976 Rapport, https://www.senat.fr/rap/1975-1976/i1975_1976_0113.pdf, accessed: 11.03.2021.

¹⁰⁶ Assemblée Nationale, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/pdf/rapports/r0932.pdf>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

¹⁰⁷ Ministère des Armées, Carte des opérations et missions militaires, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/carte-des-operations-et-missions-militaires?fbclid=IwAR2zj9uUCitNi-CfXMozz0_5356sWtwHzxZpuH_YedkXexekMWDmzwpTIGo, accessed: 25.03.2021.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

line with the will of the Senegalese governments, which wanted to reclaim the territories occupied by the French army¹⁰⁹.

The EFS bases are located in the Contre-amiral Protet district, i.e. in the former military port in Dakar and on the grounds of the former 160th Dakar-Ouakam airbase in the Colonel Frédéric Geille quartier. On top of that, the EFS has the ability of receiving and conducting stopovers on the grounds of the partially militarised Léopold Sédar Senghor airport. The military alarm system “Guepard” is also at the EFS’s disposal, allowing it to effectively utilise tactical command as well as air and navy forces¹¹⁰, which consists of the following:

- **The Air Force** equipped with the “Falcon 50” and “Atlantique 2” airplanes¹¹¹. They are split between the Maritime Patrol Units (fr. *le détachement de patrouille maritime*) and the Air Stopover Units (fr. *l’unité d’escale aéronautique*) that is integrated with the Air Guard Department (fr. *les pompiers de l’Air*)¹¹².
- **The Navy Forces** which constitute the most important support system for missions carried out in Western Africa¹¹³. They are integrated with the special intervention unit NEDEX (fr. *neutralisation, enlèvement et destruction d’engins explosifs*), responsible for the neutralisation, removal and disposal of explosives¹¹⁴.
- Joint Directorate of Infrastructure Networks and Information Systems (fr. *la Direction interarmées des réseaux d’infrastructure et des systèmes d’information*, DIRSI) in Rufisque¹¹⁵.

The Military Units in Senegal (fr. *le commandement des Éléments français au Sénégal*, COMELEF) and the defence base (fr. *la base de défense*) are overseen by a general that reports directly to the Chief of the Defence Staff of the Military Units. In terms of operational

¹⁰⁹ Assemblée Nationale, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/pdf/rapports/r0932.pdf>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

¹¹⁰ Les forces françaises prépositionnées, <https://www.asafrance.fr/images/dossier-forces-francaises-prepositionnees.pdf>, accessed: 13.04.2021.

¹¹¹ Les forces françaises prépositionnées, <https://www.asafrance.fr/images/dossier-forces-francaises-prepositionnees.pdf>, accessed: 13.04.2021.

¹¹² *Les forces françaises prépositionnées*, <https://www.asafrance.fr/images/dossier-forces-francaises-prepositionnees.pdf>, accessed: 13.04.2021.

¹¹³ Ibidem.

¹¹⁴ *Les forces françaises prépositionnées*, <https://www.asafrance.fr/images/dossier-forces-francaises-prepositionnees.pdf>, accessed: 13.04.2021.

¹¹⁵ Ministère des Armées, *Les Éléments français au Sénégal*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-ouest/senegal/dossier/les-elements-francais-au-senegal>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

cooperation (military and civil-military) between the Senegalese armed forces, member states of the Economic Community of West African States (fr. *la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, CEDEAO) and Mauretania, COMELEC works together with the EFG. EFS and EFG are linked by the permanent operational cooperation (fr. *le commandement opérationnel permanente*) which includes cooperation on missions in the Sahel and Sahara regions, and the Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*) of the EFG, as well as intelligence cooperation and intel exchange.

The EFS is organised around 2 units:

- **The Operational Cooperation Group** (fr. *le groupement de coopération opérationnelle*) that combines the Operational Cooperation unit (fr. *l'unité de coopération opérationnelle*), responsible for planning and leading the missions executed as a part of the cooperation with the African partner countries (including combat and operational support), the naval base (fr. *la station navale*), a fire brigade unit (fr. *le détachement de pompiers*), the aeronautical centre (fr. *le pôle aéronautique*)¹¹⁶ and the military equipment maintenance unit (fr. *le détachement de maintenance des matériels terrestres*),
- The Specialised Support units formed of: Directorate of Defence Infrastructure (fr. *la Direction d'Infrastructure de la Défense*, DID), the Joint Medical Centre (fr. *le Centre Médical Interarmées*, CMIA), the Prévôtal gendarmerie (fr. *la gendarmerie prévôtale*), the Military Petrol Support Unit (fr. *le Détachement du Service des Essences des Armées*, SEA) and the Bureau of Protection and Defence Security (fr. *le Poste de la Protection et de la Sécurité de la Défense*, PPSD)¹¹⁷.

The aims of the EFS are:

- Leading bilateral cooperation in terms of state defence,
- Developing bilateral and regional cooperation aiming to reinforce the capacities of African countries to maintain long-lasting peace (fr. *le Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix*, RECAMP), particularly in the training of the African Standby Forces (fr. *la Force en attente*) and peacekeeping in Africa,

¹¹⁶ Assemblée Nationale, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/pdf/rapports/r0932.pdf>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem.

- Maintaining the ability to react swiftly to any threats to the military missions in Senegal and to be able to intervene and support the French Armed Forces based in the Sahel Region and the Ivory Coast.

As the centre for operational cooperation (fr. *le pôle opérationnel de coopération*, POC), the EFS coordinates the regional military and operational cooperation efforts focused on the Operational Management Branch (fr. *le détachement d'instruction opérationnelle*, DIO), the Technical Efficiency Management Branch (fr. *la détachements d'instruction technique*, DIT) and conducting joint exercises/trainings¹¹⁸. Just in 2019, the DIO conducted around 260 training sessions, attended by almost 6,500 soldiers, improving the overall capacity of the units taking part in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (fr. *la Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali*, MINUSMA)¹¹⁹. On top of that, the EFS is a point of support (fr. *le point d'appui*)¹²⁰ that has the capacity to receive support units in its air and naval bases, as well as maintaining joint support cells in the designated theatre of operations (fr. *le poste de commandement interarmées de théâtre*). EFS also has the ability to intervene in the case of any threat to the livelihood of French citizens.

Conclusions and recommendations

The main aim of the Military Units in Senegal is counteracting the several terrorist organisations in the region that threaten the security and internal stability of African and European countries. Training sessions organised or co-organised by the various units of the EFS reinforce the peacekeeping and security capabilities of the countries in Africa, whilst reducing the need for potential involvement from the Fifth Republic, which in turn reduces its mission-related expenses.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹¹⁹ Ministère des Armées, *Les Éléments français au Sénégal*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-ouest/senegal/dossier/les-elements-francais-au-senegal>, accessed: 17.03.2021.

¹²⁰ In military theory, this is where soldiers gather before a battle. There are often monuments commemorating the *point d'appui* for significant combats.

All French forces in Africa cooperate and support each other closely¹²¹. By being able to quickly move soldiers to the various corners of the African continent, the armed forces can swiftly react in the event of any threats to the countries in the region and help maintain regional stability and security. In recent years, the number of French soldiers in Senegal has been reduced as a result of the greater involvement in the Barkhane mission.

Senegal is an important point for France when it comes to foreign engagement. One can monitor the situation in Africa from the westernmost country; this has a significant impact on the army's logistic abilities. What is more, Senegal is still more stable than Mali or Niger. It seems that the troops of the Fifth Republic will not leave Senegal for the next decades, since the rivalry for influence in West Africa, even in case of the Chinese investments, imposes maintaining partnership relations. The main objective will be to keep the forces and the market. In addition to that, Paris will enhance internal security and assure return on French investments in Dakar.



¹²¹ *Rapport d'information déposé en application de l'article 145 du règlement par la commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées en conclusion des travaux d'une mission d'information sur l'opération Serval au Mali*, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/rap-info/i1288.asp>, accessed: 20.04.2021.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE



The Côte d'Ivoire is located in the north of the Gulf of Guinea. In the past it belonged to French West Africa federation which consisted of 8 French colonial territories (Mauritania, Senegal, French Sudan (now Mali), French Guinea (now Guinea), Ivory Coast, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Dahomey (now Benin) and Niger.

Despite gaining its independence in 1960, the country continues to maintain close ties with France, particularly over economic matters. It is the 3rd largest trade partner of France in the Sub-Saharan region, behind South Africa and Nigeria. There are around 700 French companies operating in the Ivory Coast, including 200 subsidiaries¹²². The above-mentioned companies generate around 30% of the Ivory Coast's GDP¹²³.

French Armed Forces in the Côte d'Ivoire (fr. *les Forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire*)

In 2012, the Côte d'Ivoire and France signed a defence partnership¹²⁴, under which the French Armed Forces in the Côte d'Ivoire (fr. *les Forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire*, FFCI)¹²⁵,

¹²² Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/cote-d-ivoire/>, accessed: 08.05.2021.

¹²³ Ibidem.

¹²⁴ Assemblée Nationale, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/pdf/projets/pl0426.pdf>, accessed: 06.05.2021.

¹²⁵ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-ouest/forces-francaises-en-cote-d-ivoire/dossier-de-referance/les-forces-francaises-en-cote-d-ivoire>, accessed: 09.05.2021.

consisting of 950 soldiers (as of March 2021)¹²⁶ are stationed. The objective of the military presence is the intensification of relations over military matters, which is also in-line with the priorities set-out in the Whiter Paper on Defence and National Security from 2013, that assigns the region as a major priority in the eyes of France.

The FFCI consists of a wide range of units that together form the forward operations base (fr. *la base opérationnelle avancée*, BOA). The Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente*, ZRP) of the French forces incorporates the whole landmass of the Ivory coast, as well as its territorial waters and airspace¹²⁷.

The command of the FFCI (fr. *le commandement des forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire*, COMFOR) and the defence base (fr. *la base de défense*, COMBdD) is overseen by the Chief of the Defence Staff of the French Armed Forces in the Ivory Coast. The French Armed forces consist of:

- **Camp Port-Bouët** where the **43rd Marine Infantry Battalion** (fr. *la 43^e bataillon d'infanterie de marine*) is stationed. The battalion consists of: an infantry company, an armoured squadron, an artillery regiment, an engineering unit, a unit responsible for the maintenance of ground-based equipment and light aviation unit¹²⁸. The camp also contains a training centre focused on operating in lagoons (fr. *le détachement d'instruction et d'aguerrissement lagunaire*, DIAL) and a LCL camp with a shooting-training complex.
- **The "La Bourgerie" Airbase** (fr. *l'emprise de « La Bourgerie »*) located in the Félix Houphouët-Boigny airport.

The FFCI also contains a range of support units:

- A branch of the Prévôtal gendarmerie (fr. *la gendarmerie prévôtale*),
- The members of staff of the General command of the French Armed Forces (fr. *l'état-major interarmées*, EMIA),

¹²⁶ Ministère des armées – Opérations, *Les forces français en Côte d'Ivoire*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-ouest/cote-d-ivoire/dossier-de-referance/les-forces-francaises-en-cote-d-ivoire>, accessed: 20.03.2021.

¹²⁷ *Les forces français prépositionnées*, Ministère des Armées, DOSSIER DE PRESSE - Forces prépositionnées_v2-actualisé_validé final, accessed: 21.03.2021.

¹²⁸ *Etat-Major Spécialisé pour l'Outre Mer et l'Etranger*, <https://www.emsome.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/fr/regiments-ft-ome/173-43e-bima?start=2>, accessed: 20.03.2021.

- The Joint Directorate of the Overseas Police Precinct (fr. *la direction interarmées du commissariat*, DICOM),
- The 168th Airforce unit (fr. *le détachement air 168*),
- The Joint Directorate of Health Care in Central & West Africa (fr. *la direction interarmées du service de santé de l'Afrique centrale et de l'ouest*, DIASS AFCO),
- Joint Directorate of Infrastructure Networks and Information System (fr. *la Direction Interarmées des Réseaux d'Infrastructure et des systèmes d'Information*, DIRSI),
- Directorate for Defence Infrastructure (fr. *la Direction d'Infrastructure de la Défense*, DID),
- The Petrol Liaison Service unit (fr. *le détachement de liaison du service des essences*, DL SEA AFCO),
- The Ammunition Liaison Service unit (fr. *le détachement de liaison du service interarmées des munitions*, DL SIMu),
- Signal Corps (fr. *le détachement autonome des transmissions*, DAT)¹²⁹.

The FFCI have been established to provide military support in key strategic interest areas for the French Republic. They replaced the forces stationed in the country as a part of Opération Licorne, that were supporting the UN peacekeeping mission in the Côte d'Ivoire since 2002.

The FFCI focuses on supporting missions in Central and Western Africa, particularly on Operation Barkhane, in which the FFCI provides logistical and reserve army support. The presence of French armed forces also ensures the security of French nationals and the readiness to intervene in any crisis occurring in neighboring countries. Based on this, the FFCI provides training and prepares the armed forces of various African countries to take part in international and peacekeeping missions. By supporting the defence abilities of African countries, the FFCI enables the region to remain stable. However, the growing threat of terrorism, organised crime, arms trafficking and natural disasters are severely undermining any civil and military efforts in the region. Finally, the FFCI offers aid to civilians and supports the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as part of a mandate given to it by the UN Security Council.

¹²⁹ *Les forces français en Côte d'Ivoire*, op. cit.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Côte d'Ivoire continues to be a key country for France due to its geographical location that enables it to maintain control over West Africa. Both countries cooperate on matters regarding countering terrorism and maintaining stability in the region. The FFCI also plays a key role in Operation Barkhane, which aims to counter terrorist threats in the Sahel region. On top of that, by having access to the ports in the Gulf of Guinea, the FFCI guarantees logistical support to the French forces in Mali. All of the abovementioned factors may suggest that it is French interest to continue developing its relations with the Côte d'Ivoire as it helps to identify and tackle any security threats emerging in the region, which constitutes the main reason behind the engagement of French armed forces in Africa.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a small country located in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, which also represents one of the more secure territories in a region surrounded by conflicts. Such instability is related to the ongoing war in Yemen, the threat from Iran, international terrorism, or piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, among others.

The UAE armed forces are mainly equipped by the United States, France, the United Kingdom and South Korea. Since 1976, 70% of the United Arab Emirates' military equipment consists of French vehicles and equipment¹³⁰. This makes France the country's second-largest arms supplier¹³¹.

¹³⁰ *Sénat, session extraordinaire de 2010-2011*, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/l10-724/l10-7241.pdf>, accessed: 04.05.2021.

¹³¹ *Under the radar. The United Arab Emirates, arms transfers and regional conflict*, PAX, Utrecht 2017, p. 17, <https://paxforpeace.nl/media/download/pax-report-under-the-radar--arms-trade.pdf>, accessed: 06.05.2021.

Forces Stationed in the United Arab Emirates

(fr. *les Forces Françaises aux Emirats Arabes Unis*)

In 1995, France and the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement on defence cooperation¹³². In January 2008, an agreement was reached on the establishment of a military base¹³³. Inaugurated in 2009, the French military facility in the UAE (fr. *l'implantation militaire française aux Emirats arabes unis*, IMFEAU) is located in the capital - Abu Dhabi. The base was also known as Camp de la Paix and Abu Dhabi Base. In 2011, the French military presence was transformed into the Forces Stationed in the United Arab Emirates (fr. *les Forces Françaises aux Emirats Arabes Unis*, FFEAU)¹³⁴. Currently, there are approximately 650 French soldiers stationed in the UAE¹³⁵.

The costs of maintaining the FFEAU are covered by the United Arab Emirates. It is estimated that they allocate about €15 and 20 million for this purpose each year¹³⁶. On the basis of agreements between the countries, in the event of an attack on the UAE, France is obliged to maximize its military involvement.

Since 2019, the command of the FFEAU (fr. *le commandant les forces françaises stationnées aux Émirats arabes unis*, COMFOR FFEAU) and the maritime zone of the Indian Ocean (fr. *le commandant de la zone maritime de l'océan Indien*, ALINDIEN) has been exercised by the Chief of Staff of the French Army. The French military complex in the United Arab Emirates consists of:

- **Naval Base** (fr. *la base navale*), located in the port of Mina Zayed, which can accommodate ships with a draft of up to 10 meters. This allows most French navy vessels to dock except for aircraft carriers.
- **Air Force Base 104 Al Dhafra** (fr. *la base aérienne 104 d'Al Dhafra*, BA 104), where a fighter squadron 1/7 “Provence” is stationed (fr. *Escadron de Chasse 1/7 Provence*).

¹³² Le Figaro, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2008/01/16/01003-20080116ARTFIG00002-la-france-cree-une-base-militaire-face-a-l-iran.php>, accessed: 03.05.2021.

¹³³ E. Jarry, *France, UAE sign military and nuclear agreements*, Reuters, 15.01.2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-sarkozy-gulf-idUSL1517472620080115>, accessed: 19.03.2021.

¹³⁴ Ministère des Armées, *Les forces françaises prépositionnées*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/466302/7428994/DOSSIER%20-%20Forces%20pr%C3%A9positionn%C3%A9es.pdf>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

¹³⁵ *DOSSIER DE PRESSE. Les forces françaises prépositionnées*, Ministère des Armées, 2013, p. 43-44.

¹³⁶ P. Boulanger, *Le positionnement géostratégique de la France dans le golfe Arabo-Persique : la base interarmées d'Abu Dhabi*, "Outre-Terre" nr 3/2011, p. 531-537, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-outre-terre1-2011-3-page-531.htm>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

“Dassault Rafale”¹³⁷ fighter jets are stationed in the base, as well as a C-135 transport aircraft¹³⁸.

- **The 5th Cuirassier Regiment** (fr. *le 5^e Régiment de Cuirassiers, 5^e RC*) in the military camp in Zayed Military City. It is designed to train soldiers for both urban and desert operations. In 2011, the 13th Demi-Brigade of Foreign Legion (fr. *13^e demi-brigade de la légion étrangère, DBLE*) left Djibouti¹³⁹, in order to move to Abu Dhabi, and was subsequently replaced by the then-formed 5th Cuirassier Regiment¹⁴⁰. The Regiment is equipped, among others, with VBCI combat armored infantry vehicles and CAESAR trucks equipped with an artillery system¹⁴¹.

Since 2009, FFEAU units have been participating in Operation EUNavFor Atalanta (The European Union Naval Force Somali - Operation Atalanta) aimed at protecting ships in the Pacific Ocean from Somali pirates¹⁴². French soldiers have also participated in the fight against the Islamic State and in Operation Chammal. Forces in the UAE also provide operational monitoring in their Area of Responsibility (fr. *la zone de responsabilité permanente, ZRP*), which includes the territories of the UAE, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and the maritime zone of the Indian Ocean, its territorial waters and airspace, in particular Sri Lanka and the Maldives¹⁴³. The FFEAU also maintains bilateral and

¹³⁷ *Chiffres clés de l'Armée de l'air et de l'espace*, Ministère des Armées, 2021,

<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/presentation/chiffres-cles/chiffres-cles-de-l-armee-de-l-air-et-de-l-espace>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹³⁸ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/actus-air/pitch-black-2018-le-convoyage>, accessed: 07.05.2021.

¹³⁹ Foreign Legion Info, <http://foreignlegion.info/units/13th-demi-brigade-of-the-foreign-legion/>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

¹⁴⁰ Le 5e régiment de Cuirassiers officiellement recréé aux Emirats Arabes Unis, <http://lignesdedefense.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2016/06/05/le-5e-regiment-de-cuirassiers-officiellement-recree-aux-emir-16299.html>, accessed: 09.04.2021.

¹⁴¹ Le 5e régiment de Cuirassiers officiellement recréé aux Emirats Arabes Unis, <http://lignesdedefense.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2016/06/05/le-5e-regiment-de-cuirassiers-officiellement-recree-aux-emir-16299.html>, accessed: 09.04.2021.

¹⁴² P. Boulanger, *Le positionnement géostratégique de la France dans le golfe Arabo-Persique : la base interarmées d'Abu Dhabi*, « Outre-Terre » nr 3/2011, p. 531-537.

¹⁴³ Ministère des Armées, Les forces françaises prépositionnées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/466302/7428994/DOSSIER%20-%20Forces%20pr%C3%A9positionn%C3%A9es.pdf>, accessed: 25.04.2021.

regional operational cooperation, primarily through joint training, and they focus on the protection of French citizens.

In 2019, another agreement was signed between France and the UAE, in which the countries pledged to strengthen military cooperation¹⁴⁴. The cooperation also includes the participation of French forces in the defence of the Emirates against any aggression. In this regard, regular exercises are held, such as El-Himeimat¹⁴⁵, which strengthened France's credibility as a partner of the UAE. In the light of the risk of an escalation of the conflict in the Strait of Hormuz, the East Dolphin mine drill near Abu Dhabi also took place in 2019¹⁴⁶.

Conclusions and recommendations

The possession of a military base on UAE territory is an important strategic point due to this country's geopolitical location - on the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz - as well as from the perspective of France's national interests due to the financial benefits. UAE procurement of French weapons was worth €4.7 billion between 2010 and 2019 and €1.5 billion in 2019 alone¹⁴⁷.

Security concerns and the fact that this is an area rich with oil. Moreover, gas deposits play there a major role. It is estimated that around 40% of the world's oil supply, including that to France, is transported through the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time, the region is threatened by pirate activities in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, which may disrupt the stability of the supply chain.

Moreover, the Yemen LNG export terminal is located in Belhaf, Yemen, which is partly owned by UEA and 40% by the French petrochemical company Total. In 2019, *l'Observatoire des Armements* organization published a report revealing that a secret French military base and a United Arab Emirates prison, where UAE prisoners are subjected to torture or inhuman and

¹⁴⁴ UAE and France sign military cooperation agreement, UAE NEWS, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/uae-and-france-sign-military-cooperation-agreement-1.941953>, accessed: 24.03.2021.

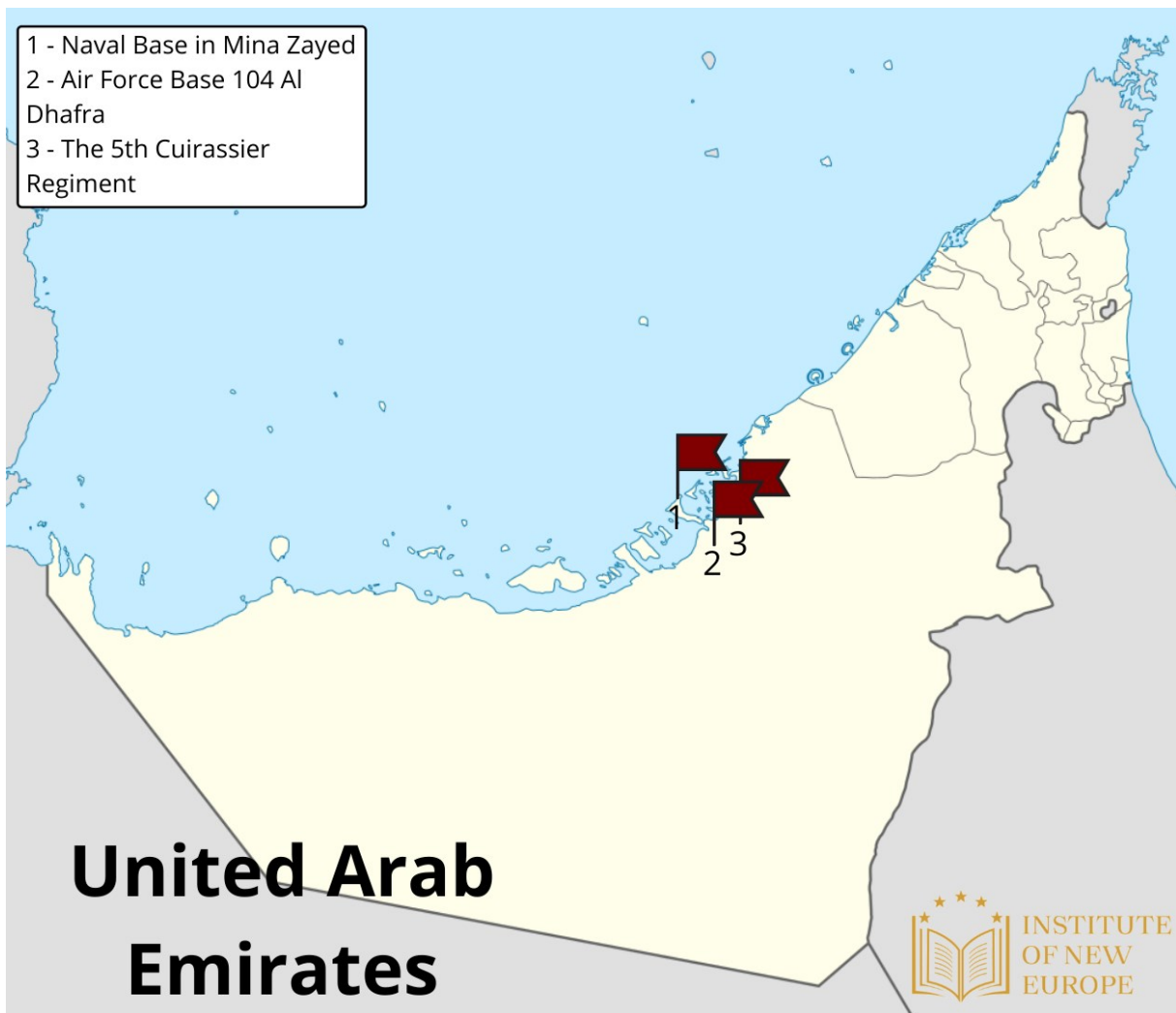
¹⁴⁵ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/forces-prepositionnees/ffeau-11e-edition-de-l-exercice-el-himeimat>, accessed: 26.04.2021.

¹⁴⁶ Institut français des relations internationales, 2020, *Confettis d'empire ou points d'appui? L'avenir de la stratégie française de présence et de souveraineté*, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tenenbaum_avenir_strategie_2020.pdf, accessed: 26.04.2021.

¹⁴⁷ Rapport au Parlement sur les exportations d'armement de la France, 2020, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/sites/default/files/rapport/pdf/274475.pdf>, accessed: 27.04.2021.

degrading treatment, are located on the site of the aforementioned terminal¹⁴⁸. French authorities are trying to avoid the topic and do not take unambiguous stances in order to, on the one hand, not to be accused of complicity in human rights violations and, on the other hand, to prevent the deterioration of relations with the UAE.

From the United Arab Emirates' perspective, the existence of a French military base enhances state security. This is visible in the case of protecting the sea lanes, which has resulted in the strengthening of energy supply security, bringing mutual benefits to the cooperating states.



¹⁴⁸ Observatoire des Armements, *Base militaire, checkpoints et prison secrète : un rapport pointe la « militarisation » des infrastructures de Total au Yémen*, <http://obsarm.org/spip.php?article325>, accessed: 15.05.2021.

FRENCH ENGAGEMENT IN NATO MISSIONS

France, with its comprehensive model of armed forces, makes an important contribution to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. It is the fourth-largest payer to the Alliance's budget. French role is of particular importance (past and present) in NATO military operations (Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya), as well as in other stabilization operations, both conducted individually (Sahel) and within the framework of international cooperation (UN, coalitions). France's operational involvement also involves participation in major Alliance exercises (3,000 French soldiers deployed to Norway as part of Trident Juncture 2018) and, above all, security operations in support of the Eastern Flank (an average of 4,000 soldiers per year). Moreover, France plays a key role in the surveillance of the airspace over the Baltic Sea (fighter aircrafts "Rafale")¹⁴⁹.

NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia

At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO member states decided to strengthen the Alliance's eastern flank and establish a NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), aiming to increase the defence and deterrence capabilities. This decision was a result of the Russian military actions in Ukraine in 2014, i.e. the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbass. As a consequence, the geopolitical situation in Central and Eastern Europe changed.

Within the framework of the program, four international Battle Groups have been established in the Baltic region - in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland¹⁵⁰. Each group is commanded by a different NATO member state, which is also responsible for coordinating military cooperation in the designated Baltic country. The military operation in Estonia, supported by soldiers from Iceland and France, has been led by the United Kingdom since March 2021¹⁵¹. The Estonian base of the NATO international battalion is located

¹⁴⁹ L'OTAN, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/dgris/action-internationale/l-otan/l-otan>, accessed: 11.05.2021.

¹⁵⁰ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, *NATO Forward Presence*, <https://shape.nato.int/operations/enhanced-forward-presence>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

¹⁵¹ Ministère des Armées, *En route vers l'Estonie*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/actu-terre/en-route-vers-l-estonie>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

in the city of Tapa, where the parent unit is the Estonian 1st Infantry Brigade¹⁵².

France participates in NATO's Forward Presence program since March 2017. So far, its troops were deployed to Lithuania in 2018 and 2020 and to Estonia in 2017 and 2019¹⁵³. French activities within the eFP framework are to emphasize the country's involvement in NATO and, through joint exercises, to transfer operational and combat capabilities and technological innovations to allied countries. The official name of the French mission is LYNX 9¹⁵⁴.

In March 2021, the Estonian battle group consisted of 1,000 soldiers, including 300 of French nationality, drawn mainly from the 12th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the Chad March Regiment, the 13th Engineer Regiment, and the 40th Artillery Regiment¹⁵⁵. The French unit has a combined tactical subdivision (fr. *le Groupement tactique interarmes*) dominated by armored units. It consists of 200 soldiers operating 12 "Leclerc" tanks, 8 VBCI wheeled armored personnel carriers, 21 VBL light armored vehicles, 2 EBG armored engineering vehicles and 8 VAB reconnaissance vehicles¹⁵⁶. As part of the French military support, 100 soldiers from the ESN national support level (fr. *l'échelon de soutien national*) are based in Estonia¹⁵⁷. They are equipped with 2 DCL armoured recovery vehicles, 6 PEB armored vehicle transporters and 7 PPLOG multifunctional logistics transporters¹⁵⁸.

The French mission in Estonia is based on two pillars - a military presence acting as a deterrent, a cooperation between the troops of NATO member states for the exchange of experience and in joint exercises to improve interoperability as well as consolidating tactical schemes in the case of a possible conflict¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵² *1st Infantry Brigade*, Republic of Estonia Defence Forces, <https://mil.ee/uksused/maavagi/1-jalavaebrigaad/>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

¹⁵³ *France and NATO*, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/our-alliances-and-cooperations/france-and-nato/>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

¹⁵⁴ DOSSIER DE PRESSE Mission Opérationnelle LYNX Estonie, Ministère des Armées, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/content/download/608802/10213270/20210304_LYNX9_Dossier%20de%20presse.pdf, accessed: 01.05.2021.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁷ The national support element ESN secures the operation of a military contingent overseas. It consists of components:

J1 - personnel, J4- logistics, J8 - budget, logistics branch (including mobility repair section and transport section, service platoon.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.



France takes part in the Enhanced Air Policing (eAP) operation within the framework of NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission as well. French airmen have participated in the operation since April 2007¹⁶⁰. The state air force is represented by the 1/2 Cigognes fighter squadron, which includes four Mirage 2000-5 fighters at the Estonian military base in Ämari¹⁶¹. French units stationed in Estonia participate in numerous operational exercises, including Allied Sky escort operations¹⁶².

¹⁶⁰ *Francuzi po raz czwarty w Szawlach*, https://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news_id=10300https://www.altair.com.pl/news/view?news_id=10300, accessed: 10.05.2021.

¹⁶¹ Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *enhanced Air Policing 2020 : La France s'entraîne avec la Suède et l'Espagne*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/europe/europe-du-nord-et-de-l-est/eap/enhanced-air-policing-2020-la-france-s-entraîne-avec-la-suede-et-l-espagne>, accessed: 26.03.2021; 3 Republic of Estonia, *1st Infantry Brigade*, https://mil.ee/en/air_force/amari-air-base/, accessed : 09.06.2021.

¹⁶² Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *enhanced Air Policing : La France vole avec son allié américain pour l'exercice « Allied Sky »*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/europe/europe-du-nord-et-de-l-est/eap/enhanced-air-policing-la-france-vole-avec-son-allie-americain-pour-l-exercice-allied-sky>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

Although the African continent remains the main area of interest for France, the country actively participates in missions conducted on NATO's eastern flank in order to reaffirm its position in the Alliance. Both the eFP and eAP missions operate on a rotational basis, allowing France to also use operational exercises to showcase its military equipment and its capabilities to potential buyers. In the short term, the Baltic States are planning to increase their defence sector investments for the period of the years 2022-2055¹⁶³. For France, this is an excellent opportunity to present itself to a potential buyer, as the existing military equipment in the eFP mission acts as a showcase for the French arms sector.

So far, the French presence in the Baltics, as well as the efficient diplomacy has resulted in the assistance of Estonian troops in Mali¹⁶⁴. France will therefore continue to participate in missions in the eastern part of Europe, since with relatively small military outlays it can win over the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have been rather ambivalent towards it so far.

Operacja Chammal

In 2014, the United States authorized an international military intervention - Operation Inherent Resolve, which is aimed against a terrorist organization composed of Islamic fundamentalists referred to as the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). Initially, the operation covered only Iraqi territory, but over time IS expanded its operations into unstable Syria, forcing the Global Coalition against ISIS to expand its mission into Syrian areas. The main initiator and commander of this international intervention are the U.S. The military intervention involves nearly 80 countries. The French equivalent of the Inherent Resolve mission is Operation Chammal¹⁶⁵. France's military presence is based on UN Security Council Resolution 2249 of November 20, 2015, recognizing that ISIS “poses a global and unprecedented threat to

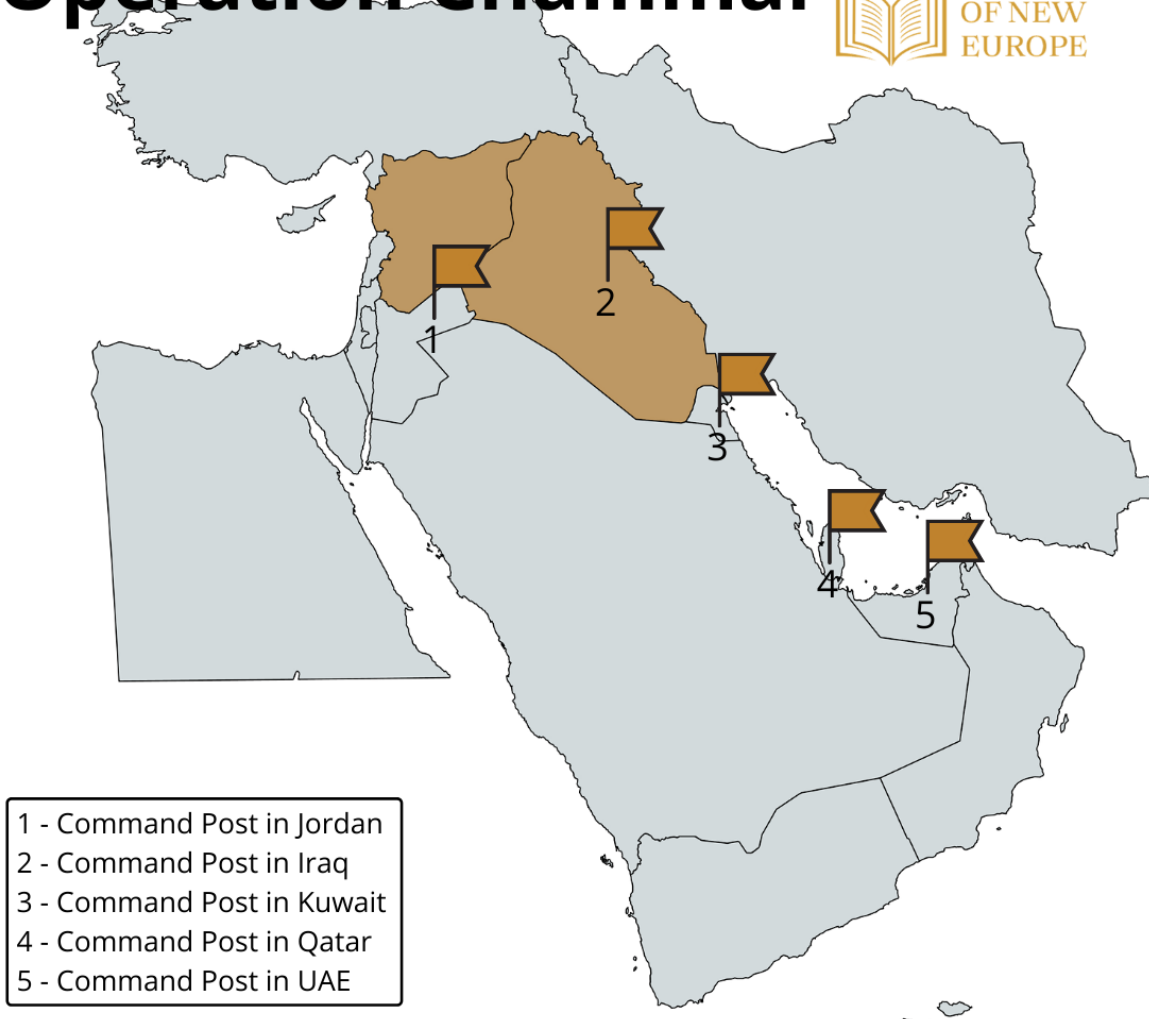
¹⁶³ T. Teluk, *Obronna wybrzeża nowym priorytetem Estonii. Szykują się wspólne inwestycje Tallinna, Rygi i Wilna*. https://trimarium.pl/obrona-wybrzeza-nowym-priorytetem-estonii-szykuja-sie-wspolne-inwestycje-tallinna-i-rygi/?fbclid=IwAR1ND8mtOw_LUtnKUAct9NIPeDqQIQCN6BfXzcaqHXxUYJwY6Xvh-KxRnQ, accessed: 26.03.2021.

¹⁶⁴ *Estonia to send special operations unit to Mali*, ERR News, <https://news.err.ee/1070023/estonia-to-send-special-operations-unit-to-mali>, accessed: 01.05.2021.

¹⁶⁵ Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *Opération CHAMMAL*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/monde/grand-levant/chammal/dossier-de-reference/operation-chammal>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

international peace and security” and calling on UN members to combat it by all means¹⁶⁶. The declared objectives of Operation Chammal include combating terrorism, defending French citizens¹⁶⁷ and the protection of civilians in Iraq and Syria¹⁶⁸.

Opération Chammal



¹⁶⁶ United Nations – Security Council, *Resolution 2178 (2014)*, [https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2178%20\(2014\)](https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2178%20(2014)), accessed: 24.04.2021.

¹⁶⁷ IS has repeatedly carried out attacks on civilians in France. In November 2015, attacks in Paris left 137 people dead and 416 injured, including nearly 100 people in critical condition.

¹⁶⁸ ISIS has committed numerous crimes against civilians. This includes, in particular, cases of executions, kidnapping of Yazidi women, their sale or abuse as sex slaves, and ethnic and religious cleansing.

The operation is based on two pillars - supporting and training of the host country's troops. While the first pillar is based on the active participation of French military units in the fight against the Islamic State¹⁶⁹, the second involves training Iraqi and Syrian soldiers to prepare them for the country's own defence. The international coalition is constantly adjusting its operations in the Levant, while France continues its own efforts in the region as part of its fight against terrorism.

The mission consists of about 600 troops, one military frigate and 11 Dassault Rafale fighters. They are supported by E-3F AWACS, C-135FR or MRTT aircrafts¹⁷⁰ and the "Atlantique 2" reconnaissance and patrol aircraft, however, they do not participate in the operation for its entire duration¹⁷¹. The air force has 3 main objectives: to support, to train, and to advise the military units of Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. Combat aircrafts directly participate in support to ground troops and in intelligence missions. Their armament includes long-range SCALP air-launched missiles¹⁷². Military units participating in the mission are stationed in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Operation Chammal is also supported by the CLEMENCEAU 21 mission, which began in the seaport of Toulon in February 2021¹⁷³. The mission zones are areas in the Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf¹⁷⁴. The mission involves the Carrier Vessel Battle Group (fr. *le groupe aéronaval*), with the aircraft carrier "Charles de Gaulle", supported by: the air defence frigate "Chavalier Paul", the multi-role frigate "Provence", the nuclear-powered submarine (SNA) and the supply ship "Var". Support is also provided by the air group, and its equipped with 20 Rafale M aircrafts, 2 E-2C Hawkeye Airborne Early Warning aircrafts 2 "Dauphin"

¹⁶⁹ Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *Dossier de presse – Opération CHAMMAL*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/monde/grand-levant/chammal/dossier-de-reference/operation-chammal>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *CHAMMAL : le MRTT participe à l'opération CHAMMAL depuis la métropole*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/monde/grand-levant/chammal/breves/chammal-le-mrttphenix-participe-a-l-operation-chammal-depuis-la-metropole>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem.

¹⁷² Ibidem.

¹⁷³ *Press Kit Clemenceau 21*, Ministère des Armées, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/606899/10193070/Press%20Kit_Clemenceau21_ENG.pdf, accessed: 02.05.2021.

¹⁷⁴ *CLEMENCEAU 21 : Bilan de la 1re phase de la participation du groupe aéronaval à l'opération CHAMMAL*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/monde/grand-levant/chammal/breves/clemenceau-21-bilan-de-la-1re-phase-de-la-participation-du-groupe-aeronaval-a-l-operation-chammal>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

helicopters and 1 “Caïman” helicopter¹⁷⁵. The main tasks of the mission include maritime area control, reconnaissance and supply. The USS “Porter” destroyer, the Belgian frigate “Léopold I”, the Greek frigate “Kanaris” and the Italian frigate “Margotini” are also participating in the mission¹⁷⁶.

Major deployments within Operation Chammal are not expected in the near future. Despite victories on the side of the Global Coalition against ISIS, the region of Syria and Iraq remains the site of internal conflicts and attacks by terrorist organizations. In addition, a struggle for influence between Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, and Western countries is ongoing across the Middle East. In 2021, Iraq does not have sufficient resources to be able to effectively and single-handedly protect its civilians, maintain peace and ensure internal security, which in turn affects the situation of the countries involved in the international intervention and forces the continued presence of their armed forces. Moreover, since 2017, following the referendum on Kurdistan's independence, the risk of further conflicts between the Iraqi government and the authorities of the autonomous region has been increasing. French policymakers are aware that additional conflict is likely to strengthen Islamic radicals and influence the situation in France - which will be seen as part of a rivalry with the Islamic followers. These factors make French military withdrawal a distant prospect, particularly from such a militarily active region as the Middle East.

¹⁷⁵Ministère des Armées – Opérations, CLEMENCEAU 21 : Départ du groupe aéronaval en mission opérationnelle, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/actualites2/breves/clemenceau-21-depart-du-groupe-aeronaval-en-mission-operationnelle>, accessed: 26.03.2021.

¹⁷⁶ Press Kit Clemenceau 21, Ministère des Armées, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/606899/10193070/Press%20Kit_Clemenceau21_ENG.pdf, accessed: 02.05.2021.

FRANCE'S COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The French Daman operation in the framework of the UNIFIL mission

France holds one of the five permanent seats in the UN Security Council. Consequently, the state wields veto power on all the decisions of the Council. In March 1978, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)¹⁷⁷ peacekeeping mission was established on the basis of the resolutions no. 425 and 426 of the UN Security Council. Its establishment was related to the fights between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Lebanon and Israel, while its purpose was to ensure the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from Lebanon and the integrity of its borders, as well as to restore the jurisdiction of the Lebanese authorities on Lebanese territory. Over the last seventy years, Israel and Lebanon have been in an uninterrupted conflict which, among others, results in the impossibility to sign a peace treaty which would imply the recognition of the state of Israel. The UN Security Council adopted the resolution establishing the mission in order to stabilize the situation and ensure the peaceful withdrawal of the troops. Currently, a staff of over 10,000 people from forty-six countries is involved in the UNIFIL mission¹⁷⁸, including Italian, Indonesian, Indian, Spanish, Chinese, as well as French (656 people) and Polish Armed Forces¹⁷⁹.

Since the launch of the UN mission, France, in cooperation with UNIFIL, has been running its own operation, codenamed Daman as a part of the Rapid Reaction Forces Commander Reserve (FCR). The French Armed Forces are stationed in the city of Dayr Kifa, and run their activities on the entire operational area of the UNIFIL mission. The Finnish infantry unit has also been stationed there since 2017. Beside daily patrols, France cooperates with the

¹⁷⁷ Fr. FINUL – *Force intérimaire des Nations Unies au Liban - Resolution 425*, United Nations Security Council, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/425>, accessed: 26.03.2021; *Resolution 426*, United Nations Security Council, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/426>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

¹⁷⁸ Data updated to April 2021.

¹⁷⁹ *Unifil Troop-Contributing Countries*, UNIFIL, <https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-troop-contributing-countries>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

Lebanese Armed Forces on carrying out observation and reconnaissance missions, which allow the increase of French operational readiness¹⁸⁰.

Nearly 700 soldiers participate in the Daman mission, including a reconnaissance and intervention unit, equipped with forty five light VBL armoured vehicles, infantry serving Sisu armoured vehicles and thirty five VAB vehicles, an artillery battery with radars responsible for securing the air, and short range surface-to-air missiles of the “Mistral” type. The French army also includes a support and command company, which is composed of an engineering section, fire brigade unit, sapper unit and military dogs¹⁸¹. The French troops are supported by the National Support Units (fr. *les Éléments de soutien national*)¹⁸², which are responsible for the strategic coordination of the vehicles, technical support and implementation of connectivity and communication.

The French Armed Forces participate in the military mission and also support the civilian population. After the explosion in the port of Beirut in 2020, French soldiers took part in a rescue operation aimed at minimizing the aftermaths of the disaster¹⁸³. During the 2006 operation Baliste they evacuated the citizens of France and of other European countries from the areas affected by the Israeli-Lebanese conflict¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸⁰ Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *DAMAN : La contribution française à la FINUL*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/europe/bassin-mediterraneen/daman/dossier-de-reference/daman-la-contribution-francaise-a-la-finul>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁸¹ Ibidem.

¹⁸² Ministère des Armées – Actualités, *ESN – Services Compris*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/communaute-defense/esn-services-compris>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁸³ Almost immediately after the explosion of the FCR, at the request of UNIFIL, France launched the QRF SAN (*Quick Reaction Force Sanitaire*) with an escort in order to be able to intervene at the scene of the accident as soon as possible and provide first aid to the numerous wounded. Five injured were evacuated to the Hammoud Hospital in Saïd. Two medical teams of SSA workers, called AMET (Air Medical Evacuation Team), aboard Italian helicopters stationed in Naqoura, participated in the evacuation of six wounded soldiers of the peacekeeping Maritime Task Force. After the explosion, a detachment consisting in a team of sappers, a doctor, a paramedic and an engineer inspected the place of the accident. *DAMAN : Les experts français de la FINUL sur le Ground Zero de Beyrouth*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/daman-les-experts-francais-de-la-finul-sur-le-ground-zero-de-beyrouth>; *Le Parisien, Explosions à Beyrouth : fin de l'opération militaire française d'aide au Liban* <https://www.leparisien.fr/politique/explosions-a-beyrouth-fin-de-l-operation-militaire-francaise-d-aide-au-liban-22-09-2020-8389641.php>, accessed: 10.05.2021.

¹⁸⁴ *Le Figaro, Des forces spéciales au secours des Franco-Libanais*, https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2006/07/24/01003-20060724ARTFIG90197-des_forces_speciales_au_secours_des_franco_libanais.php, accessed: 23.03.2021.



UNIFIL is one of the longest-lasting UN missions, while the operation Daman, executed within its framework, is expected to last until 31st August, 2021. Despite the relatively stable situation in Lebanon since 2006, there is no reason to believe that the mission is coming to an end and that the withdrawal of the French troops is happening any time soon. For over forty years, no mechanisms to guarantee peace in Southern Lebanon have been developed. The military activity is limited to the presence of the UN forces, which are ready to react in case the conflict escalates.

Historical facts and the consequent cultural closeness between France and Lebanon is deemed as a factor justifying the presence of the French Armed Forces in the country. This applies in particular to the legal acts such as the Constitution of the Republic of Lebanon, in force since 1926, issued by a French trustee. Moreover, about 38% of the population speaks

French¹⁸⁵. There is a network of French-speaking schools in Lebanon, financially supported by the French government. Only in 2021, the Republic of France donated to them an amount of €20 billion¹⁸⁶. Several cultural and intellectual exchanges ensure a permanent partnership with France for Lebanon as well as military support. Lebanon belongs to the International Organisation of the Francophonie.

Through its engagement, France gains the opportunity to mark its presence in the Middle East. Significantly, French influence is being gradually supplanted by, among others, the United States of America, Iran, as well as by China. The last of the mentioned countries is currently one of Lebanon's most important trading partners¹⁸⁷. What is more, China is making efforts to build the country's internal infrastructures. By maintaining its military and political presence, as well as by emphasizing the aforementioned historical and cultural events, France wishes to underline the closeness of the countries and to deepen the cooperation, as it is shown by numerous visits at a political level.

Other UN missions

Currently, the French Republic engages with a staff of 740 peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations, which places it in the 31st position in terms of the number of troops deployed¹⁸⁸.

Beside UNIFIL, the French Armed Forces are involved in five UN peacekeeping operations carried out in Africa. However, unlike the aforementioned missions, its degree of participation is limited. The French Armed Forces take indirectly part in UN peacekeeping operations in Mali (fr. *la Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali*), in the Central African Republic (fr. *la Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République centrafricaine*) and in the

¹⁸⁵ Ballais JL., Al Amrawy M., Al Dbiyat M., Charbel L., Geyer B., Mezedjri L., *The Place of the French Language in Arabic-Speaking Mediterranean*. W: Brunn S., Kehrein R. (red.), *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*. Springer, 2020.

¹⁸⁶ TV5Monde, *Jean-Yves Le Drian au Liban : quelle est l'influence de la France au pays du Cèdre ?*, <https://information.tv5monde.com/info/jean-yves-le-drian-au-liban-quelle-est-l-influence-de-la-france-au-pays-du-cedre-407568>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

¹⁸⁷ Trend Economy, *Lebanon*, <https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/Lebanon/TOTAL>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

¹⁸⁸ Ministère des Armées, *Dispositif opérationnel français déployé à travers le monde*, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/dispositif-operationnel-francais-deploye-a-travers-le-monde?fbclid=IwAR2Kcz99O8jF1QyWyeier0ljtnrEnfgil6RJC_udtQaOtH3t1zITKOJSbek, accessed: 13.06.2021.

Western Sahara (fr. *la Mission des Nations Unies pour l'Organisation d'un Référendum au Sahara Occidental*)¹⁸⁹. French staff officers participate in the coordination of activities at a decision-making level.

EU missions

The European Union provides military and humanitarian aid to countries in need. By April 2021, France was engaged in four EU operations. Currently, it has deployed personnel amounting to 150 soldiers in six EU missions¹⁹⁰.

The French National Gendarmerie took part in the EU Liaison and Planning Cell (EULCP), established in April 2015¹⁹¹. The tasks of the Cell include the preparation of research and intelligence analysis concerning the security situation in Libya. It supports both the EU activities and the UN missions in Libya.

Another project is the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali, established in 2013 at the request of the Malian government and based on the 2012 UN Security Council resolution no. 2085. The goal of the Mission is to increase the combat and operational capability of the Malian armed forces and to enforce the implementation of the peace treaty with Algeria, signed in 2015. Consequently, these activities are to ensure political cooperation between the states and improve the security situation in the region. The mission is based on four pillars: conducting training, providing support in the decision-making process, developing the local military education system and consultancy, and training for the joint forces of the Group Five (G5) Sahel. Both EU member and non-member states take part in it. The amount of French armed forces is negligible, since the Barkhane mission is carried out in parallel in the

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping, *Troop and police contributors*, https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors?fbclid=IwAR0n_H4QccF9nJYpOb_aJKJkHXWS4oEAljBDXJe7izPdKDICC7viJZ1WdQo, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁹⁰ Ministère des Armées, *Dispositif opérationnel français déployé à travers le monde*, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/rubriques_complementaires/dispositif-operationnel-francais-deploye-a-travers-le-monde, accessed: 11.05.2021.

¹⁹¹ EUROGENDFOR (fr. *La Force de gendarmerie européenne*) is a unit capable of carrying out all the police tasks. EUROGENDFOR can have an auxiliary function for the EU, UN, OSCE, NATO and other international organisations or ad hoc coalitions. The military status of EUROGENDFOR's police forces and their ability to cover the entire spectrum of police functions ensure adequate flexibility of the activities under civilian command system and, under certain circumstances, even within the military command system.

Gendarmerie Nationale Française - Member State, <https://eurogendfor.org/gendarmerie-nationale-francaise-full-member/>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

region. In total, nearly 700 soldiers from twenty-two EU countries, including France, and other three non-EU states (Georgia, Montenegro and Moldova) participate in the European Union Training Mission in Mali¹⁹².

Another European project with the participation of France is the EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA). It was established in December 2019 at request of the Central African government. It is a civilian advisory mission, whose purpose is the strategic, training, and operational support for the local authorities and the soldiers they are responsible for¹⁹³. The EUAM RCA strengthens the efforts of the EU military training mission in the Central African Republic and operates in conjunction with the international community.

France is also involved in the European Naval Operation “IRINI”, launched in March 2020. Its purpose is to control the UN arms embargo on Libya. The French army delegated to this mission the ship FS *Premiere “Maitrel’Her F792”* and “Falcon 50” and “Atlantique 2” airplanes¹⁹⁴.

France also participates in two rotating missions of the European Union. The first one is the Atalanta Operation, conducted to stop, prevent, and tackle the issue of piracy. Since its establishment in 2008, the mission’s purpose has been adapted to reflect the current maritime situation and support the EU integrated approach to Somalia and to the Horn of Africa. The activity area of the Atalanta Operation also covers the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and much of the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoros¹⁹⁵. At the end of 2020, the mission was prolonged until December 2022.

France’s participation in the operation is visible in the activities of the French Armed Forces stationed in Djibouti, which hosts Spanish and German troops as well as the Force HQ

¹⁹² European Union Training Mission Mali, *EUTM Mali*, <https://eutmmali.eu/eutm-mali-mission/>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁹³ European Union External Action Service, *EUAM RCA: European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic – Civilian Mission*, https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/89318/euam-rca-european-union-advisory-mission-central-african-republic-civilian-mission_en, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁹⁴ EUNAVFOR IRINI, *Deployed Units*, https://www.operationirini.eu/media_category/assets/, accessed: 23.03.2021.

¹⁹⁵ Royal Navy, <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/operations/indian-ocean/atalanta>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

Support Area (FHQSA) logistic support staff¹⁹⁶. Moreover, the Maritime Security Centre in the Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), under the command of the Atalanta Operation, is located in the French city of Brest. MSCHOA ensures communication with sailors and contributes to the protection of trade routes in high-risk areas. Separate French units, deployed specifically to take part in the operation, could duplicate the tasks performed by the French Armed Forces deployed in the southern part of the Indian Ocean, whose activities consist also in tackling piracy and protecting commercial shipping. Therefore, it looks like Paris allows other EU members to get more involved, while providing constant assistance by keeping its units nearby.

Another EU stabilisation operation is Althea. The mission started in 2004 to replace the NATO troops which were being withdrawn from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, its main purposes are helping maintain stability in the country, preventing possible episodes of violence and conducting training.

In total, nineteen countries are involved in the mission¹⁹⁷. Since military actions are no longer carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only the EUFOR's Multinational Battalion (MNBN)¹⁹⁸ is stationed in Sarajevo. The number of soldiers taking part in the operation has been reduced to around 600¹⁹⁹. Austrian, Hungarian, and Turkish units are fully sufficient to ensure a peaceful situation in the country. However, France is ready to support the Althea operation at any time.

France is a diplomatic and military power. Its history, status of founding member state as well as its political, economic, and military relevance have guaranteed the state a decisive position in the institutions of the European Union. By participating in the EU mission, the French Republic underlines its military and political importance in its immediate area, which favours tighter cooperation at the European level. What is more, the missions enabled France to gain economic benefits. Presenting capabilities, military equipment and its potential allows France to reach potential European purchasers. Moreover, France's participation in European military missions is fundamental for achieving the strategic autonomy proposed by Emmanuel Macron.

¹⁹⁶ Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/territoire-national/forces-de-souverainete/forces-armees-dans-la-zone-sud-de-l-ocean-indien/dossier-de-reference/les-forces-armees-dans-la-zone-sud-de-l-ocean-indien>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

¹⁹⁷ Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey.

¹⁹⁸ EUFOR, <https://www.euforbih.org/index.php/latest-news/2884-change-of-command-ceremony-mnbn>, accessed: 12.05.2021.

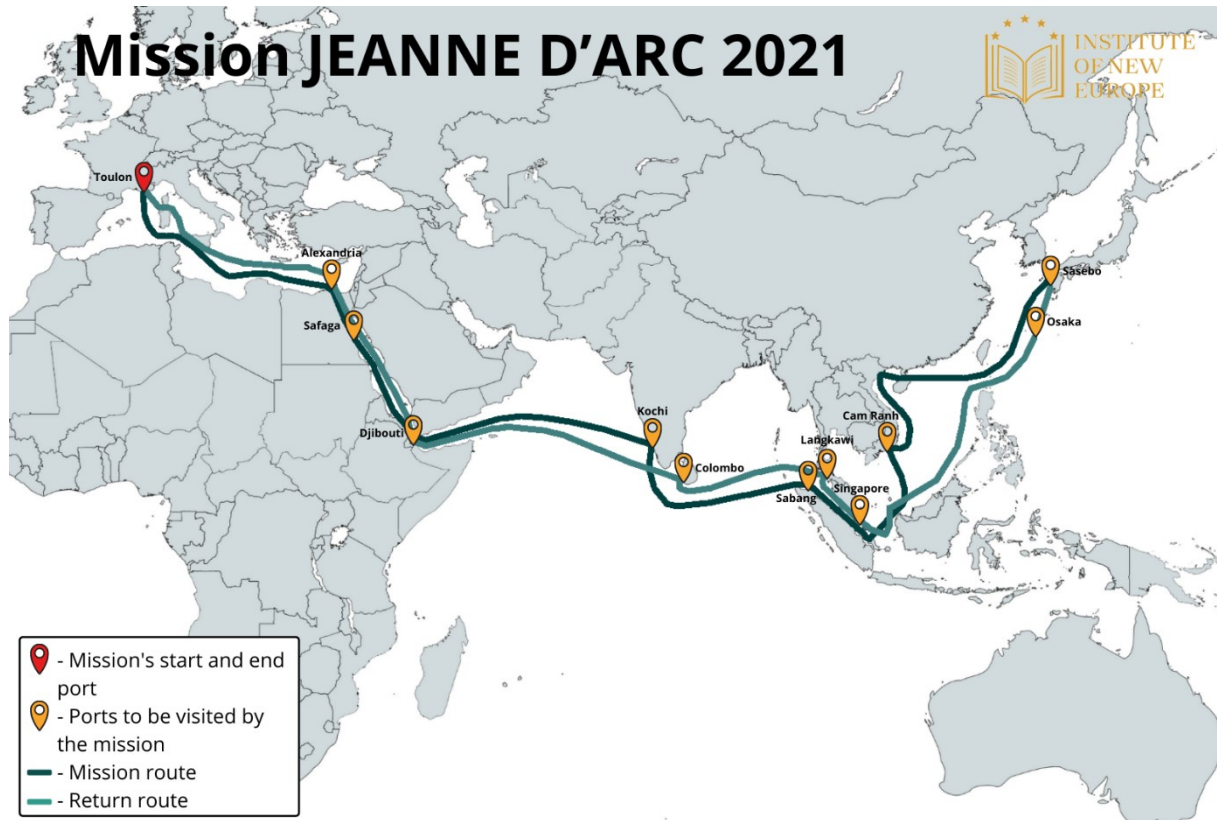
¹⁹⁹ EUFOR, <https://www.euforbih.org/index.php/about-eufor>, accessed: 13.05.2021.

They help promote the image of French military issues and ensure France's leadership in the European strategic thinking. Military activities of this kind can also convince the other EU members to reform the unchanging structural cooperation as a part of a common security and defence policy.



NAVAL MISSIONS

The JEANNE D'ARC 2021 training mission



From February to July 2021 the French navy conducted a military ship training exercise as a part of the JEANNE D'ARC annual mission. In 2021, it included an assault ship of the Mistral Tonnerre type and a La Fayette-class Surcouf missile frigate. They will navigate the waters, among others, of the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea up to the Yellow Sea²⁰⁰. The mission aims to educate the future officers of the French Navy and give them practical experience, implement the operational capabilities in areas of special strategic importance for France, as well as develop cooperation with the countries present in the region (India, Japan, Australia, the USA and Indonesia). The units of the JEANNE

²⁰⁰ Ministère des Armées – Salle de presse, *Dossier de presse – Mission Jeanne D'Arc 2021*, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/dossiers-de-presse/dossier-de-presse_mission-jeanne-d-arc-2021, accessed: 23.03.2021.

D'ARC 2021 mission will also support the Combined Task Force 150 operations in the Indian Ocean. The mission involves around 800²⁰¹ soldiers.

The JEANNE D'ARC 2021 training mission is a part of the French defence strategy in the Indo-Pacific area. It is supposed to confirm France's interest in this zone through an enhanced presence and an intensified bilateral and regional cooperation, as well as to consolidate its position as a relevant military player. For France, this is also an occasion to deter its opponents' potential interference.

The CLEMENCEAU 21 mission

The water-air group GAN (fr. *le Groupe aéronaval*, pl. *Uderzeniowa Grupa Lotniskowca*) Task Force 473 (TF) participates in the CLEMENCEAU 21 mission, which is running from February to the summer of 2021²⁰². Its main purpose is to patrol the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, as well as to support the Inherent Resolve international mission and the French Chammal operation. In total, 1200 soldiers take part in the mission²⁰³. The CLEMENCEAU 21 mission is the continuation of a similar mission which had been carried out two years earlier. Consequently, it also focuses on power projection, intelligence and on ensuring security and freedom of action in these strategic areas. Moreover, the involvement in the GAN group by American, Belgian, Greek and Italian assets enables to consolidate interoperability with these leading partners²⁰⁴.

The strike force includes the aircraft carrier "Charles de Gaulle"²⁰⁵, which hosts a water-air rapid reaction combat unit (fr. *la Force aéromaritime française de réaction rapide*, FRMARFOR) on board. The aircraft carrier is supported by the anti-aircraft frigate "Chevalier Paul" and by the FREMM-class multi-task frigate "Provence"²⁰⁶. The mission is also equipped with twenty Rafale M fighter aircraft, two E-2C Hawkeye early warning planes, two "Dauphin"

²⁰¹ Ibidem.

²⁰² Ministère des Armées – Opérations, *CLEMENCEAU 21 : Départ du groupe aéronaval en mission opérationnelle*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/actualites2/breves/clemenceau-21-depart-du-groupe-aeronaval-en-mission-operationnelle>, accessed: 23.03.2021.

²⁰³ Ministère des Armées, *Opération Clemenceau*, https://cdn.fbsbx.com/v/t59.2708-21/81881541_16853077779261_904742557483794432_n.pdf/DP_MinARM_d%C3%A9part-Clemenceau_GAN-19.pdf?_nc_cat=105&ccb=1-3&_nc_sid=0cab14&_nc_ohc=DZlqBxdRXrcAX8FQ6Cu&_nc_ht=cdn.fbsbx.com&oh=cc5e68ccfae567a53125db9330a93133&oe=60C7AF42&dl=1, accessed: 13.06.2021.

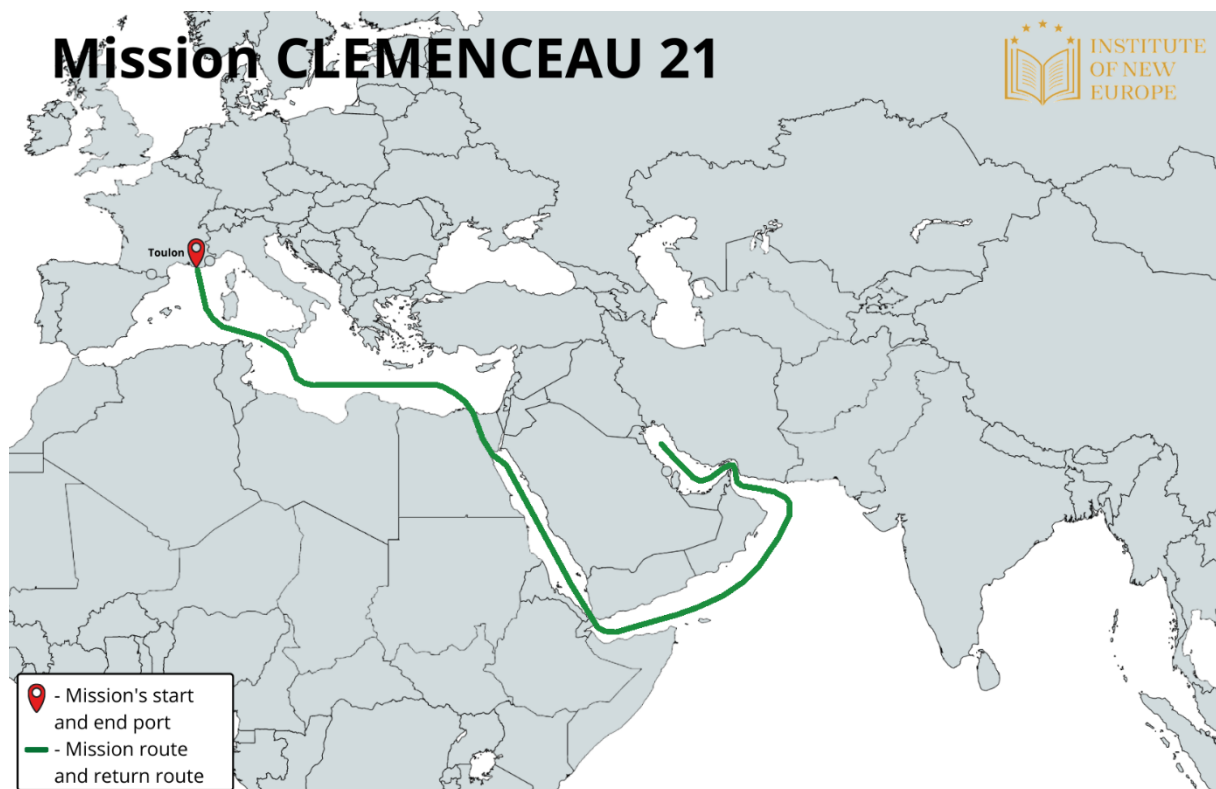
²⁰⁴ Ibidem.

²⁰⁵ Crew: 1200 people.

²⁰⁶ Ibidem.

helicopters and one “Caïman” helicopter. For the purpose of better cooperation, a Var supply and command ship and a nuclear-powered submarine (fr. *les sous-marin nucléaire d’attaque*, SNA) also take part in the operation²⁰⁷.

Thanks to its combat and operational capabilities, the CLEMENCEAU 21 mission represents one of the crucial components of France’s struggle against terrorism in the Middle East. The strengthened presence of France demonstrates to the states competing for influence and dominance in the region, i.e. Russia, Turkey, China and Iran, its capabilities, and also allows, if necessary, the immediate reaction of the units of the French armed forces.



²⁰⁷ Ibidem.

The CORYMBE mission

Since 1990, the French navy has been patrolling the Gulf of Guinea and the coast of Western Africa in order to protect the aforementioned sea areas against, for example, pirate attacks, and to improve the security situation of the region by strengthening the capabilities of the coastguard of those states. The French ships (usually one or two) engaged in the CORYMBE mission also support the French units stationed in Western Africa on the basis of bilateral agreements.

Since February 2021, the 2nd Foreign Infantry Regiment (fr. *le 2^e regiment étranger d'infanterie*), which has access to the assault ship "Dixmude", has been taking part in the mission²⁰⁸. The regiment is supported, among others, by the 1st Spahis Regiment (fr. *le 1^e regiment de spahis*) and by the 1st Foreign Engineering Regiment (fr. *le 1^{er} regiment étranger de genie*). In total, around 250 soldiers²⁰⁹ controlling the area between Senegal and Gabon take part in the CORYMBE mission.

The mission is carried out on the maritime drug trafficking routes, thanks to which the access of narcotics to Africa and Europe has more than once been prevented. In March 2021, the navy informed through social media that the trafficking of six tonnes of cocaine, worth more than one billion euro, had been thwarted in the Gulf of Guinea. The cargo ship where the narcotics were found was expected to leave the African coast, but its route began in South America²¹⁰. The action required close cooperation with international partners.

The CORYMBE mission is, first of all, supposed to mark the presence of France in the African continent and to ensure operational capability to intervene in a situation of crisis, where the support of the maritime units will be needed.

²⁰⁸ CORYMBE 156 : Livraison de fret humanitaire au profit de l'association Casamasanté par le Dixmude, Ministère des Armées , <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/espanol/operations/afrique/afrique-de-l-ouest/operation-corymbe/corymbe-156-livraison-de-fret-humanitaire-au-profit-de-l-association-casamasante-par-le-dixmude>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

²⁰⁹ Foreign Legion Info, 2^e REI: Mission CORYMBE, <http://foreignlegion.info/2021/02/11/2-rei-mission-corymbe-2021/>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

²¹⁰ Marine Nationale, <https://twitter.com/MarineNationale/status/1375079205986254853>, accessed: 14.06.2021.

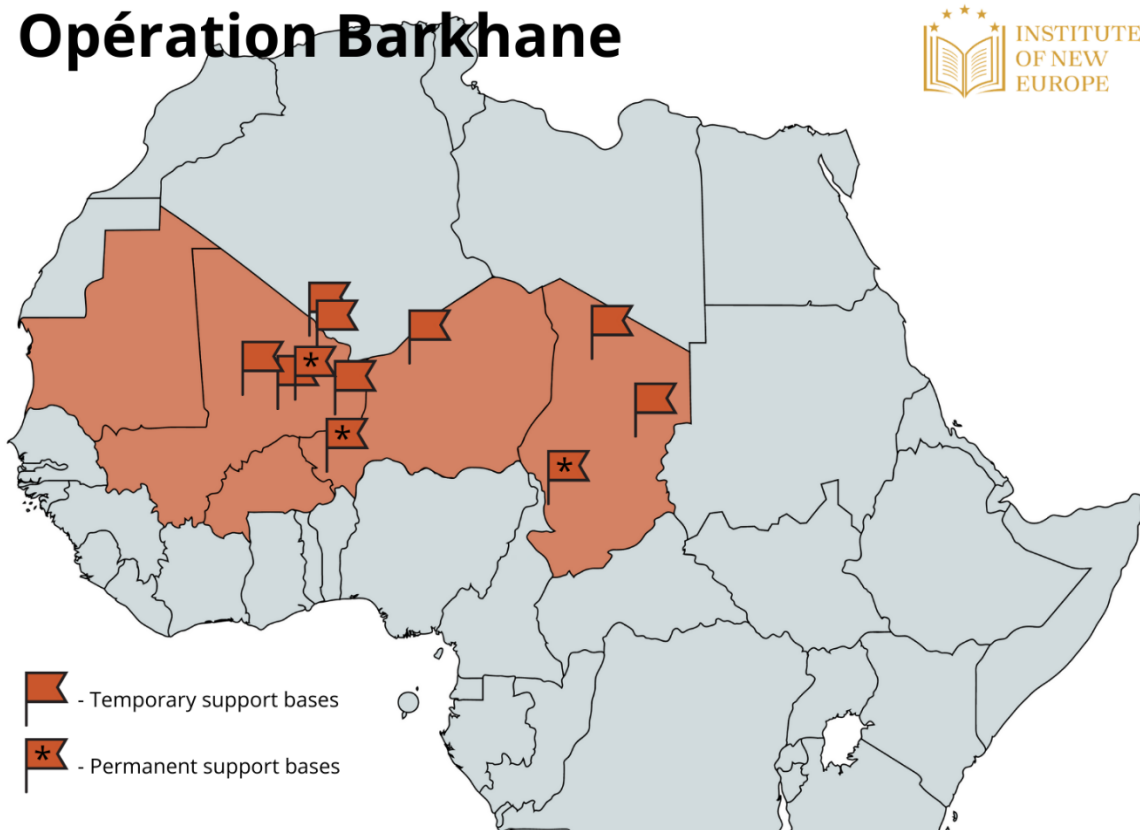


Conclusions and remarks

The large-scale French maritime missions are aimed at developing the capability of military units, representing Paris' military potential and intensifying cooperation with partner countries. Moreover, they provide crucial support to permanent French missions carried out in the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean and ensure a timely reaction in the event of a crisis. The missions also facilitate the control of the activities of other countries and it makes it easier to influence other powers. The naval missions are also to protect France's vital interests by constantly keeping nuclear-powered submarines with ballistic missiles at sea, protect the marine environment, fight pollution and piracy, as well as to continuously conduct intelligence activities in maritime areas. Such an extended presence of France at sea has a significant strategic importance, especially in regions whose future is uncertain, such as the Sahel and the Indo-Pacific area

OPERATION BARKHANE

Opération Barkhane



Operation Barkhane (fr. *l'Opération Barkhane*) began in August 2014 and is a continuation of Operation Serval, targeting Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) structures. As early as 2013²¹¹, France, at the request of the Malian government²¹², decided to intervene militarily to neutralize the terrorist presence in the Sahel region. The main objective of the French armed presence is to support the local military forces in the fight against terrorism, coordinate the international coalition and support the humanitarian action for the benefit of

²¹¹ Dioncounda Traore, who served as president from 2012 to 2013 after a coup by the military junta (after which France suspended military cooperation), asked France for military assistance to repel an offensive by Islamist armed groups. The request was made in a letter to President Françoise Holland after a Security Council consultation on Mali, the same day that armed Islamists controlling the north seized a town in the central part of the country.

²¹² *Le Mali appelle la France à son secours*, Le point, https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/le-president-malien-demande-l-aide-militaire-de-la-france-11-01-2013-1612342_24.php accessed: 13.05.2021. *Mali : après l'offensive jihadiste, Dioncounda Traoré demande une aide militaire à la France*, JeuneAfrique, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/172755/politique/mali-apr-s-l-offensive-jihadiste-dioncounda-trao-demande-une-aide-militaire-la-france>, accessed: 13.05.2021.

the local population. The French army operates in partnership with the countries of the Group of Five (G5) which encompasses five nations - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. France's strategic objective is to help the Sahel countries achieve military self-reliance so that they could provide security and stability in the region without the assistance of foreign forces. Humanitarian support missions are closely linked to the military aspect of the operation, as the inclination of the local population to the international coalition prevents the creation of new areas where terrorists can find shelter. Due to the vast area of operation, the French operation against terrorism in the Sahel is a very difficult and demanding mission. French troops have to operate on the territory of 5 countries, whose total area is comparable to the area of all the member states of the European Union. Until the beginning of June 2021, about 5100 French troops were involved in the operation, mainly in Mali, Niger, and Chad (with the command headquarters located in Chad's capital, N'Djamena), supporting and training the forces of the G5 Sahel countries. The United Kingdom²¹³ and Estonia have also been participating in the operation since 2018, and Denmark²¹⁴ since December 2019. American, Italian and Spanish²¹⁵ forces are also present in the region.

Operations in the framework of Operation Barkhane

In addition to French troops, Barkhane involves around 3,000 soldiers from the G5 countries, depending on the action taken. After eight years, the costs of the mission are

²¹³ J. Deveaux, G5-Sahel: quatre pays d'Europe montent à bord, *France TV Info*, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/politique-africaine/g5-sahel-quatre-pays-d-europe-montent-a-bord_3055657.html, accessed: 13.05.2021.

Through the provision of Chinook 2 helicopters, London supported the G5 actions.

²¹⁴ Le dossier de presse, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/operation-barkhane/dossier-de-reference/operation-barkhane>, accessed: 21.04.2021 ; BARKHANE : Les MERLIN danois d'attaque pour Barkhane !, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/actualites2/barkhane-les-merlin-danois-d-attaque-pour-barkhane>, accessed: 05.05.2021.

²¹⁵ The U.S. presence is marked primarily by drones, which provide about 50 percent of the intelligence used by French forces in the area. Italy has decided to commit to Task Force Takuba as a strategic move to increase its presence in the region. In addition to the deployment of up to 200 soldiers and support personnel, it is planned to commit 20 ground vehicles and 8 aircraft (including four AW-129D Mangusta attack helicopters and four NH-90 transport helicopters) for a total of 15.6 million euros. This contribution should serve to make the task force fully operational, which, despite its large number of participants, is having difficulty attracting more personnel from the countries that have joined the initiative. Plans to increase the Spanish presence (Sahel and Lebanon) have been announced. First and foremost, this concerns the involvement in Operation EUTM Mali (European Union Training Mission in Mali).

estimated at between 650 million and one billion euros per year²¹⁶. Another important aspect is the support of the local population. Thanks to such initiatives, the population is increasingly unwilling to cooperate with terrorists. Only in 2020, 128 combat and 98 civil-military operations were carried out, which improved, among other things, access to water, energy, and education in the region²¹⁷. In addition to theoretical and tactical knowledge, France also supports the troops of the Sahel countries materially by offering vehicles. Moreover, broadcasting stations launched by France have significantly improved the effectiveness of African armies. French bases (of a permanent and temporary presence) are currently located in Mali, Niger, and Chad²¹⁸.

Land forces

The ground element is made up of:

- Two Desert Tactical Battlegroups (fr. *le groupement tactique désert*, GTD) of approximately 1,500 troops,
- 280 heavy armoured vehicles,
- 400 logistics vehicles,
- 220 light armoured vehicles,
- On May 1, 2021, at the Malian armed forces camp in Gao, France handed over 20 pick-ups (Masstech type) to the Light Reconnaissance and Intervention Units (fr. *Unités légères de reconnaissance et d'intervention*, ULRI) 3 and 4, trained by the Franco-Estonian Task Force Takuba²¹⁹.

²¹⁶ La croix, Opération Barkhane: quelles conséquences en cas de retrait français du Sahel ?, *La croix*, <https://www.la-croix.com/Monde/Operation-Barkhane-queelles-consequences-cas-retrait-francais-Sahel-2021-02-15-1201140760>, accessed:23.04.2021.

²¹⁷ Opération Barkhane, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/operation-barkhane/dossier-de-referance/operation-barkhane>, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²¹⁸ Le dossier de presse, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/operation-barkhane/dossier-de-referance/operation-barkhane>, accessed: 21.04.2021.

²¹⁹ Point de situation des opérations du 30 avril au 6 mai, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/points-de-situation/point-de-situation-des-operations-du-30-avril-au-6-mai?fbclid=IwAR2HIV5w0BwGsGVTAmathG299iOeLhGX8PFokDEHxK07ovslfyp_StV0_w, accessed: 08.05.2021.

Air Force

The air force element used in military operations in the Sahel region is made up of:

- 20 helicopters, including 3 British CH-47 Chinook heavy transport helicopters, stationed at the Mali base, Gao²²⁰.

In addition, the air unit section is divided into two air bases - in Niamey, Niger and in N'Djamena, Chad. The military assets include:

- 7 Mirage 2000 C and D aircraft,
- 5 to 8 transport aircraft and 3 Reaper drones²²¹.

Since the start of the operation, 57 French soldiers have been killed²²², while according to a French parliamentary report in 2020 alone more than 1,200 terrorists have been neutralized²²³.

Provost Gendarmerie (fr. *Gendarmerie Prévôtale*)

In the area of the Operation Barkhane (in Chad, Niger and Mali ²²⁴) Prévôtal Detachments²²⁵ are also present. The military-judicial-policing mission is the primary activity of the Gendarmerie Prévôtal. It reports to the French Public Prosecutor's Office and to the

²²⁰ Sahel: Des hélicoptères CH-47 Chinook pour la force française Barkhane, <http://www.opex360.com/2018/01/18/sahel-helicopteres-ch-47-chinook-force-francaise-barkhane/> ; *Barkhane : prolongation du déploiement des Chinook*, <https://www.air-cosmos.com/article/barkhane-prolongation-du-dploiement-des-chinook-23297>, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²²¹ Opérations, Opération Barkhane, *Ministère des Armées*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/barkhane/dossier-de-reference/operation-barkhane>, accessed: 10.04.2021 ; BARKHANE : Reaper et Mirage, une complémentarité essentielle aux opérations aériennes, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/operation-barkhane/breves/barkhane-reaper-et-mirage-une-complementarite-essentielle-aux-operations-aeriennes>, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²²² Of this group, 51 soldiers were posthumously awarded the title “killed for France” (fr. *Morts pour la France*).

²²³ Terrorisme - C'est une guerre lointaine menée par des militaires français depuis huit ans au Sahel. Ils combattent les djihadistes d'Al-Qaïda et de le groupe État islamique. Cette guerre peut-elle être gagnée?, <https://www.lci.fr/international/video-operation-barkhane-ce-qu-il-faut-savoir-sur-la-presence-militaire-francaise-au-sahel-2178468.html>, accessed: 23.04.2021.

²²⁴ These are 3 of the 7 existing situational branches (fr: Les détachements prévôtaux de circonstance); the others: Estonia, Lebanon Jordan and the Central African Republic. There are also 6 permanent presence detachments (fr: détachements prévôtaux permanents), stationed in Germany, the United Arab Emirates, Gabon, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.

²²⁵ This formation dates back to King Charles V in the 14th century and currently plays a key role in supporting French troops outside the republic. The Gendarmerie Prévôtal is the successor of the Maréchaussée police force, which dealt with the “people of war”.

supervision of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (fr. *le Chef d'État-Major des Armées*, CEMA).

The Gendarmerie Prévôtal also carries out general police missions in support of other formations (it deals with escorts, protection, sometimes providing information to the relevant French judicial authorities and, if necessary, assisting local investigative services)²²⁶. It also engages in intelligence activities for the military forces it accompanies abroad. The Prévôtal Detachment is not competent to operate in peacetime on national territory²²⁷.

Other objectives of the mission

The French Army conducts counterterrorism operations in partnership with the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5). Soldiers from these countries participate in French-led operations. The active policy of the French towards their former colonies is an important element of local security structures, as the aforementioned countries are among the poorest in the world and without external support, their armed forces are unable to ensure the security of their civilians²²⁸.

The Pau Summit in 2020²²⁹ strengthened cooperation between the already existing allies. The ongoing offensive against terrorists is supported by 600 additional soldiers who joined the logistics, communications and desert battle group units. It was also decided that the forces involved in Operation Barkhane and G5 Sahel Joint Force (FCG5S) would operate under a single command. Thus, the Joint Command Mechanism was established, which had a positive impact on the coordination of operations. It consists of a Contact and Liaison Detachment (fr. *le Détachement de Liaison Conjoint*, DLC), an intelligence cell, and a Joint Command post manned by officers of the G5 Sahel countries and French soldiers of Operation Barkhane.

²²⁶ *La gendarmerie prévôtale*, Ministère des Armées, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/la-gendarmerie-prevotale>, accessed: 05.05.2021.

²²⁷ *Armées. 70 gendarmes de la prévôté déployés à l'étranger*, available at: <https://www.ouest-france.fr/politique/defense/armees-70-gendarmes-de-la-prevote-deployes-a-l-etranger-d9d5ac78-8f27-11eb-a3dd-c268e58a9335> ; Un nécessaire positionnement à l'international, <https://www.gendinfo.fr/dossiers/transformation-et-identite-au-caeur-de-la-gendarmerie/Un-necessaire-positionnement-a-l-international>, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²²⁸ Pięcioro francuskich żołnierzy poległo w Mali, 4.01.2021, *Konflikty*, <https://www.konflikty.pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/piecioro-francuskich-zolnierzy-poleglo-w-mali/>, accessed: 22.04.2021.

²²⁹ The purpose of the summit was to discuss strategies to combat armed groups and the French presence in the Sahel region.

The videoconference, as part of the two-day G5 summit, included clear statements on French counterterrorism operations in the region. There were also highlights from Chad, which announced the reinforcing of the particularly dangerous cross-border area of the three countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali) with an intensified involvement of its soldiers. The meeting aimed to summarize activities conducted since the Pau summit and, consequently, discussing further cooperation²³⁰.

As part of the European cooperation with the Malian army, France organized a special group, Task Force Takuba, which supports operations in the Liptako - Gourma region, where the greatest threat is posed by the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and al-Qaeda-linked Groups for Support of Islam and Muslims (arab. *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin*, JNIM)²³¹. This new structure is intended to augment the counterterrorism operations already underway in the region. It includes a command center, two tactical groups (French-Czech and French-Estonian), and a Swedish rapid reaction force stationed in Gao and Ménaka. Task Force Takuba is characterized by a high degree of autonomy, which greatly enhances its operational activities. The establishment of this structure is particularly important for the G5 Sahel force, which, after restructuring and the creation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, comprises of seven battalions (550 soldiers and 100 policemen or gendarmes), of which two of each are fielded by Mali and Niger, and one each by Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. Ten EU countries were part of the mission: France, Estonia, Sweden, Czech Republic, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Belgium, Greece, and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, only half of them pledged to send troops. France, Estonia, Sweden, and Italy sent personnel of 100, 40, 150, and 200 respectively²³². Originally, the operations were to be conducted 50 km away from the border, but after the Pau summit, it was agreed that this area could be extended²³³.

One of the most recent operations that the French forces can pride themselves on is the neutralization of Bah Ag Moussa, the military commander of the terrorist group JNIM.

²³⁰ G5 Sahel: ce qu'il faut retenir des déclarations de Macron à l'issue du sommet, *Le express*, https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/g5-sahel-ce-qu-il-faut-retenir-des-declarations-de-macron-a-l-issue-du-sommet_2145004.html, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²³¹ BAH AG MOUSSA, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/bah-ag-moussa>, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²³² Task-Force Takuba. Les Italiens arrivent, *Bruxelles 2*, <https://www.bruxelles2.eu/2021/02/task-force-takuba-les-italiens-arrivent/>; France and the EU in the Sahel, <https://www.eu-logos.org/2021/02/25/france-and-the-eu-in-the-sahel/>, accessed: 5.05.2021.

²³³ Task Force Takuba – nowe siły w rejonie Sahelu, https://securityinpractice.eu/task-force-takuba-nowe-sily-w-rejonie-sahelu/#_ftn6, accessed: 24.04.2021.

Operations such as Monclar or Bourrasque, carried out within the framework of Barkhane, involving 5,000 and 3,000 troops respectively²³⁴ are also worth mentioning here. Operation Monclar, conducted in March 2020 and lasting three weeks, had as its objective to neutralize jihadists. As a result of the operation, participating units found and destroyed numerous militant hideouts along with their military equipment²³⁵. Operation Bourrasque was launched a few months later, on September 28, and ended on November 1, 2020. It was conducted in cooperation with the Malian and Nigerian armed forces, and with the support of their English, American, and Danish counterparts. The main tasks of the operation included the control of designated zones and their inhabitants, as well as the search and prosecution of terrorists²³⁶. Both Monclar and Bourrasque contributed to weakening the military capabilities of al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb.

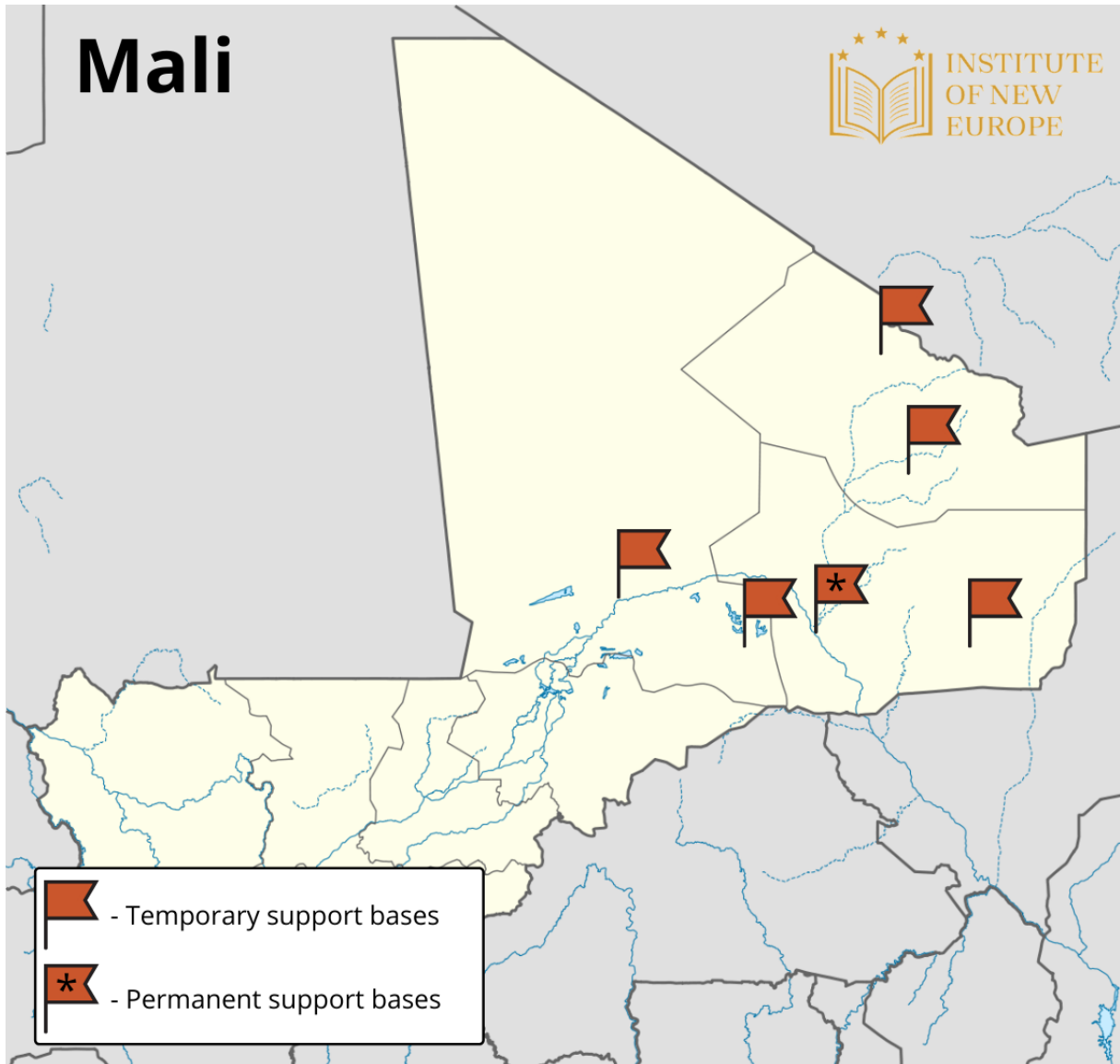
The second quarter of 2021 began with intense activity in the Sahel theater. In Mali, in the Doro region, between Gao and Gossi, two Desert Combat Groups of Tactical Purpose (fr. *les Sous groupements tactiques désert*, SGTD) undertook their tasks. The first group conducted exploratory missions to improve contacts with local authorities. Indeed, the return of the security forces is essential for the stability and restoration of state administration. A doctor from the Malian armed forces (fr. *les Forces armées maliennes*, FAMa) in Gao also participated in the mission and offered his services to the local population deprived of medical care. The second group visited the FAMa camp in N'Tahaka. For four days, soldiers from Operation Barkhane trained the Malians in tactics, medical care, maintenance, and infrastructure. FAMa will eventually have the resources to provide protection for itself and the local population. Currently, in Doro, FAMa provides security at the local market. In addition, due to the upcoming rainy season, the Charente Desert Logistics Combat Group (fr. *le Groupement tactique désert logistique*, GTD LOG) conducted a large convoy to resupply the Barkhane Force's Desert Operating Platforms (fr. *les Plateformes opérationnelles désert*, PfOD) in northern Mali. More than 130 vehicles participated in the mission (over an area of more than 1,000 km square).

²³⁴Opération Barkhane, *Ministère des Armées – Opérations*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/bande-sahelo-saharienne/barkhane/dossier-de-reference/operation-barkhane>, accessed: 10.04.2021.

²³⁵ Foreign Legion Info, *2020 Operation Monclar in the Sahel*, <http://foreignlegion.info/2020/04/04/2020-operation-monclar-in-the-sahel/>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

²³⁶ Ministère des Armées, *Barkhane: Opération BOURRASQUE, une opération d'ampleur dans le Liptako*, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/actualites2/barkhane-operation-bourrasque-une-operation-d-ampleur-dans-le-liptako>, accessed: 11.06.2021.

Engineering components were deployed to combat improvised explosive devices (fr. *les Engins explosifs improvisés*, EEI). Approximately 300 soldiers took part in the operation, and the last time such an action took place was in November 2020²³⁷.



Shifting the model of the Operation Barkhane

On June 10, 2021, President Emmanuel Macron announced a reduction of French forces in the Sahel region. It is the beginning of a change in the model of the existing Barkhane mission, which will no longer be classified as a foreign operation (fr. *les opérations extérieures*, OPEX).

²³⁷ Point de situation des opérations du 30 avril au 6 mai, https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/points-de-situation/point-de-situation-des-operations-du-30-avril-au-6-mai?fbclid=IwAR2HIV5w0BwGsGVTAmathG299iOeLhGX8PFokDEHxK07ovslfyp_StV0_w, accessed: 08.05.2021.

The plan is to gradually reduce the number of troops from 5,100 to about 2,500 by 2023²³⁸. This decision was taken after about a year of raising the number of troops by an additional 600. Moreover, its announcement came just before the June G7 summit in Cornwall, during which E. Macron raised the issue of security in the Sahel that is seen by Western countries as a high-risk area²³⁹. Details of the operation to reduce French involvement in the region are to be presented by the end of June 2021. The assumption is that the presence of the French armed forces is to be based on the activity of special forces, tasked with the fight against organized terrorist groups as part of the Sabre mission²⁴⁰. The burden of the current mission is to be shifted to a coalition of European troops within the framework of Operation Takuba, in which French, Estonian, Swedish and Czech troops, among others, are currently participating. They are to be supported by Italian, Danish, Greek, and Hungarian troops²⁴¹. It is planned to concentrate these units in the Gao region and in western Niger, where the terrorist activity is the greatest.

The worsening situation in the region and the powerlessness of the French troops meant that the scenario of changing the operational model had been under consideration for a long time. The existing tactics and system of fighting terrorists has in no way resulted in an increase in the stability in Mali, the country most affected by the activities of radical military organizations. This situation had forced Emmanuel Macron to act. The unstable political situation in Mali, which led to a coup d'état in May, became the perfect pretext for taking action to change the commitment of French forces in the Sahel and consequently, to their reduction²⁴². In addition, the upcoming presidential elections also had a large impact on the decision, as the majority of the French society is opposed to Operation Barkhane due to the

²³⁸ Le Pentagone maintiendra son soutien au Mali, *La presse*, <https://www.lapresse.ca/international/afrique/2021-06-11/fin-de-l-operation-militaire-francaise/le-pentagone-maintiendra-son-soutien-au-mali.php>, accessed: 14.06.2021.

²³⁹ No 'immediate' reduction of France's Sahel force, says Macron, *France 24*, <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210216-france-will-step-up-anti-terror-efforts-in-the-sahel-says-macron>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁴⁰ Opération Extérieures (OPEX) – Barkhane, *Global Security*, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/opex-barkhane.htm>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁴¹ Task Force Takuba: Launching Ministerial Meeting, <https://www.government.se/495ef1/globalassets/government/dokument/forsvarsdepartementet/2020/joint-press-statement-task-force-takuba.pdf>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁴² Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/france-suspends-joint-military-operations-with-malian-troops-2021-06-03/>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

high financial outlays from the state budget, as well as the low effectiveness of the mission. An additional reason was the growing misunderstanding between Paris and Bamako, provoked, inter alia, by France's reluctance to enter into talks and negotiations with terrorists, pushed by the Malian government. These factors led Emmanuel Macron to decide that the Sahel countries should take responsibility for their territory and citizens, thus forcing a reduction of French troops in the Sahel.

The change in the model of military presence revealed the true face of Operation Barkhane. In the previous narrative, the French government affirmed that its operations were only successful. In reality, this proved to be untrue. Another mistake was the increased spending on military operations that were supposed to ensure stability. However, the funds were disproportionate to the effects of the mission. These arguments, repeated by those in power, were only supporting illusionary views for 7 years. The concentration of French actions on military operations, and at the same time neglecting in a significant way the political and social aspect, made any long-term and significant improvement difficult to see, and any possible effects and successes were only temporary. France is reorganizing its army at a time when the military has taken over in Mali and the country is unable to provide for its own security without external support and has no prospect of political stability in the future. Nevertheless, the reduced French activity also provides more opportunities for African states to propose their own solutions to the problem, including negotiations with terrorists (a form accepted in Africa and the Middle East) and political dialogue. France has always been a staunch opponent of such action, even despite the actions of the United Nations, which has led to the opening of 29 schools²⁴³.

The reduction of French troops may cause other countries to make intensified attempts to increase their influence in the region under the pretext of stabilization. Russia and Turkey are the most involved countries in the region at the moment, in addition to France²⁴⁴. However, the current Malian government is working more closely with Moscow, which has significant

²⁴³ Fin de l'opération « Barkhane » : « Le sentiment anti-présence française monte au Mali ces derniers mois », *Le Monde*, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/live/2021/06/11/fin-progressive-de-l-operation-barkhane-au-sahel-posez-vos-questions_6083755_3212.html, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁴⁴ Mali : La Russie va-t-elle profiter du dernier coup de force du colonel Goïta, désormais président par intérim?, <http://www.opex360.com/2021/05/29/mali-la-russie-va-t-elle-profiler-du-dernier-coup-de-force-du-colonel-goita-desormais-president-par-interim/>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

investments in the country²⁴⁵. Western public opinion hopes for an increase in the involvement of the US military in the region, but the effect of the operation in Afghanistan suggests that they will approach this subject very cautiously and limit themselves to the current intelligence and logistical activities.

In conclusion, after 7 years of the Barkhane military operation, the balance of the French presence is negative. Although the Republic's tactics can be called successful, the impact on the improvement and stabilization in the region is hardly noticeable. This is because the assumptions from the beginning were too optimistic, and the idea of an apolitical mission and the subsequent creation of Task Force Takuba became a de facto protective umbrella for the Bamako elite.

The Sahel remains a region characterized by the increased activity of terrorist groups. Mali's ruling military group has recently staged a coup, and democratic governance has ceased to exist. In addition, the region is a highly competitive area for influence, especially from the sides of China and Russia. Thus, after Emmanuel Macron's call for withdrawal, there is little to no chance for any Polish involvement in support of France. Given the above, it should be concluded that the region, in the context of maintaining security, has gained very little from French and international activity.

Paris emphasizes that it does not intend to completely abandon the region, which is exposed to even greater destabilization and is a strategic area for French interests. If it were to be taken over in its entirety by jihadists, it would represent a defeat for the Fifth Republic in the face of the measures it has taken since 2014. Therefore, France cares about maintaining the support of the region, however, it does not see itself as the only and main force. The increase in the importance of American power is visible, and it is the United States that should be seen as a dominant actor. Such a role played by this country appears to be a better alternative than Russian or Chinese forces.

²⁴⁵ Mali : un consortium d'investisseurs contrôlés par des Russes veut financer le projet d'or Sanankoro, <https://www.agenceecofin.com/investissement/1906-77678-mali-un-consortium-d-investisseurs-controles-par-des-russes-veut-financer-le-projet-d-or-sanankoro>, accessed: 13.06.2021.



Other missions with French involvement in the region

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (fr. *la Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali*, MINUSMA) is also supported by the French military. The mission was created by the UN Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013)²⁴⁶. In addition to the permanent troops at the UN mission command headquarters, France supports the mission with troops that are in the region as part of the Barkhane operation. A personnel of about 14,000 people, consisting of soldiers and police officers, is involved in the mission²⁴⁷.

²⁴⁶ Countries militarily involved in MINUSMA forces:

Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Spain, U.S, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, Zambia.

²⁴⁷ Ibidem.

Furthermore, French forces are also involved in the European Union operations in Africa. Established in 2013 by the UN Security Council Resolution 2085²⁴⁸, at the request of the Malian government, the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) is part of the EU's security and development efforts in the Sahel region. It responds to the need to enhance the capabilities of the Malian Armed Forces to ensure secure conditions in the territory of Mali and reduce the terrorist threat. EUTM Mali's assistance shall consist of developing the operational capacities of Malian forces through military advice, training, education and mentoring. The mission activities shall remain under the control of the legitimate civilian authorities of Mali and shall not include combat activities²⁴⁹. The mission is headquartered in Bamako.

Two other civilian European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions operate in the region: the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali), which helps internal security forces reestablish government control over the entire national territory, and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger), which supports the fight against organized crime and terrorism in Niger. In addition, the Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell initiates and coordinates capacity-building activities in all G5 countries and their structures, with support from existing CSDP missions (Common Security and Defence Policy)²⁵⁰.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Barkhane represented a priority foreign operation for the French Republic, which saw its only chance to counter international terrorism through a military presence in West Africa. Despite nearly two decades of fighting in the Maghreb and in the regions following the Algerian civil war (1991-2002), as well as many minor conflicts, it does not appear that the French-led coalition would put an end to the evolving terrorist threats in the coming years. The long-standing presence of international troops, the use of high-end military equipment, and the

²⁴⁸ European Union External Action, *EU Training Mission in Mali*, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-mali/pdf/factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf, accessed: 09.06.2021.

²⁴⁹ Ibidem.

²⁵⁰ EUTM Mali: Rada przedłuża misję szkoleniową, rozszerza mandat i zwiększa budżet, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2020/03/23/eutm-mali-council-extends-training-mission-with-broadened-mandate-and-increased-budget/>, accessed: 23.04.2021.

training provided to the armies of the G5 Sahel countries have had a positive effect on regaining territory in Mali or Chad, but terrorists are moving into the territories of Mozambique, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire. It is therefore necessary to consider how the operation with the countries of the potential alliance should be conducted, whether it should or should not concentrate on operations within the borders of one country, and after its possible recapture, also cover other territories.

It is not possible to verify to what extent Operation Barkhane minimized the risk of terrorists coming from Africa to Europe to commit attacks. While it is true that many extremists have been captured or eliminated, it is impossible to assess how many of them would have been engaged in carrying out terrorist attacks in France. At the same time, the very expansive implementation of the French military mission is causing the conflict between the coalition troops and the so-called rebels and terrorists to escalate. Thus, the creation of, for example, a buffer zone between Africa and Europe where travellers would be vetted (e.g. in Morocco or Algeria), should be considered. However, if France's goal is to minimize the terrorist threat as much as possible in the G5 Sahel states, the undertaken operations must be intensified and the strategy should be changed. This is one of the longest-running conflicts in the 21st century, and prolonging it only causes the mission area to expand into more states. At current effectiveness, the mission could last another few decades, as the war on terrorism will never end. There will always emerge new groups that look forward to changing the state order or fight in the name of their own political or religious beliefs.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the popular discontent towards the troops of the international coalition, including French troops. Despite the long-term actions, terrorists are still present in the region, which makes the neo-colonialism accusations against France more frequent. According to the inhabitants of the Sahel, the French army wants to take control of the region under the pretext of fighting terrorism. These accusations are compounded by the French colonial past in this very territory²⁵¹. Recently, for example, in

²⁵¹ *France and the EU in the Sahel*, EU Logos, <https://www.eu-logos.org/2021/02/25/france-and-the-eu-in-the-sahel/>, accessed: 5.05.2021; *Sahel la France perd le combat sur les réseaux sociaux*, Tv5Monde, <https://information.tv5monde.com/afrique/sahel-la-france-perd-le-combat-sur-les-reseaux-sociaux-395771>, accessed: 07.05.2021.

Bamako or Niamey protests broke out during which demonstrators demanded the withdrawal of international troops from the Sahel²⁵².

A second, and equally important, problem is the decline in support for Operation Barkhane among the French public. The French are increasingly opposed to spending budget money on military missions, which in their view do not have a positive impact on France and result in human loss²⁵³.

The third obstacle is a change in the attitude of Sahel countries towards the problem of terrorism. So far, the conducted operations have had a significant impact on the society and political stability in the region. For this reason, local authorities are increasingly promoting a conciliatory approach that aims to negotiate with terrorist groups²⁵⁴. The main reason for such a solution is the ineffective military action, which, despite eliminating many terrorist leaders, does not translate into security for the entire region. An additional argument of those in power is the fact that most of the militants are Malians, which significantly increases the likelihood of finding a common consensus. Moreover, a system of communication and negotiation with radicals already exists, as evidenced by the exchange of prisoners in 2020²⁵⁵. Nevertheless, this approach is unacceptable by the international coalition, especially by France.

As a result, the future of the military presence in the Sahel is in question. Growing dissatisfaction among the French is counterintuitively crucial, as the country's presidential elections will be held in 2022, which could influence future political decisions. Moreover, the conciliatory approach proposed by the Sahel countries is unacceptable, as it would allow the reconstruction of terrorist structures and consequently, it would increase the risk of terrorist attacks not only in Africa but also in Europe. The growing dissatisfaction of the local population has a negative impact on the whole mission, since the fight against terrorism is made very difficult if it is aided by the civilian population that is, for example, bribed. At the same time, it must be understood that the locals, having been waiting for years for peace, are only victims in

²⁵² Niger : manifestation contre la présence de bases militaires étrangères à Niamey, Jeune Afrique, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/779936/politique/niger-manifestation-contre-la-presence-de-bases-militaires-etrangees-a-niamey/>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁵³ F. Tih, *51% of French oppose military presence in Mali*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/51-of-french-oppose-military-presence-in-mali/2107534>, accessed: 02.05.2021.

²⁵⁴ Au Sahel, négociier avec les djihadistes n'est plus tabou, *Le temps*, <https://www.letemps.ch/monde/sahel-negociier-djihadistes-nest-plus-tabou>, accessed: 13.06.2021.

²⁵⁵ Négociier avec les djihadistes: une solution pour le Mali ?, *Le point*, https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/negociier-avec-les-djihadistes-une-solution-pour-le-mali-08-12-2020-2404709_3826.php, accessed: 13.06.2021.

this game. The most important objectives of the international coalition are to increase the awareness of local authorities and to portray the long-term consequences of cooperation with the terrorist community, aiming to prove that the military intervention is the only possible solution. It would be a good idea to consider the creation of an information campaign, both for the Sahel population and also for French citizens, which would show the possible consequences of their current attitude towards terrorism and military missions.

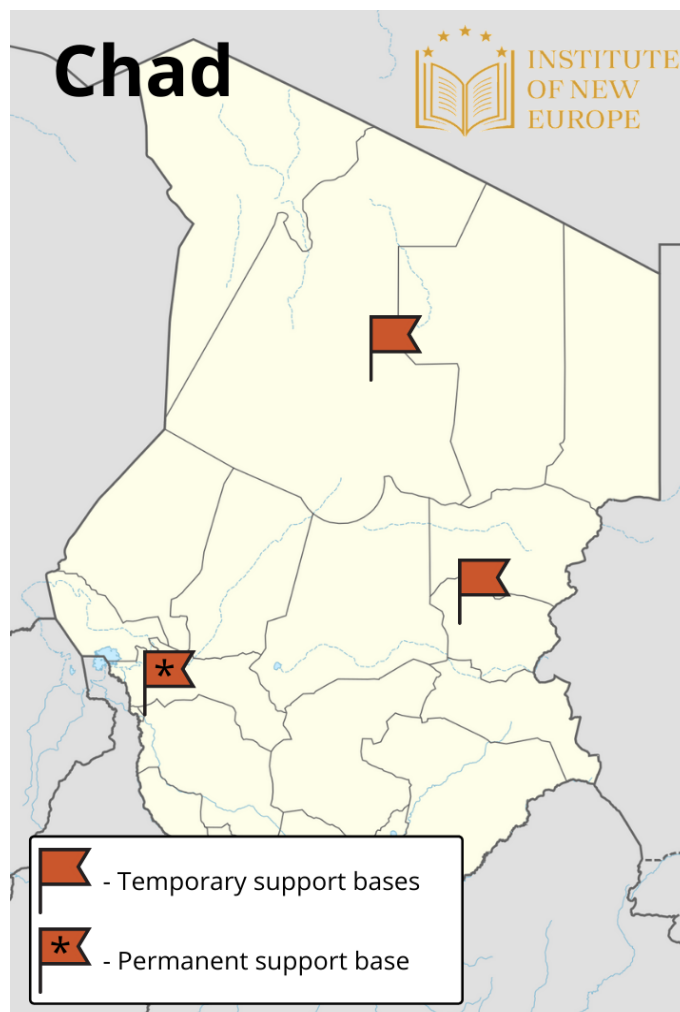
Without a doubt, the death of the President of Chad, Idriss Déby, as a result of the wounds he received during a clash between anti-government rebels and state troops, will pose a challenge to stability in the region. The event has been hailed by the French press as “*a geopolitical seismic shock*”²⁵⁶. The military cooperation between France and Chad is long-standing. As early as 1986, the capital N'Djamena housed the headquarters of Operation Epervie, and later Operation Barkhane. Since then, the concentration of command in Chad has been evident, and it is from N'Djamena that most field operations are coordinated - despite the presence of French bases in Mali. Chad has always been the largest contributor to the G5 Sahel joint force (about 1,850 troops out of 6,000)²⁵⁷. The Chadians have always been among the most committed within MINUSMA, which Paris considers absolutely essential to conduct. Thanks to Déby's activity, Chadian troops have entered, among others, in Nigeria and fought against Boko Haram extremists in 2015. In February 2021, Déby announced the deployment of a battalion of 1,200 troops there as part of a reinforcement effort in the most dangerous area at the interface of the three borders. This was supposed to represent a significant increase in security for the UN and EU missions.

Because of the country's unitary rule system, a military junta seized power after the death of the president and appointed Déby's son as his successor. However, the opposition is fighting to take over the capital, which will most likely result in a reduced, at least temporary, presence of Chadian forces in the region. The scale of Chad's military involvement is also uncertain, from the decisions of the new leader. It seems that the current situation will

²⁵⁶ Sahel : sans Déby, la France face au risque d'effondrement du « rempart tchadien », *Le express*, https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/sahel-sans-deby-la-france-face-au-risque-d-effondrement-du-rempart-tchadien_2149285.html, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²⁵⁷ *Avec la mort du président tchadien Idriss Déby, la France perd un allié clé de l'opération « Barkhane » au Sahel*, *Le Monde*, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/04/21/avec-la-mort-du-president-tchadien-idriss-deby-la-france-perd-un-allie-cle-de-l-operation-barkhane-au-sahel_6077478_3212.html, accessed: 24.04.2021.

negatively affect the progress of the missions there, which will give more room for extremists to operate. Moreover, the Takuba missions should be expanded or the training of the Malian army should be intensified. From 2022, they will be reinforced with the participation of the Eurocorps²⁵⁸. Therefore, France will have to change its actions as part of its presence in the Sahel. Paris will seek to uphold its demands from the February 2021 summit, but because of the death of the Chadian president, French actions must be intensified²⁵⁹. In this view, it will not be possible to rely on N'Djamena as much as it was discussed at the summit. Moreover, terrorist organizations are moving deeper into the continent to more West African countries²⁶⁰.



²⁵⁸ Śmierć prezydenta Czadu wyzwaniem dla stabilności Sahelu, PISM, https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/Smierc_prezydenta_Czadu_wyzwaniem_dla_stabilnosci_Sahelu, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²⁵⁹ G5 Sahel : ce qu'il faut retenir des déclarations de Macron à l'issue du sommet, Le express, https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/g5-sahel-ce-qu-il-faut-retenir-des-declarations-de-macron-a-l-issue-du-sommet_2145004.html, accessed: 24.04.2021.

²⁶⁰ A. Lis, A. Olech, *Działalność dżihadystycznych organizacji terrorystycznych w rejonie Sahelu*, Myśl Suwerenna – Przegląd Spraw Publicznych, Białystok 2021, 1(3)/2021, p. 74 – 79.

FRANCE – UNDER-APPRECIATED MILITARY POTENTIAL

France should not only be perceived as a country developing its security technologies, but also as the one holding a significant military potential. Most often, France is seen under the shadow of the German economy and the United States military. In fact, France has great abilities in the field of military and aerospace technologies. What is more, France is one of the best technologically developed countries in the world, and the most technologically independent member state of the EU that is capable of producing intercontinental missiles, nuclear-powered submarines, jet-powered fighter planes, aircraft carriers, and anti-aircraft defence systems. France is also no short of nuclear energy, fast trains, jumbo-jets, and semiconductors. Paris remains open for selling technologies or their key components to the international partners, which is particularly appreciated by the countries developing their own military abilities.

The beginnings of French strategic autonomy could have been already seen in the 17th century; however, numerous political upheavals have broken the continuity of this development. The proper history of this European success began after World War II. The policy of President de Gaulle had a significant impact on the development of French technology, laying the foundations for the military-operational independence of today's France. As a result of experiments conducted in the years 1939-1945, the consciousness of French political elites has been directed towards gaining strategic independence, from which the nuclear program was a part of. Regardless of changing policies and ruling parties' views, technological self-sufficiency as a part of such an independence, was an indisputable element of internal policies. As a result, a wide range of modern armament has been created, with the use of components made solely in France. That is, to some extent, a phenomenon on a European scale.

The army interests are the basis for the direction of the development of defensive technologies and their efficiency. That is why French armament is developed based on French army requirements. However, it does not decrease the export value, being equally important for the international development process. Paris is currently selling its equipment to, among others, Egypt, India, Qatar, Brazil, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, and the

Netherlands. The export business is particularly important for France because the internal equipment requirements are relatively limited and rarely cover the costs of development and production launch. Exports enable the achieving of a balance and conducting further works on the armament. On the other hand, that also causes insufficient flexibility of the military technologies offered by France – aiming for the highest sales rate possible, manufacturers agree on introducing only minor modifications in comparison with the originals.

The French Army is involved in several conflicts around the world as well as appears in hotspots where the high probability of a potential outbreak of armed conflicts where occurs. A permanent presence poses a great challenge to an army that is less numerous than the one of the United States'. In view of the above, maintaining a permanent readiness which allows a reaction in crisis situations is a priority for French decision-makers. The only French aircraft carrier "Charles de Gaulle" serves as one of the greatest examples of its kind. Incorrect planning of a dock renovation, or extending its operation time, may permanently exclude France from participating in important international missions. Another example would be the requirement for a large amount of ammunition, which France experienced a lack thereof during an intervention in Libya in 2011, codenamed *Opération Harmattan*. In relation to the ambitions of the Republic, the relatively small size of the army and its equipment is a greatest challenge for both French servicemen and engineers. Nevertheless, it is possible to a large extent to reconcile state interests with technological development. Furthermore, the key aspect of developed armament is the possibility of its utilisation under all climatic conditions, a feature that is currently available only in the USA and Russian Federation.

The Elysée Palace also stands to gain from technologies at a business and policy level, since France is ready to transfer even the sensitive technologies provided that the receiving country is willing to cover the costs of the transfer. An interesting example could be the construction program of Brazilian submarines. Apart from an offer that includes a few conventional submarines, it is planned to develop and build at least one nuclear-powered submarine. Another aspect worth mentioning, is the openness and flexibility of French cooperation with partners around the world. For example, one can mention the sales of thermal imaging cameras "Catherine-FC" to Russia (indirectly to Belarus because the plants located there participate in creating the "Sosna-U" viewfinder for Russian tanks), and also the sale of matrices for thermal imaging cameras developed and produced in Poland. Consequently, technological cooperation with France demands from its partners not only

financial involvement, but also a demonstration of the understanding that Paris' openness towards cooperation in the field of technology is an important economic and political factor, which encourages the expansion of the influence. Such a multi-sectoral and an openness of French foreign policy create a lot of political obstacles. For instance, this can be seen in the cooperation with central-eastern European countries, where because French sell technologies to hostile countries (such as Russia) this results in a great political opposition.

The complexity of French technological policies also complicates relations within the EU and NATO. French aspiration to the "autonomy" of not only its republic but of the whole of the EU under its leadership, causes concerns among different countries, for instance Germany, which recognizes the primacy of NATO in the European security politics. At the same time, Paris sees a high potential in selling its broadly defined technologies, not only defensive ones but also space, nuclear energy, air and rail transportation ones. The French activity on the international market raises a natural concern of other countries and causes their reactions. That is the reason why France does not get involved in European-wide armament programs, because they are in a conflict with the economic and political interests of the Fifth Republic.

In conclusion, France is the leader in defensive technologies, manufactured, beyond some exceptions, in an autarkic way. That is a base for the significant independence of French foreign policy, which may be conducted separately from NATO. Nevertheless, some weaknesses of the adapted strategy should be remembered – the French army does not have enough size to realize all of the Republic's interests on a global scale. For now, personal shortages are supplemented by the French technological diplomacy, which enables them to establish political and industrial relationships and greatly extend its influence towards the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

Showing the international potential of the French Republic on the basis of its military activity allows for the broader view of the current directions of interest, objectives and potential plans for the development of its foreign policy. Maintaining significant forces away from its territory is closely related to the structure of its national security system, as well as to the development of strategic defence plans based on troops deployed globally which perform specific tasks that are strongly dependent on the situation in the region. This implies the need to regularly coordinate international missions, which should make a coherent vision of the development of all French troops and the ad hoc review of needs possible.

Aiming to maintain a high level of internal and external security, the French Republic has adopted the option of responding simultaneously on several levels. Internationally, this involves the deployment of military forces in overseas departments to perform tasks on behalf of international organizations, to carry out cross-border operations in support of state security (such as the fight against global terrorism), and through engagement with former colonial territories or on the basis of established bilateral cooperation with selected countries. This approach makes it possible to control interests in any region of the world (with the use of significant military capabilities) and constantly verify the movement of other state and non-state actors, identifying potential threats to the Republic. Meanwhile, from the domestic perspective, it is crucial to establish actors to protect the borders and respond to crises and dangers. In both cases, the basis for strengthening the level of security is the development of the military and correlated services that will successfully implement the vision of an independent and stable France.

Maintaining the presence beyond the country's borders, however, requires the constant involvement of multiple actors, strengthening cooperation with foreign partners, and a huge financial contribution. To achieve this, France is orienting its security policy towards the entire world, and not exclusively towards a specific region. Moreover, when the need arises, forces in selected territories are intensified and short- and long-term missions are carried out. The required support is provided by pursuing its own strategy and on behalf of international organizations, of which France is a key member. In this regard, investment in the military and

in missions abroad makes it possible to regularly demonstrate its power and to emphasize where the most important events for the Republic are currently taking place. Maintaining international operations is therefore a permanent pillar of state power that is worth any price.

President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron is currently competing for re-election, so one of his priorities will be to strengthen France's position in Europe - in every way - seeking to gain approval in the eyes of its citizens. It seems that efforts to "secure the Republic" will remain his flagship slogan, as it was when he began his term by deciding in 2018 to increase the budget of the Ministry of the Interior for the fight against terrorism by 7%. Currently, E. Macron is struggling with domestic problems, which are largely caused by the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, France's foreign cooperation is currently taking on a very different character depending on the opportunities that arise, which results, for example, in cooperation with Russia²⁶¹. In order to win the election, E. Macron must argue that all of France's foreign engagements, including participation in costly missions such as Barkhane and Chammal, are crucial for the security of the country, as the public would currently prefer to spend funds on health care or the economy. If military involvement is used to prove that France has the capacity to participate in the global race for dominance, and at the same time E. Macron convinces the electorate that the virus has not affected economic stability, he will undoubtedly govern until 2027. He is currently on a very good path to maintain his mandate and to continue the diversification of his foreign policy.

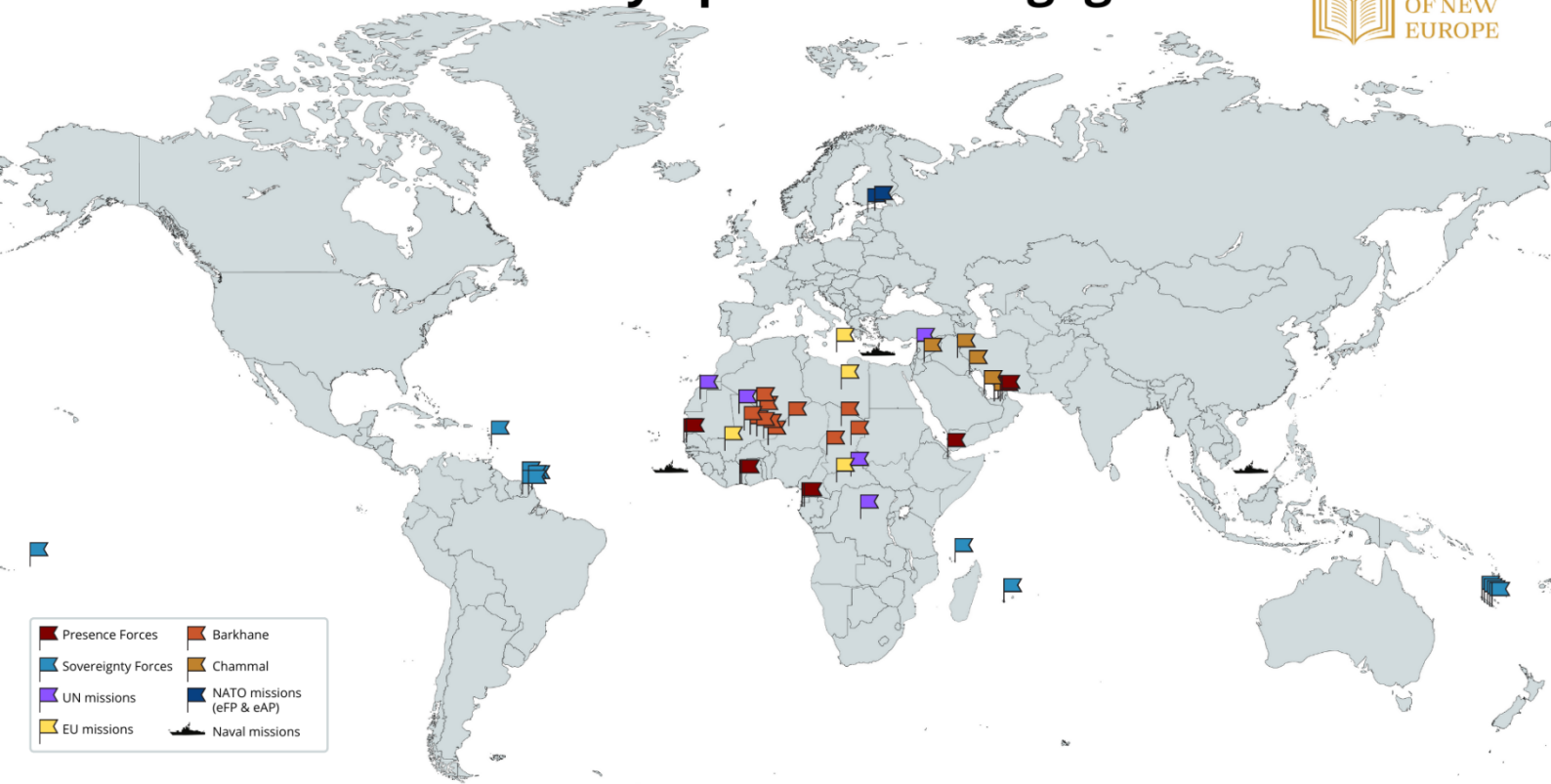
In the current view, one can consider whether France has as significant military capability like the U.S., Russia, and China. It seems that despite its enormous potential and leading role in Europe, the Fifth Republic still needs some time to stand on par with these three superpowers. Moreover, it has to constantly look towards other actors on the international stage, i.e. India, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea, Germany or Brazil - who are also investing in armaments. However, when it comes to overseas presence, the global ranking is followed in order by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the French Republic. While the U.S. dominates across the latitude and longitude, having the primacy, however, defining the second power is problematic due to the characteristics of overseas operations, which can be considered in different ways. Russia, apart from its historical

²⁶¹ A. K. Olech, *Emmanuel Macron and French-Russian relations in times of crisis in international alliances*, „The Warsaw Institute Review”, t. 1, nr 12/2020, p. 64–71.

influence on the territory of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, pursues its interests mainly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This allows it not only to control the territory near its borders, but also to pursue a deterrence strategy, which nowadays acts as a counterweight to NATO forces in Europe. In addition, it is becoming more and more involved, both formally and informally, in Africa, and it is seeking opportunities to increase its presence in the Middle East. It is worth noting that Russia uses a highly developed military infrastructure outside its borders and has numerous troops on constant alert²⁶². At the same time, at the other end of the range is the French Republic, which maintains military units deployed in various parts of the world, carrying out both independent missions and those based on bilateral and international agreements. This allows it to protect its interests in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and (to a smaller extent) in the northeastern part of South America and the western Pacific Ocean. It seems that, from a global perspective, France has the greater outreach, but when it comes to protecting state interests and strengthening its position in the region - which comes from maintained troops and new investments - the Russian Federation has the advantage. In conclusion, building a global position in light of possessing resources and chosen priorities is different for each state, but it should be taken into account that nowadays regions of Africa and the Middle East are of special interest. An additional factor that must be taken into account in the future will be the activities undertaken by members of NATO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SOW) or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), whom may pursue parallel international security policies or, nonetheless, for reasons of economic advantage opt for bilateral agreements focused solely on their own interests.

²⁶² A. Rogozińska, A. Olech, *The Russian Federation's Military Bases Abroad*, Institute of New Europe, Warsaw 2020.

French military operational engagement



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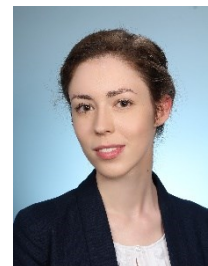
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