To Washington via Tripoli. The French Engagement in the Libyan Intervention as *rapprochement* with NATO and Turn-away from the EU

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The strong French engagement in Libya was generally interpreted in media as a means to show proactivity after the sleepy French inactivity in the rise of the Arab spring, as a regain of European leadership together with the British, and as an intervention for liberty and democracy against an evil dictator.

While there is some truth in these points, however, this paper argues that more interestingly, the French Libyan policy during the recent crisis stands for a *rapprochement* with the NATO and a turn-away from the strong French engagement for the EU’s security and defense policy (CSDP). Accordingly, the Libyan intervention gives testimony about changing ideas of what French security and defense policy should look like, e.g. with respect to autonomy and integration, Europeaness, or Franco-British cooperation. Consequently, the Franco-British initiative and its conduct under the shield of NATO was less designed to strengthen CSDP, but shows on the contrary that France adapted its policy towards both the EU and NATO.

The paper argues that this policy change can be explained in linking policies to their discursive construction, wherein symbolic technologies are used through which political agents make sense of the world and legitimize their action in public. The paper therefore adopts a concept of constitutive causality. Accordingly, drawing on qualitative content analysis, semantic analysis, and interpretivist methods, I will study the discourses on Libya, Europe/ CSDP, Franco-British cooperation, NATO, as well as autonomy and integration in analyzing presidential documents from the time of the Libya intervention and thereafter. Thus, the paper contributes to a better understanding of French policies, can give prospects for further French action, and highlights challenges for the ability of the EU to affirm its strive for international actorness.

**Keywords:** French security and defense policy – ideas – NATO – EU – Franco-British defense cooperation – Libya – discourse analysis – identity

**WORK IN PROGRESS.**

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1 This paper is based on a larger project focusing on discourse and ideas as causal mechanisms in French security and defense policy. The focus is the presidency of Sarkozy, as in this paper. Five discursive moments will be studied intensively, which are NATO reintegration, the 2008 white book on security and defense, the Franco-British defense treaty, the French EU presidency, and the Libya intervention. The empirical apparatus will consist of presidential and parliamentary documents, and might be enlarged further if deemed necessary.
Introduction

The intervention in Libya brought France (and the United Kingdom) back to the forefront of the revolutions in the Arab world. After its more than late appraisal of the Tunisian start of the Arab spring of democracy, when France still opted for continuing its policies of “stability” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31) at the expense of openness towards democratic change in the Maghreb – bringing to light even such strange remarks like those of the then-minister of home affairs, Michelle Alliot-Marie, about helping the Tunisian president Ben Ali to control the masses with French police expertise –, France finally took the decision to support the Arab people/s in their strive for liberty and democratic reforms, culminating in the willingness to use military force against a dictator who was still allowed to put his tent in the gardens of the Palais de l’Élysée some years before. Thus, after decades-long policies in the support of regimes in the Maghreb, the French president Nicolas Sarkozy decided to reinstate the value and place of French distinctiveness – in its quality of being the self-declared cradle of democracy, human rights, and republicanism – in foreign realpolitik, summoning the nation's cultural heritage and founding story. Furthermore, responsibility to protect was actively advanced as new norm of international action in general.

However, inasmuch as this story contains a piece of truth, it is not the only story to be told when it comes to the French foreign policy change through Libya – or at least, more neutrally, not the only interesting one. What is equally interesting to decipher is what we can indeed learn from Libya for French security and defense policy more broadly, especially when it comes to the French policies towards the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union's (EU) security and defense branch, its (since the Lisbon Treaty now also) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as well as Franco-British defense cooperation, which was intensified since 2008 and probably lead to the two countries' prominent role during the Libya campaign. Given these manifold institutional implications and the centrality of both NATO and the EU in French security and defense thinking – we could also call it identity –, accordingly, fundamental questions about autonomy (independence) and integration are at play, which formed the centerpiece of public and scholarly debate for a long time. It is particularly remarkable that France agreed to intervene in Libya under the shield of NATO if we consider that CSDP has been designed under strong French influence since 1999 to engage on its own in conflicts in Europe and at its borders. Consequently, for a first time, France chose to act under NATO where it could have opted for the EU. This puzzle has to be explained in the contexts as described above.

I suggest that we should conceive these policies (NATO, EU/CSDP, Franco-British cooperation) and the norm of autonomy as discourses which we can analyze in order to understand
how decision-making is constituted through social practice (Wendt 1998; Laffey and Weldes 1997). Hajer describes discourse as an “ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories” that give meaning to a phenomenon and that is (re)produced by definable practices (Hajer 2005, 300; also Torfing 2005, 14ff.; Polkinghorne 1988, 32ff.) Ideas – such as norms, frames, or concepts of self and other – about political problems or policies concatenate to socio-discursive representations about issues which then enable or restrain the realm of appropriate policy choices (Hopf 2002, chapter 1; Marcussen et al. 2001, 102ff.; Risse 2007, 50ff.; Stahl 2006, 40ff., 48ff.); as intersubjectively shared symbols (“symbolic technologies' [...] that enable the production of representations” (Laffey and Weldes 1997, 194; term originally by Greenblatt 1991, 12), they constitute policies. The form a national security policy takes (the behavior it shows) is therefore not externally defined by the structure of the international system, but is constructed by discursive practice in a specific arena providing “webs of significance” (Yee 1996, 95) through which possible policy choices are signified as appropriate or inappropriate ones. Thus, language is not seen as epiphenomenal to politics, but as its constitutive part.

Consequently, when we study these discourses, we can understand how discursive agents make sense of the political challenges which lie in front of them and how they try to sell them towards their democratic constituencies to which they are responsible (Waever 2005, 35; Hansen 2006, 7, 23ff.). In studying these discourses on central questions of French security and defense policy, we can thus draw a picture, or write a causal story (Patterson and Monroe 1998, 324ff.), about French security and defense identity as it is constructed during the Libyan intervention (Jackson 2011, chapter 5; also Bevir 2006). I understand identity here with Hopf not as something previously given, but as an intersubjective social structure that emerges out of this discursive practice and offers cognitive “heuristics” (Hopf 2002, 4) to bring order to a complex world (cf. also Berger and Luckmann 1966, 159ff.; Somers and Gibson 1994, 40ff., 64ff.). The overarching research question can therefore be formulated as followed: How were ideations and representations symbolically produced in discourse to constitute policies?

Apparently, this approach favors a constructivist ontology. Constructivism as ontological position about how the world is made makes a main shift away from the rationalist foundations of realism and liberalism towards The Social Construction of Reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966).
World, as social constructs too, is man-made and the first product of action before other action takes place in it. Clifford Geertz, drawing on Max Weber, put this famously in claiming that “*man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.*” (Geertz 1973, 5; also cited by Parsons forthcoming). Constructivist approaches therefore abandon a view of immutable international structures (anarchy, the state) priming on policy choices, but see the world as one “*of our making*” (Onuf 1989) where reality is intersubjectively constructed in social practice between the subjects of discourse (Boekle, Rittberger, and Wagner 2001, 106ff.; Wisotzki 2002, 70ff.; Burr 2003, 3, 48ff.).³ Jackson sees a strong “*comparative advantage*” of a constructivist world view towards realist or institutionalist ones in its ability to include language and intersubjectivity (Jackson 2011, 207).

Applying methods from qualitative content analysis, discourse analysis, and interpretive policy analysis (framing) in a constructivist perspective on the world, the purpose of this paper is three-fold. First, it presents an analysis of French presidential documents with respect to the Libya campaign to show how the intervention was framed discursively. Second, the discourses on NATO, Europeaness/ CSDP, Franco-British cooperation, and about autonomy and integration will be laid out. And finally, I will discuss what conclusions can be drawn from this discourse analysis for future French security and defense action.

Broadly speaking, the paper argues that we see indications for a shift of French security and defense action away from the EU, approaching NATO, and generally pragmatizing its engagement.

**Structure of the paper**

I will first briefly give a summary of French security and defense policy within EU and NATO and sketch the state of the art. Then, methods and data will be presented. The analytical part starts with the discourse analysis on Libya, and then subsequently proceeds to the discourse on Europeaness/ CSDP, Franco-British cooperation, NATO, as well as that on autonomy and integration. The concluding section discusses the results with respect to French security and defense identity and the according realm of policy choices; some remarks on the consequences for EU actoriness will be included.

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³ This is not to be misunderstood that there is no real world outside, but that humans make sense of it. The position stipulates simply – in the well-known words of Laclau and Mouffe – that “*What is denied is not that such objects [earthquakes or falling bricks] exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside of any discursive condition of emergence.*” (Laclau and Mouffe, cited by Ifversen 2003, 64; also Howarth 2005, 317).

French Security and Defense Policy in NATO and Europe after the Cold War

French security and defense policies in NATO and in Europe are generally considered to be each others flip side, even more so after the end of the Cold War (Hoffmann 1993, 139; Vaïsse 2009, 166). For decades after Charles de Gaulle's landmark decision of 1966/67, France stood outside the integrated command structures of the alliance and was trying to keep away from the bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, thus assuring itself a larger room for maneuver, while staying firmly committed to the West. This ambivalent position within NATO can be rightfully considered as the raison d'état in security and defense (Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 29). France even refused the existing state of military integration and just subsequently sent a small but growing number of officers to the integrated command structures after the end of the Cold War, when pragmatically cooperating in NATO missions in Iraq or during the various Yugoslavian wars; although weaknesses of European and French forces were apparent in these conflicts (Müllner-Brandeck-Bocquet 2009, 96ff.; Varwick and Woyke 1999, 122ff.), the French kept their skepticism towards the overwhelming power of the United States and therefore saw the need for autonomy (or their fear of dependency) confirmed (Hoffmann 1993, 137ff.; Burmester 1997; Schmidt 1997). The French policy was especially designed to limit the organization's role in international security issues after the end of the Cold War and the ongoing debate on NATO's transformation from a collective defense to a collective security organization. While the new French president Chirac initially tried to bring France back into the command structures (Hunter 2002), France refrained from reintegration when negotiations between 1995 and 1997 were not judged sufficient, manifesting the unwillingness of the U.S. to cede power to the Europeans and France. Therefore, Gaullism prevailed. The French pursued old goals of autonomy with new means (Art 1996, 32; Irondelle and Mérand 2010; Menon 2000, 78ff., 138, 149ff. 200; Meimeth 1997, 85ff., 90; 2005, 402ff.; Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet 2009, 96ff.; Varwick and Woyke 1999, 122ff.; Woyke 2010, 141ff.).

France did also not hesitate to duplicate NATO structures, an issue of fierce debate with the U.S. and the UK (Hunter 2002). It clearly conducted a Europe first! policy and searched autonomy for the EC/EU, which should become a fully-fledged international actor in security and defense and shape a multipolar world order (Brenner 2003, 204; de Swaan 1994, 12ff.; Hoffmann 1993, 139; Kupchan 1998, 60, 68; Posen 2006, 166; Chirac 2007 (2004), 87f.). Accordingly, France pursued a policy of deepening and an institutionalization of cooperation which has led to the establishment of a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP, earlier ESDP) with numerous
political, civilian, and military bodies, and the conduct of many missions since 2003 (Art 1996, 30ff.; Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 31ff.; Meimeth 2005, 414; Vaïsse 2009, 207; Varwick 2006, 11ff.) that prevailed through all EU treaty negotiations until Lisbon included, resting on a strict intergovernmental logic (Koenig-Archibugi 2004, 141, 148; Vaïsse 2009, 136). While Franco-German defense cooperation was already starting slowly in the late 1980s, the Franco-British efforts were much more encompassing and the 1998 Saint-Malo summit basically launched ESDP (Mayer 2003). However, Franco-British cooperation was extremely difficult to conduct due to the transatlantic divide between the two countries, not being able to overcome mistrust and alienation, especially in the backwash of the third Iraq War (Art 1996, 10; Croft 1996, 787; Duke 2005, 108; Jones 2011, 19; Hoffmann 1993, 139; Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 31ff.; Mérand 2006, 140ff.; Mongrenier 2008, 32; Peters 2007, 26ff.). It took until Sarkozy to renew the bilateral cooperation and to set it on a stronger basis with his state visit to Britain, summoning the end of ambivalences especially with respect to NATO (Sarkozy 2008; Hajdenko-Marshall 2010, 154ff.). The Joint UK-France Declaration ("Joint UK-France Declaration, 27 March 2008" 2009, 104ff.) contains numerous commitments to bilateral cooperation and capability-building and pledges for the availability of the initiatives to EU and NATO (Pesme 2010, 57).

In November 2010, these steps were followed by the signature of the Defence and Security Co-operation Treaty (Hoffmann 1993, 139; Vaïsse 2009, 166; Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic for Defence and Security Co-operation 2010)

The new president also set new accents in NATO. He enacted a massive verbal détente with the U.S. (Sarkozy 2007-11-07; Jarreau, Leparmentier, and Ridet 2006), earning him the attribute of a neoliberal economist, a generally too America-friendly guy, and even of being an Atlanticist (for a critical appreciation of this see Bozo 2008, 2f.; Jones 2011, 19ff.; Lepri 2010). In August 2007, Sarkozy's announcement to reintegrate France nearly fully (with the major exception of the Nuclear Planning Group) into NATO's command structures flabbergasted the French political class and left it speechless for a moment (e.g. Bozo 2008, 1). The heated national debate (e.g. Fressoz and Roger 2009, interview with de Villepin; Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 29f.; Védrine 2009) about this move – discussing the legacy and future of Gaullism, the place and role of the U.S. and France in the world, and the best means to maintain autonomy and influence in an interdependent world – indicates that the decision had an ideational dimension to the French elite and public. In the end, the Fillon government had to connect the vote about reintegration to a motion of confidence in parliament, underlining the dissent that had arisen around the issue.

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4 There has actually been talk about the enlargement of nuclear cooperation to submarine patrols, even though this initiative has not been put forward so far (Jones 2011, 28; Mongrenier 2010, 178; Nougayrède 2010):
Altogether, French security and defense policy under Sarkozy has therefore become more integrated, less committed to institutions, less U.S.-critic, less EU-European, and more Atlanticist than ever before. This gives us enough incentives to ask how discourses on NATO, CSDP, Franco-British cooperation and around autonomy and integration have developed during the Libyan intervention in order to estimate the consequences for French security and defense identity and its realm of appropriate action.

**Literature Review**

French security and defense policies in the EU, Europe, and NATO after the Cold War have been researched from various angles, reaching from rationalist contributions within realism and institutionalism to constructivist scholarship, focused on ideations and identity or culture in general; contributions from discourse-inspired approaches are however rare, what gives some credit to this study.\(^5\)

Explanations advancing balancing against the U.S. have been widely discussed from the perspective of (French) efforts for European autonomy, or *Europe puissance* (Burmester 1997; Pape 2005; Paul 2005; Posen 2006). These contributions mostly opt for classical *balance of power* strategies at the expense of *balance of threat* (Walt 1987, 1997) and often advance *soft-balancing* as subcategory of the former through institutions. However, this scholarship has seen strong opposition, arguing that soft-balancing still relies uniquely on the relative-power argument of realism and its focus on security as the only motivation of state behavior, thus neglecting economic interests, regional security issues (not global concerns about U.S. Power), simple disagreement with a specific U.S. policy, and situation-related or long-term domestic factors (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005; Howorth and Menon 2009; Lieber and Alexander 2005).

Within neoliberal(-institutionalist) approaches, Menon (2000) has most thoroughly established a reading of autonomy as *leitmotif* of French NATO (and *ex negativo* European) security and defense policies in founding the French reticence to integration in domestic struggle and elite disunity, forming a consensus “*cliché*” and showing many disagreements beyond mere Gaullist labels, resulting in political “*immobilisme*” (Menon 2000, 175, 182). Much scholarship is dedicated to this rational-choice ontology (e.g. Bozo 2008; Chafer 2002; Howorth 2010; Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet 2009; Menon 2000; Rühl 1997), especially when analyzing the famous French term of *intérêts vitaux* or looking at Franco-British defense cooperation (e.g. Bickerton 2010; Gomis and Goussot 2010; Jones 2011; Mongrenier 2010). For the early years of the Sarkozy presidency in

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\(^5\) For security studies in particular, the Copenhagen School (Buzan 1998; Hansen 2006, 2011; Waever 2002) has elaborated the discursive processes in the construction of security threats (its famous *securitization* thesis).
particular, Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (2009) rejects a thesis of policy change with respect to NATO and CSDP. She argues that French reintegration in NATO is still limited (e.g. due to the persisting absence of France from the NPG and its opposition against a global, politicized NATO) and that Sarkozy has not ended with the French strive for strengthening CSDP via its NATO presence (comparable also Bozo). However, if we contrast the nearly absence of any CSDP initiatives – yet operations – in the last years to the French steps undertaken with the UK (outside EU institutions) and NATO (Libya intervention) it is doubtful whether this argument still withstands post-2010 reality. Already in the beginning of 2010, Irondelle and Mérand are much less certain about a continuing French engagement for CSDP and cautiously suggest that French CSDP policy might change towards less rhetoric and institutionalism on the one hand and towards more pragmatism or a toolbox-approach on the other (Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 33ff., 40f.). These cautious conclusions seem to have come true nowadays. In the same volume, Howorth (2010, 19ff.) correctly argues that the intriguing question about French NATO reintegration lies within its consequences for CSDP. However, whether the rapprochement with NATO is still made conditional on developing CSDP further is uncertain today, isasmuch as the vocation for “European security autonomy” (Howorth 2010, 21) through the institutional realm of the EU.

Existing literature is limited either in bringing together supposed rationalist logics of consequence and continuity in French behavior with a somehow relevant symbolic dimension that it is unable to explain and that may have changed. If this was true, I argue that this might be at least an example of equifinality (same effect, different causes) worth studying (Ragin 2004, 134ff.). Rational choice is a respectable approach, but it is unable to answer how representations of reality constitute a specific perception of rational interests, or a concept of rationality itself.6

The role of ideations, such as identity, culture, or norms, have also been researched from constructivist perspectives. Vaïsse (2009) adopts a cultural standpoint in explaining policies, anchoring them in cultural categories like identity, grandeur, or distinctiveness. French policies in the European realm may have been researched the most from an ideational perspective (e.g. Jachtenfuchs, Diez, and Jung 1998; Parsons 2002; Risse et al. 1999; Vaïsse 2009, chapter 2 and 162ff.), also considering normative underpinnings of foreign and security policy in particular (e.g.

6 Hopf underlines that in the end, people always act interest-driven, but those interests derive from the realm of their constructed identities, not an unbounded rational choice (Hopf 2002, 16ff.)

In one of his recent books, A Cultural Theory of International Relations, Lebow also grounds the value of this assumption in a novel psychological reading of constructivism (Lebow 2008a; s. also Hymans 2010). Research on the role of emotions, cognitive biases, and in general psychology in international relations and decision-making has also been driven much forward in the last years, arguing for an a priori status of emotions and/ or cognitive processes constituting interest-rationality thereafter (Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Farnham 1992; ’t Hart, Stern, and Sundelius 1997; Lake 2010/11; Mercer 2010; McDermott 2004; Gross Stein forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b).
Katzenstein 1996a; Howorth 2005, 2010; Menon 2000; Wagner 2002; Webber et al. 2004). The norm of autonomy and the respective thinking that influence comes along with autonomy is often considered to be the guiding principle of foreign policy, cited along with an idea of cultural distinctiveness (\textit{grandeur}) deriving from the Enlightenment and the French revolution, which has to be promoted in the outside world (Grosser 1986, 193, 223, 350, 396ff.; Hoffmann 1993, 133ff., 145ff.; Jachtenfuchs, Diez, and Jung 1998, 430ff.; Vaïsse 2009, chap. 3 and 9, pp. 105, 298ff., 303ff., 524; Woyke 2010, 39ff., 94f., 122ff., 187ff.).

Major discursive contributions can be found in the book of Stahl (2006), in which he shows how discourse coalitions enable or impede change in French foreign policy, and the work of Irondelle and Mérand, who engage in research on social representations in French security and defense policy in Europe (e.g. Irondelle and Mérand 2010; Mérand 2006; Mérand and Poulion 2008). However, while the argumentation in Irondelle and Mérand's 2010 article on NATO reintegration and the future of ESDP – stipulating changes even within Sarkozy's presidency – is convincing, it is not always clear how Irondelle and Mérand conceptualize the role of language and their communicative model accordingly, as sometimes they refer to language and the \textit{“hypocritical discourse”} (Irondelle and Mérand 2010, 34) on NATO as being somehow epiphenomenal, rather than seeing them as part of the ideational structure and the representational process. The value of discourse studies as an analytical tool, informing us on the one hand \textit{“which codes are used when actors relate to each other”} (Waever 2002, 26f.), is therefore underestimated in scholarship on France. The advantage of the discursive approach lies in the operationalization of the significance of ideations and representations in their \textit{articulation} and therefore on a phenomenological quality of language (Hansen 2006, 23f.; Stahl 2006, 47; Waever 2002, 24f.; Torfing 2005, 14ff.; Doty 1993). Waever underlines further that relying interpretively on discourse has the great merit of taking available texts \textit{“for what they are, and not indicators of something else”} (e.g. expressions of individuality, or subjective intentionality (Waever 2002, 26). Accordingly, a discourse-oriented approach (Baumann 2006; Doty 1993; Hansen 2006; Laclau; Mérand 2006; Stahl 2006; Torfing and Howarth 2005) seems particularly appropriate to analyze constructions of meaning in smaller time frames within one discursive arena, rather than using cultural approaches that often aggregate various ideations for cross-country and cross-time comparison (e.g. Wendt 1999; Katzenstein 1996b; Duffield 1999, 1998). It therefore sees constructs such as ideas, representations, or identity as products of social processes, rather than as characteristics of a cultural system. A discourse-inspired concept of politics consequently responds both to the structural conditioning of behavior – understood as the historical evolution of discourses and meanings – and a theory of agency and
change that avoids the shortcut of uncontextual individualism and determinism.

**Interpretive Discourse Analysis as Access to Ideations**

Interpretive scholars have developed methods that are able to both analyze the form and content of discourse and the interactive, symbolic relationship between different texts and speakers. Interpretive policy analysis (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006), which has a strong tradition in public-policy issues (e.g. Abolafia 2004; Gamson and Lasch 1980; Gusfield 1981; Keeler 2007; Schön 1979; Yanow 1992), consequently underlines the linkage between language, meanings, and political struggle/policy positions. Additionally, from discourse analysis, we have learned that inasmuch as discourses create the objects of reference (Mills 2004, 15) (here: ideations and representations of reality), they also constitute the speaking subjects themselves and their relationship to each other. Put differently: with interpretive methods we can study both single linguistic artifacts (e.g. the meaning of ideations, the relevance of the use of words), self-concepts, and the mechanisms or strategies through which they are made available for policies (e.g. framing, narratives).

For the establishment of the objects of the discourse, I draw on grounded theory and qualitative content analysis which develop its causal model from the empirical material of experience (here: discourse) rather than solely testing existing theories on data. Both approaches consider the role of hermeneutic understanding (Strauss 1987, 5-14; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Glaser and Strauss 1967), and qualitative content analysis uses a mixed deductive-inductive approach, working on the one hand with previously defined codes (categories), while enlarging its coding scheme during the research process (Mayring 2000b, 2000a, 2005) in a spirit of inductive openness for the discovery of unanticipated issues on the other (cf. also Baumann 2006, 94ff.; Ragin 2004, 130; Wagner 2002, 197ff.). The coding is done with the software package *Nvivo 9.2*, which also helps in conducting the further, semantic and discourse-analytical research steps on the

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7 The notion of *text* in a discursive sense transcends written language and refers to speech too; it may reach out to non-verbal forms of language (e.g. body language) as well (cf. Hansen 2006, 23; Gamson and Lasch 1980).

8 Hermeneutics refers to the idea that our understanding of an object of knowledge or the observations we make are always relating to experience or knowledge we have acquired earlier and theories which inform our arguments: "An experience is not an unmediated interaction with the world, imprinting itself clearly and directly in the brain of the experiencing person. Rather, part of any experience is itself an interpretation, a recognition that something happened and the construction of a theory about what that something was. 'Experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, and always therefore political.’” (Patterson and Monroe 1998, 328; quoting Scott 1991, 797; also Bevir 2006, 289f.; Hollis and Smith 1990, 66). – This also has consequences for the concept of falsification of an analytical argument, what is a process which works just indirectly through other theories (Jackson 2011, 14ff., 45ff., 114f., 147f.; Collier, Seawright, and Munck 2004, 22ff.; Howarth 2005, 328; Patterson and Monroe 1998, 328f.; Wendt 1998, 106f.).
basis of the coded material. With regard to the purpose of this study, the coding will map the
discursive constructions of the Libyan intervention itself and the embedded discourses on NATO,
CSDP/ Europeaness, Franco-British cooperation, as well as the positions on autonomy and
integration. It will of course not always be possible to clearly differentiate each discourse from the
other, as each discourse contributes to the other interdiscursively, reflecting the differential
character of language which constructs meaning in relationship to other meanings (Andersen 2005,
145; Foucault 2002, 329; Laclau, 1, 5ff.; Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000, 9ff.; Wodak 2008, 3f.).
This approach also reflects the counterfactual procedure of constitutive causation Lebow (2008b)
and Wendt (1998, 105f.) put forward for constructivist scholarship (cf. also Jackson 2011, 148f.,
199). In this differential process, I will further consider the relevance of intertextual references, as
the references texts make to other ones or other events both synchronically and diachronically (e.g.
through quoting, catchphrases, or simple mentioning) relate to processes of the construction of
authority or legitimacy and the transformation of policies and ideations (Hansen 2006, 55; Phillips
and Jørgensen 2002, 73; Kristeva 1996). Consequently, we can think of intertextuality (or
intertextual referencing) as mechanism of discursive change. The semantic analysis of vocabularies
and the way they attribute meaning is therefore important and a procedure at the crossroads of
qualitative content analysis – which is focused on the emergence of issues – and discourse analysis
– which analyzes the form these issues take (e.g. Doty 1993; Sjöstedt 2007).

Additionally, the analysis will investigate frames, which focus on the set-up of political
controversies and the narratives/ stories which are told to legitimize a policy. Frame analysis departs
from the observation that a policy is an interwoven construction of facts, values, interests, and ideas
about appropriate actions for goal-attainment by specific actors, groups of actors, or organizations
(Abolafia 2004; Rein and Schön 1996; Schmidt 2006). A frame is then “a way of selecting,
organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing,
analyzing, persuading, and acting.” (Rein and Schön 1993, 146). Accordingly, framing is used by
agents to forward their own narratives for analysis and action, drawing on readings of the past, a
symbolic negotiation of the policy in question, and the crafting of signals for future action (Abolafia
2004; Rein and Schön 1993, 1996; as a good review also Rasmussen 2011, 932ff.). Relevant frames
can be – without pretense for comprehensiveness – e.g. economic advantages through cooperation,
democratic values, utility, expressions of community, or history.

9 It therefore stands in the tradition of and a critical dialogue to bureaucratic and cabinet politics from psychological
IR (see e.g. Stern and Sundelius 1997).
10 While being close to each other, narratives are also forwarded as separate techniques for framing, applying concepts
for the construction of truth claims or stories which strongly derive from literature theory and pay much attention to
sequences of storytelling. Narratives therefore play the role of showing where one comes from and where one is in
After this description of the methodical approach, I will now turn to the data. After a brief record of the Libya campaign, the analytical part begins.

**Data**

The empirical apparatus of this study consists of 46 presidential documents, reaching from the beginning of the upheaval in Libya in February 2011 until the end of the the presidency of Sarkozy in May 2012 (the first document dates from the 23 February 2011, the last from 2 March 2012). This decision on the time period is founded on the idea to follow whether ideations and representations from the period of the intervention could still be found later. All documents were downloaded from elysee.fr and searched for references to *libye*. Included documents consist of: declarations, interviews, newspaper articles, online articles, press conferences, and speeches. A small number of press communiqués has been included when they were communicating joint bi- or multilateral declarations. However, the rest of the press communiqués on elysee.fr has been excluded, as they do not represent speech acts from the president himself and function more as very short records of activities, often not consisting of more than a few lines. Excluded have been further the agenda of the president, the agenda of the Council of Ministers, and travel summaries.

In order to work with the empirical material properly, some editorial changes had to be undertaken. First of all, I have decided to work with personally created doc-files, because automatic conversion using the pdf-button on the Elysée webpage has produced mistakes in the conversion of special characters (e.g. the \œ in *vœux*, or the apostrophe between article and word starting with a vowel), which did not show up in the copy-paste process to word processors. I then deleted all kind of supplementary data like dates, places, events, institutions, or references to foreign language versions that could be misleading the analysis when using automatic word-frequency or co-occurrence tools in e.g. generating semantic fields. However, I have opted for keeping titles, subtitles, or in-text headlines in the working documents, as they can inform us about important issues or framing moves on behalf of the speaking agents; in the same spirit, I did not change the paragraph structure of the sources. For press conferences involving other than French actors, I deleted these parts of the data and just dealt with questions directed towards the French president.\(^\text{11}\)

Coding is done exclusively on paragraph level, as paragraphs can be considered to form a

\(^{\text{11}}\) The press conferences with Mahmoud Jibril on 28 August 2011 and the press conference of the Libya support conference on 1 September 2011 were not available as transcripts and have been transcribed by myself from the video on the Elysee webpage. The transcription has been checked with the video by a native speaker.
logic, meaningful unit beyond the phrase, and further in order to assure an adequate coverage of context which gives the code additional meaning. I just seldomly coded beyond a single paragraph and only deviate from this rule when an idea is continued in the following paragraph.

**The Libya Intervention and Security and Defense Discourses**

**A Brief Record of the Libya Intervention**

After the arrest of a human-rights lawyer on February 15\textsuperscript{th} protests against the Kadhafi regime start in Benghazi. In the following days, they spread to other cities in the country. On February 17\textsuperscript{th}, we see first clashes with the security forces, who repress the demonstrations brutally from the beginning. On February 25\textsuperscript{th}, Sarkozy for the first time calls Kadhafi to leave office (Sarkozy and Gül 2011-02-25). The following day, the United Nations Security Council endorses its resolution (UNSCR) no. 1970, freezing the financial assets of Kadhafi (UnitedNations 2011a). In the following weeks, the Comité de transition national (CNT) is formed and rebels take the fight against Kadhafi along the coast line (Rémy 2011). While pushing for sanctions since February 23\textsuperscript{rd}, Sarkozy and British Prime minister David Cameron ask for an extraordinary European Council session on February 28\textsuperscript{th}, which then takes place on March 11\textsuperscript{th}; one day before, France recognizes the CNT as legitimate representation of the Libyan people. The forces of Kadhafi start attacking the rebel forces on March 6\textsuperscript{th}, finally heading for Benghazi on March 19\textsuperscript{th} (Rémy 2011). Tow days earlier, on March 17\textsuperscript{th}, the Security Council passed its resolution no. 1973 under chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorizing member states and/ or regional organizations for the implementation of a no-fly zone to prevent harm from the Libyan people, allowing for “all necessary measures” (UnitedNations 2011b, 3); Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia voted with abstention. A coalition of countries then starts with airstrikes on March 19\textsuperscript{th}, when Kadhadi’s forces were heading for Benghazi. NATO made final arrangements for the take-over of both the control of the arms embargo and the no-fly zone are taken on March 22\textsuperscript{nd} (phone call between Cameron, Obama, and Sarkozy) and 25\textsuperscript{th} respectively, to be directed by the Joint Forces command in Naples under a Canadian commanding officer (Sarkozy 2011-03-24).

Between August 20th and August 26th, rebel forces start their offensive against Tripoli, causing Kadhafi to flee. He is finally killed on October 20th. The allied operations then end formally on October 31st (Rémy 2011).

**The French President’s Discourse on Libya: Democracy, Responsibility to Protect, and Policy Change**

Given the strong French engagement in the Libyan conflict, starting since the earliest action of Kadhafi against his people in February 2011, being one of the lead nations in the airstrikes implementing UNSCR 1973, and chairing several conferences for the support of the Libyan people – or “La Libye nouvelle” (Sarkozy 2011-03-24), as the country is often called from the dawn of
Kadhafi’s power during the airstrikes and onwards – during and after the armed hostilities, we must not wonder that the French president was very actively involved and giving a lot of speeches or statements on the intervention. From the very beginning, some clear argumentative lines can be discovered, while some usual suspects (e.g. a small number of references to the war on terror) also play a minor role.

The overwhelming idea in the presidential discourse on Libya is the necessity to protect the Libyan people from state repression and a dictator threatening his own people. This argumentative line is sometimes even directly outspoken as responsibility to protect as norm of the international community, represented by the United Nations and its Security Council, and being enacted in Libya (and the Ivory Coast, while pending in Syria). But before coming to this point, we shall first scrutinize this argumentative line for itself.

The necessity to intervene in Libya for the protection of its people is mentioned almost 70 separate times (separate paragraphs) in 33 of the 46 presidential documents analyzed for the purpose of this study. It is thus way long the largest idea that has been discovered in the analysis, and present in roughly 70 percent of the material. This necessity to intervene is legitimized as a means to prevent massacres on a civil population which is threatened (exactions, menacer, assassiner, canon) by its own head of state, running a dictatorial regime. Occasionally, this regime is also described as foolish and criminal:

“Aujourd'hui, nous intervenons en Libye, sur mandat du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, avec nos partenaires, et notamment nos partenaires arabes. Nous le faisons pour protéger la population civile de la folie meurtrière d'un régime qui, en assassinant son propre peuple, a perdu toute légitimité.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-19)

“En Libye, ils défendent tout un peuple contre les exactions d'un régime criminel qui menaçait de faire couler des « rivières de sang » à Benghazi. Un régime qui s’acharne au canon contre la population de Misratah. Un régime qui veut priver tout un peuple de ses droits les plus élémentaires.” (Sarkozy 2011-07-12)

The representation of the enemy is thus – unsurprisingly – a very negative one. The necessity of action to protect the Libyan population from its despot is further reinforced by intertextual elements. We find explicit references to the Srebrenica massacre and the then-inability of the Europeans to react, enforcing the argument made here for intervention by reference to the narrative of apparent European powerlessness during the Yugoslavian wars, which was often used when legitimizing the build-up of ESDP in the late 1990s (Duke 2005, 117ff.). Consequently, the scope of the construction of otherness which takes place here is profound, touching the frames of crime, cruelty, stupidity, (bad) historic experience inasmuch the lessons learned from it, and – first and foremost – the negation of democracy, disputing legitimacy to a leader who withholds “the most
elementary rights” (Sarkozy 2011-07-12, my translation) from its people. The value commitments related positively to democracy in this theme of the protection of the Libyan people are as strong as the condemnation of Kadhafi on behalf of the violation of democratic standards. Throughout the case, democratic values play a role in either interpreting the intervention as a means to strengthen and/ or spread democracy or in affirming them as common basis of the intervening coalition with the Libyan people (or others), thus constructing a sense of solidarity which obfuscates the dividing lines between intervening powers and the democratic Libyans and constructs a common democratic self:

“Des peuples arabes ont choisi de se libérer de la servitude dans laquelle ils se sentaient depuis trop longtemps enfermés. Ces révolutions ont fait naître une immense espérance dans le cœur de tous ceux qui partagent les valeurs de la démocratie et des droits de l’homme. […] L’avenir de ces peuples arabes leur appartient. Au milieu des difficultés et des épreuves de toutes sortes qu’ils ont à affronter, ces peuples arabes ont besoin de notre aide et de notre soutien. C’est notre devoir. […] Si nous intervenons aux côtés des pays arabes ce n’est pas au nom d’une finalité que nous chercherions à imposer au peuple libyen mais au nom de la conscience universelle qui ne peut tolérer de tels crimes.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-19)

Democracy is put forward here as something universal, its lack synonymous with “servitude”, the support of Arab peoples in their strive for democracy even a “duty” (Sarkozy 2011-03-19, my translation), inasmuch as the value of human rights is invoked next to democracy (also Sarkozy 2011-03-12, 2011-03-11).

This link between the necessity to intervene in Libya and democracy even gets stronger when we consider further the idea and norm of self-determination, which already shows up in the above citation, and can be found in 22 documents. The French president does not get tired of underlining both the internal and external sides of this norm: that the Arab spring revolutions are conducted by the Arab peoples for the Arab peoples and that when the coalition forces are engaged in Libya they do this on request of the Libyan people and will refrain from any intervention into internal affairs, respect its independence and sovereignty, yet question territorial integrity (Sarkozy 2011-09-01; Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-10, 2011-03-28):

“Les peuples [arabes, F.O.] se sont mis en mouvement au nom des valeurs universelles qui nous sont chères : la liberté, la démocratie, la justice. Notre devoir est d’accompagner ces peuples, avec amitié et sans ingérence.” (Sarkozy 2012-01-20)

“Et nous ne sommes pas là-bas pour faire la révolution à la place des Libyens ou pour résoudre les problèmes politiques qui appartiennent aux Libyens.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-24)

Though this emphasis of self-determination is tied to a wish for the establishment of democratic

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12 Implicitly, this statement is also linked to lessons from Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003, when Sarkozy claims that the strive for democracy cannot be “provoked” from outside a country, but must derive from the free choice of the people (Sarkozy 2011-08-31).
systems and a rule of law (Sarkozy et al. 2011-09-01), formulations often stress the indeterminacy of the democratic process which is nevertheless owned (appartenir) by the people (Sarkozy 2011-03-11, 2011-03-24, 2011-03-19; Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-28) – including the possibility that the valued partners of the Comité national de transition (CNT) might not be at the head of governments elected in the future (Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-03-11; Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-10) – and use variations of the formula that the Libyan people “will be free to decide on its own future” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-28, my translation; also Cameron, Obama, and Sarkozy 2011; Sarkozy 2011-09-20) and to find solutions to its own political problems by taking their liberty and destiny into their own hands, by choosing (choisir, construire, prendre en main) for themselves – a stable claim throughout the whole period under scrutiny (Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-03-12, 2011-08-31, 2012-01-13; Sarkozy and Gül 2011-02-25; Sarkozy 2011-05-26). We can recognize here a first indicator for the proclaimed foreign policy change from policies for stability to policies in the support of democracy and liberty, to which I will come later.

A third omnipresent idea in the texts by Sarkozy is that the Libyan intervention is conducted by a large coalition of multi-civilizational forces on behalf of the “international community” (e.g. Sarkozy 2011-03-12; Cameron, Obama, and Sarkozy 2011; Sarkozy 2011-08-12) which Libya asked for help, and as it is represented by the UN Security Council to undertake legitimate action. 41 references in 20 different documents make clear that neither religion, nor post-colonial paternalism, nor a clash of civilizations is on the agenda, but the enforcement of a Security Council resolution for the protection of a people against its despotic enemy (Sarkozy 2011-08-31, 2011-09-09). Therein, the participation of Arab countries in the airstrikes against the forces of Kadhafi and the support of the Arab League take the central place, even underlining that action has originally taken place on the call of the Arab League (Cameron, Obama, and Sarkozy 2011; Sarkozy 2011-03-16, 2011-03-24):

“Nous ne devons jamais perdre de vue les raisons qui ont initialement obligé la communauté internationale à agir. Lorsque la Libye a plongé dans le chaos à la suite des attaques du colonel Kadhafi contre son peuple, la Ligue arabe a exigé des actes. L’opposition libyenne a appelé à l’aide. Dans ce moment de détresse, le peuple libyen s’est tourné vers la communauté internationale. Le Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies, dans une résolution historique, a autorisé la communauté internationale à prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour protéger la population libyenne contre les attaques qu’elle subissait. En réagissant immédiatement, nos trois pays [UK, USA, France, F.O.] ont arrêté la progression des forces de Kadhafi. Le bain de sang dont il avait menacé les habitants de Benghazi, assiégée, a été évité.” (Cameron, Obama, and Sarkozy 2011)

The centrality of the Arab support goes so far as to cause Sarkozy to quote a resolution of the Arab League on Libya at length, occupying approximately half of a letter to the heads of state and
government of the members of the UN Security Council (Sarkozy 2011-03-16). On the same level as Europeans, Americans, or Canadians, the Arab countries are referred to as “partenaires” (e.g. Sarkozy 2011-03-11, 2011-03-27, 2011-03-19) whose support (soutien) is “strong” (my translation of "soutien régional ferme", Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-10) and with whom action takes place “côte à côte” ("side by side", also "à nos côtés" et al., e.g. Sarkozy 2011-08-31, 2011-03-24).

This argumentation of action on behalf of the international community under the shield of the responsibility to protect cannot be disentangled from continuous references to the UNSCR no 1970 and 1973 relevant to Libya as legal basis for the intervention – showing up 42 times in 22 documents – and a commitment of Sarkozy for action under the coverage of international law in general:

“Si nous participons à l’opération en Libye, c’est pour répondre à la demande d’un peuple, qui était soumis à un danger immédiat et parce que la communauté internationale est parvenue à un accord, au sein des Nations Unies. Sans l’accord des Nations Unies, nous ne serions pas intervenus. Notre force est respectable parce qu’elle est légitime. C’est la différence entre la force d’une démocratie et les forces barbares.” (Sarkozy 2011-08-12)

Nous avons posé un certain nombre de conditions : un mandat des Nations Unies -- du Conseil de Sécurité --, le soutien des partenaires -- nous visions naturellement la Ligue arabe et par ailleurs les autorités libyennes que nous reconnaissions comme des interlocuteurs politiques -- et bien sûr des agressions massives, par des moyens militaires, sur des populations désarmées non violentes et civiles.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-11)

The intervention in Libya is thus explicitly made conditional on the approval of the Security Council, widespread support (with regional partners), and the self-determined decision to ask for help by a threatened people, uniting the three major ideas of the presidential discourse on Libya presented here so far. Yet, this commitment reaches beyond the Libyan case and is e.g. also invoked multilaterally for the war on terror (Un nouvel élan pour la liberté et la démocratie: déclaration du G8 de Deauville 2011-05-26, § 81), for Syria (Sarkozy 2011-08-31, 2011-08-24; Sarkozy and Merkel 2011-06-17), and the Ivory Coast intervention (Sarkozy 2012-01-13, 2012-01-26, 2011-04-26), in delimiting it from the Tunisian and Egyptian situations, where – following Sarkozy – no large-scale, massive action of military forces against civilian masses has been undertaken (Sarkozy 2011-03-11). Thus, the frame of law adds up to the frame of democracy which are both enacted via a (democratic) international-community self against a cruel, barbaric other.

Altogether, we see arising here the norm of responsibility to protect at a broader scope that reaches beyond Libya, already concerned the Ivory Coast before, and which is uphold as general principle around which the international community should unite (Sarkozy 2011-07-12, 2012-01-

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13 These numbers have been produced by an automatic text search on resolution and mandat (including stemmed words, synonyms, and specializations, thus also producing results for demander and autoriser), then coding manually upon the results.
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26, 2011-09-01):

“En Côte d'Ivoire comme en Libye, à la demande du Conseil de sécurité et avec nos alliés, nous avons pour la première fois assumé « cette responsabilité de protéger » que l'ONU a adopté à l'unanimité comme nouveau principe d'action.” (Sarkozy 2011-07-12)

“La France, et il me semble que c'est son honneur, a su prendre l'initiative et montrer le chemin à deux moments décisifs : en Côte d'Ivoire d'abord, lorsque le Président sortant, refusant le résultat des urnes pourtant validé par l'Union africaine et par les Nations Unies, a voulu se maintenir par la terreur et les massacres en faisant tirer à l'arme lourde sur le marché d'Abidjan; en Libye ensuite, lorsque les populations qui demandaient la liberté étaient menacées d'écrasement, de faire couler des rivières de sang, disait M. Kadhafi à Benghazi sous les tirs des canons, des chars et de l'aviation d'un dictateur.” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31)

Once again, the connection made between the protection of people striving for democracy against a dictator at the risk of “écrasement” (to crush, squash), the fight against “terreur” and “massacres” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31), and the defense or spread of liberty and democracy is the utmost clear – and in the case of the latter put forward at a prominent place of French diplomacy, the Conférence des ambassadeurs. This “new principle of action” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31, my translation) of the international community is further framed as a change of French foreign policy as lessons learned from the Arab spring. In Sarkozy's view, “stability” has too long (reaching back to the Cold War) be bargained with democratic values:

“In an exercise of (also personal) self-criticism, the pursuit of foreign policies paying tribute to democratic values is put into the realm of possible realpolitik, replacing (“choix historique”, “tournant” (Sarkozy and Berlusconi 2011-04-26) the old policies of “stability” towards regimes when oppressed peoples strive themselves for democracy (also Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-05-26; Sarkozy and Berlusconi 2011-04-26). Furthermore, explicitly, uncertainty is accepted as negative trade-off from these new, value-oriented policies, summoning that “fear is not a good counselor” (Sarkozy 2011-09-20, my translation). Additionally, this policy change also relates to the prosecution of crimes against humanity, and therefore again introduces the frame of law to the argumentative strategy of the French president:

“Le Président du CNT nous a demandé d'intervenir, cela sera fait demain. Il faut que tous les
dictateurs du monde comprennent que dans le monde du XXIème siècle, il n'y aura pas un endroit où ils pourront s'assurer de leur impunité. L'impunité, c'est fini.” (Sarkozy 2011-09-15)

In sum then, we can draw a representation of the French Libyan policy in the eyes of president Sarkozy which is deeply rooted in the frames of democracy, law, community-of-action, and policy change. Ideational elements – such as the norm of responsibility to protect, or democratic values like liberty and self-determination – play the central role for the legitimization of the French participation in the intervention. These ideations are often embedded into lessons from history – more recent ones like Yugoslavia, or fundamental elements of national identity relating back to the 18th century. They are further connected at some points to a self-critical narrative reflecting these historical and ideational foundations on policies before the Libyan intervention, then arguing for policy change on the grounds of a new dawn for democracy, the Arab spring, portrayed as struggle of a suppressed people for democracy against a dictator, whose attributions alternate between barbaric, fool, and criminal. This framing of the policy is reinforced by the claim to act on behalf of the international community as represented by the United Nations and its Security Council, and in accordance with international law, thus adding more generic (generally accepted) and international dimensions to the value-based arguments.

The construction of the enemy (Kadhafi, his regime) as negative other is therefore clear as a negation of all the values and norms which are implicated in the frames as described above – though not crossing the threshold of dehumanizing him. However, in the portrait of the Libyan (and other) people striving for democracy, the borders between the self and other become fuzzy due to the construction of the former as perfect agent for democratic change. Though the continuous reference to the self-determination of the Libyan people inhibits the intervening and the protected self to coincide fully, the non-confrontational self-other construction – which also reflects on own (Western) mistakes in the past – on the basis of democracy as common point is striking. The Libyan situation is portrayed as war against us, the democrats. Altogether, this representation leaves little other possibility than to intervene.

**The President’s Ideas About Europe During the Libya Crisis: Europeanness and CSDP**

The Libya intervention gives us a three-fold incentive to study discourses on Europe and the EU. First, the intervention took place at the rims of Europe in an area which is subject to European Union policies, and should therefore be so in security and defense as well. Second, as shown above,

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14 “Nous avons dit au Premier ministre combien nous étions attachés à son message de réconciliation, de rassemblement, combien nous lui faisions confiance pour qu’il n’y ait pas de règlement de compte parce qu’on ne répond pas par la violence à la violence. On ne combat pas la dictature avec les méthodes des dictateurs. Et je suis heureux de voir que l’engagement du Premier ministre est exactement dans cette direction.” (Sarkozy 2011-08-24)
the intervention in Libya has been presented as being conducted on behalf of the international community; as it is a commonplace to state that the EU should act internationally as a coherent, global player, thus, its role in the crisis is of interest. And third, and this with more special attention to CSDP; France was always pursuing actively policies for the build-up of a EU security and defense capacity; for that reason, investigating the discourse on CSDP during the Libya campaign can tell us something about respective policy positions and developments.

During the research process, one fundamental problem has shown up when reading and thinking about Europe and the European Union in French discourse: it is often impossible to clearly determine whether talk is actually taking place about Europe in general or the EU in particular. Generally speaking, Europe can be considered to refer to the EU. However, the language used is not so clearly cut to exclude that indeed something else then the EU is referred to. This is a caveat which has to be kept in mind when analyzing the discourse on the following pages. For the following pages, I will nevertheless keep this ambivalence when using Europe as synonym for the EU. I will start with ideas about Europe/ the EU in general, before turning to the more specific realm of CSDP.

As it could be expected, Europe shows up in a lot of different facets in the discourse during the Libya intervention. Consequently, just little of the different themes that have been coded are mentioned in a large amount of documents and a large individual quantity. Occasionally, the idea of une Europe française shows up, claiming that French positions are indeed European ones and that France acts on behalf of Europe, e.g. when introducing the G20 forum (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21) or leading the continent in the Libya crisis:

“Deuxièmement, fallait-il ne pas intervenir en Libye, parce que nos amis Allemands, qui ont quand même participé au Sommet de Paris, ne voulaient pas intervenir ? Et à ce moment-là, quelle eût été l’ambiance de la conférence de presse ? On m’aurait dit -- comment on dit ? -- « suiviste ». J’ai le choix entre diverger ou suivre ! Permettez-moi de choisir une troisième voie, la voie française, d’un pays indépendant qui fait ses choix, qui essaye de rassembler autour de lui ses partenaires européens.” (Sarkozy 2011-06-27)

The last sentence of the quote perfectly shows the ambivalence of the use of Europe in French discourse, as in the case of Libya, the rassemblement was indeed not one of the whole EU united its positions and actions towards Libya, but just a group of European countries that supported the airstrikes, while the EU as such did not play a role in the military enforcement of UNSCR 1973. However, Sarkozy still underlines the unanimous support of the EU-27 for the action of the coalition and claims a European leadership role for Libya (through the Franco-British couple though), manifesting the ambivalence of the term as stated above (Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-06-22). Further references in this code can be understood as general claims of French leadership in
Europe, referring to various domains like economic governance, climate change, trade, and security and defense, too, to which we come later (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21).

Some closeness to the former theme of a French Europe exists in the well-known French idea of *Europe puissance*, the idea that Europe/ the EU should have a say in multipolar world affairs in many policy fields, such as economics, trade, but also foreign policy (Hébert 2003; Heumann 2005; Kramer and Rochefort 2006). This idea is formulated as a necessity to make Europe's voice heard:

“C'est pour que dans le monde de demain, l'Europe puisse encore faire entendre sa voix et faire vivre une très ancienne idée de la civilisation à laquelle elle tient par-dessus tout, que la France se bat.” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01)

“Le monde change. Le Président Obama a présenté une nouvelle vision de l'engagement militaire américain, qui implique que les Européens assument davantage leurs responsabilités. Si nous n'en tirons pas les conséquences, si nous ne tenons pas compte des réalités du monde, les Européens se prépareront des réveils difficiles.” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31)

*Europe puissance* therefore refers both to a internally-motivated means of preservation of the European “civilization” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01) in a changing global landscape and to a very concrete external need to adapt European security and defense policies to the reality of an American partner reducing its European presence in favor of the Asia-Pacific and therefore the share it can hold in European security affairs (Le monde change., tenir compte des realités du monde, le monde de demain). Given this up-to-date reference, we can barely say that the idea belongs to the past. It further reflects a concept of integration as means of getting, maintaining, or increasing national influence (s. first quote above, also Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21) – a topic which I will treat as an own discourse later.

This idea of *Europe puissance* is joined by another political concept of *une Europe politique* – well-known from earlier French discourse –, grasping the idea that Europe must be more than a zone of economic exchange, but a place where politics is done together to achieve political goals:

“L'Europe a besoin de plus de politique. Je veux dire de plus de responsabilité politique. L'Europe sans politique, l'Europe en pilotage automatique qui ne fait qu'appliquer aveuglement les règles de la concurrence et du libre-échange est une Europe qui ne peut pas faire face aux crises. C'est une Europe désarmée. C'est une Europe qui est condamnée à subir. Cette Europe-là, nous n'en voulons pas.” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01)

It comes not with a surprise that during the financial crisis, these statements are focused on the economy, invoking the famous French term of a “gouvernement économique” (Sarkozy 2012-01-20), accompanied by words like “veritable” (Sarkozy 2012-01-20) or a less “naïve” position in trade, and the call for an European industrial policy (Sarkozy 2012-01-16); accordingly, the theme also refers to external relations and is connected to the Arab spring where, following Sarkozy,
Europe must play a role due to its geographic proximity and to support the democratic revolutions on the shores of the Southern Mediterranean (Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-06-24) – “Plus de politique, c'est le deuxième principe de refondation de l'Europe.” (Sarkozy 2011-06-22). We should maybe note at this point that despite their purposeful targets, the themes as described here necessarily construct a European community – as we see below: of nation-states and governments – as political entity; however, except for historic references to European integration (Sarkozy 2011-06-22), this community is internally exclusively constructed as a means for the overcoming of the financial crisis, tied to the establishment of a regulative framework (Sarkozy 2011-12-01), and externally as part of the democratic coalition fighting against a Libyan dictator (Sarkozy 2011-03-24, 2011-03-11, 2011-08-31), and therefore lacks a positively connotated element of internal identity. If a self is created here, it is a defensive one that has to protect itself in the flow of the crisis from an unclear other (unrestrained economic exchange, new and unclear geopolitical situation) causing danger from the outside, and is just vaguely combined with an affirmation of a somehow European civilization. Put stronger, one could say that the construction of self is based on fear towards what would come if Europe did not prevail.

In the same documents as quoted above, we also find clear expressions on the preference of intergovernmentalism as modus operandi of the European institutions, interlocked with the idea of a Europe that works (décider, fonctionner, jouer un rôle), not the least with a look on the lessons from the financial crisis:

“La refondation de l'Europe, ce n'est pas la marche vers plus de supranationalité. Ce n'est pas la réouverture des vieilles querelles entre les partisans de l'Europe des nations et de l'Europe fédérale. L'Europe se refondera en tirant pragmatiquement les leçons de la crise. La crise a poussé les chefs d'États et de gouvernements à assumer des responsabilités croissantes, parce qu'au fond, eux seuls disposaient de la légitimité démocratique qui leur permettait de décider. C'est par l'intergouvernemental que passera l'intégration européenne, parce que l'Europe va devoir faire des choix stratégiques, des choix politiques.” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01)

“Il faut un petit peu d'autorité et un petit peu de règles, sinon, l'Europe, ça ne marche pas. Et nous, nous voulons que l'Europe marche.” (Sarkozy and Obama 2011-11-04)

Notably, the claim for intergovernmentalism is linked to the achievement of democratic legitimacy for political action beyond the nation-state (also Sarkozy 2012-01-20). Accordingly, a utility frame is formed here for Europe, which comes further along with the protection of influence of France beyond its borders in Europe and on a global stage. The claim for intergovernmentalism is put even stronger with respect to CSDP, following the argument that the armies are national and therefore CSDP must lie in the member states' responsibility (Sarkozy 2011-03-25).

When we look more closely on places where European or EU actorness (rôle) is invoked in
foreign policy, we can see that they mainly relate to statements about a reformulation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the backwash of Libya and the Arab spring, generally the support of democracy (Sarkozy 2011-09-15, 2011-04-26), issues like immigration and border protection (gérer, personnes/populations déplacées, flux migratoires), (economic) development and humanitarian aid (zones humanitaires, désastre, aide, assistance), and the participation in negotiations (e.g. Iran, Palestine), including the enforcement of sanction regimes at the crossroads of foreign and security policy (e.g. Sarkozy and Cameron 2011-03-28; Sarkozy 2011-04-26, 2011-03-12, 2011-03-11, 2011-08-31).

When it comes to security and defense at this crossroads then, despite its lacking involvement as a formal actor in the Libya intervention, Europe – and here sometimes also explicitly: the EU is still considered to be a security and defense actor (jouer un rôle) by the French president during the period under research. At various occasions, Europe is seen as an actor in the service of peace, referring to Palestine in particular – besides the omnipresent Arab spring – and the Mediterranean in general (Sarkozy 2011-05-26, 2011-09-15, 2011-08-31, 2012-01-13). Additionally, this theme does not only hold an external dimension, but refers back to Europe as means of internal peace between European countries as well, a function which is, with a look on the euro crisis, considered all but obsolete (Sarkozy 2012-01-16, 2011-08-31, 2011-06-22):

“L’Europe comme condition de la paix et de la prospérité. Elle l’était hier dans un univers bipolaire elle le reste encore de nos jours dans un monde où émergent de nouveaux pôles de puissance.” (Sarkozy 2011-06-22)

Beyond this general commitment to promote peace, Sarkozy expresses his support for ongoing EU missions like Atalanta in the Indian Ocean (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17), though after the end of the Libya intervention. Most interestingly, during the early weeks of the intervention, even a possible CSDP mission in Libya is evoked in a bilateral meeting with Silvio Berlusconi to counter the humanitarian difficulties in the country (Sarkozy 2011-04-26); however, this option is not followed up further. Conversely, the mixed civil-military CSDP support mission for Somalia in its fight against piracy, approached by Sarkozy and David Cameron in the document cited above, will probably start in the summer of 2012 (EuropeanUnion 2012). Remarkably, both missions are tied to a demand by the United Nations and therefore subscribe to a discursive element which was very present during the Libya intervention and apparently became stable, as it is still used after the end of the intervention for other policies. Further, with the exception of Atalanta, humanitarian concerns seems to be at the forefront of the discursively expressed motivations for CSDP missions.16

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15 Due to the focus of my research on (foreign,) security, and defense policy, references to European actorness in the financial crisis have not been coded, though they were manifold in the data.
16 “assurer une assistance humanitaire durable” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17); “elle [the High Representative,
However, if we turn away from these operational concerns to more general and institutional aspects of CSDP, we can see that these concrete ideas about missions are not matched by a positive appreciation of the state of CSDP in general in Sarkozy's talk:

“Face aux changements de notre environnement stratégique, nous avons besoin d'une Alliance atlantique plus forte et d'une politique européenne commune de sécurité et de défense plus efficace. [...] Nous appelons à renforcer la coopération entre Alliés et partenaires européens afin de nous doter de capacités militaires flexibles, déployables, interopérables et entraînées à la disposition de l'OTAN et de l'UE.” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17)

These concerns about European effectiveness are joined by fears about a “rétrécissement stratégique” (strategic withdrawal) of Europe and a false reliance on the useless concept of “soft power” (Sarkozy 2011-08-31), which are supposed to be bad solutions for coping with the changing geopolitical situation. As much as the principle of EU actorness is kept alive here (capacité d'agir, renforcer la cooperation) – notably an improved cooperation with NATO to which I will come in the NATO discourse section (also Sarkozy 2011-04-26) – and being referenced with progress in actorness in its close neighborhood since the Bosnian and Kosovo wars (Sarkozy 2011-08-31; Sarkozy et al. 2011-09-01) in comparison to Libya, it faces the willingness of only some states to be driven further forcefully, as it has been the case in the Libya intervention; accordingly, an EU actorness ideal and real-world European actorness fall apart semantically, especially when it comes to the permanent underlining of Franco-British defense leadership, manifest throughout the empirical apparatus.

In addition, as shows the quote above, we can see emerging a quite utilitarian view, or frame, on CSDP in the texts by Sarkozy, as capacity-building and effectiveness is generally put to the forefront of the CSDP discourse (efficace, consolider, capacités, partage des tâches, faciliter, dans les fait, concret), with only one single institutional reference to the European Defence Agency and the same bilateral document contributing the only reference to a strengthening of the permanent EU planning capacities in Brussels (Sarkozy 2011-04-26; also Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17). Overall, the impact of CSDP actorness during and after the Libyan campaign must therefore considered to be very low, and exclusively linked to a utilitarian frame of capacity-building (also Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21). Strengthening therefore means mainly capacity-building. Furthermore, we can point out to a cautious indication that bilateral and multilateral efforts which not necessarily involve the EU directly seem to gain momentum in the approach to CSDP, as we can see this in the strong Franco-British cooperation and, as represented here in the
documents, to a lesser extent, the Franco-Italian one.\(^{17}\) Notably, there is never talk of Franco-German cooperation in security and defense in the whole empirical apparatus, except for the fact that Germany, in the end, did decide not to veto Libya-related decisions of the European Council (Sarkozy 2011-03-25). However, in order to build a solid argument and to identify a development to bilateralism and outside-EU cooperation, further documents which are not necessarily related to Libya must be analyzed. Nevertheless, at the same place where Germany does not block European unity, Sarkozy is more than blunt in reserving European defense leadership to the French and the British:

“[…] l’Europe de la défense, ça repose d’abord sur un couple, qui est le couple franco-britannique, puisque ce sont les deux armées les plus puissantes d’Europe.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-25)

In sum then, the discourse on Europe and CSDP during the Libya intervention is focused on a frame of utility, or a framework of utilitarian aspects, reaching from Europe being a necessary means to get, maintain, or increase influence in the global arena, to provide solutions for the financial crisis, or to assure cooperation in military capacity-building, while the role of EU/CSDP institutions in the latter gets unclear. Despite some historic references and an updated discourse on intra-European peace through the euro, the representation of Europe is almost void of any emotional affinity or intrinsic commitment to the European identity or the European project as such, and further tied to the idea that Europe must work better than it generally does (though it is not incapable of acting). Acting European is a necessity, dependent on both national constraints (such as budgetary pressures due to the financial crisis) and international, geopolitical developments. The construction of self is therefore almost purely defensive: Europeans have to defend themselves against financial/economic crises and a floating geopolitical balance of power, what nations cannot do alone any longer. While Sarkozy conceives France as fundamentally European and still wants Europe to be political, it is mainly portrayed as an intergovernmental project. With respect to security and defense policies in particular, European actoriness is merely driven beyond humanitarian issues, and practically absent from the Libya intervention. Sarkozy’s representation of Europe is therefore pragmatic. We will have to consider this later in relationship to the on the contrary strong engagement of NATO in Libya with French consent, participation, and leadership. Though still carefully here, I suggest the thesis that this pragmatic view on CSDP which joins the utmost pragmatic one on NATO creates a new realm of appropriate policy choices for the future, discharging the EU as the preferred locus of French security and defense action. Washington, 25

\(^{17}\) “Dans le domaine des capacités, la France et l’Italie sont convenues de soutenir le travail accompli par l’Agence Européenne de Défense (AED), en appui des efforts des États membres, pour faciliter, dans les faits, un meilleur partage des tâches et une coopération accrue entre eux et dans le cadre UE-OTAN.” (Sarkozy 2011-04-26, emphasis added).
London, or Mons might therefore have become closer for France than EU-Brussels through the detour of Tripoli.

To shed some more light on these two themes of bilateralism and NATO, I will now switch first to the discourse on Franco-British cooperation and then both enlarge the scope to NATO and more general observations on autonomy and integration in order to better understand which lessons this intervention might provide for French security and defense identity and its repercussions on European actorness.

Franco-British Defense-Cooperation: It Finally Works!

It comes without nay surprise that Franco-British defense cooperation plays a prominent role in discourse during the Libya campaign as both countries were the active leaders in the diplomatic struggles before the airstrikes, during the implementation of UNSCR 1973, and with respect to post-conflict responsibilities.

The statements of the French president on Franco-British cooperation are impregnated with references to common views and common vital interests between the two countries on the one hand and claims for defense leadership in both Europe and NATO. The assertion of common views and vital interests refers both specifically to the Libya intervention and to national interests in general:

“Je voudrais également dire combien la France a été heureuse de travailler main dans la main avec ses amis et ses partenaires britanniques et notamment avec David CAMERON, qui a été dans ces cinq derniers mois un ami et un partenaire fiable, courageux, partageant pleinement nos analyses.” (Sarkozy 2011-08-24; cf. also Sarkozy 2011-05-26, 2011-03-27)

“Une menace contre nos intérêts vitaux peut apparaître à tout moment. Nous n’envisageons aucune situation où les intérêts vitaux de l’une de nos deux Nations soient menacés sans que ceux de l’autre le soient aussi.” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17)

“ […] nous sommes des partenaires naturels en matière de sécurité et de défense et que nos deux pays partagent les mêmes valeurs, les mêmes intérêts globaux et les mêmes responsabilités.” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17)

The implication of community in these statements therefore goes way beyond mere common views on single policy issues, but indicates a fundamentally common perspective on global issues and further evokes “common values”, “same responsibilities” as permanent members of the UN Security Council, and the famous French notion of “intérêts vitaux” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17, my translation). These statements after the Libyan intervention thus carry on the formulations made in the Lancaster House Treaty of November 2010 (Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic for Defence and Security Co-operation 2010, 3), which is referenced throughout the empirical apparatus, and whose high-
level working groups have met usually during the Libyan crisis, implementing a large array of armament projects, technology transfer, and defense-industry cooperation more generally (Communiqué conjoint franco-britannique 2011-07-08). According to Sarkozy, this far-reaching partnership (ambitieux, essentiel) “à un niveau jamais atteint auparavant” ("on a level that has never been reached before", my translation of Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17) has been “consolidated” through the common engagement in Libya (Réunion du Groupe de haut niveau sur la coopération en matière de défense et de sécurité, créé par le Traité de Lancaster House 2011-11-09), where France and the UK have worked together “main dans la main : même objectif, même appréciation de la situation, même méthode.” ("hand in hand: same goals, same assessment of the situation, same method", my translation of Sarkozy 2011-05-26). We can thus see here a construction of common policies and a common self which defines itself by the “same responsibilities” to act in the world inasmuch as security and defense policies and are concerned, common “intérêts vitaux” (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17), and a large amount of joint programs which make progress and where you can relate to positively. Autonomy therefore can be given up due to a widespread identification with the other, who is a positive part of one's own national identity. Overall, we can see here both a frame of close community which serves as argument for integration and a clear utility frame with is spelled out through numerous concrete programs and proposals (e.g. Réunion du Groupe de haut niveau sur la coopération en matière de défense et de sécurité, créé par le Traité de Lancaster House 2011-11-09; Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17). In the context of the wider French debate on (badly performing) industrial competitiveness, the stress of the economic (and therefor job) advantages for the defense industry through Franco-British cooperation should not be underestimated.

This intense Franco-British defense cooperation is tied closely by Sarkozy to the claim of European defense leadership – and often also to NATO – for the French and the British. Reflecting the American turn towards the Asia-Pacific and the resulting necessity for the Europeans to take a larger share of the responsibility for security and defense in Europe themselves, the numerous bilateral measures are explicitly and steadily put into a European perspective (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21; Communiqué conjoint franco-britannique 2011-07-08; Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17; Sarkozy 2011-08-31) and – as already quoted above – into a perspective of clear Franco-British leadership:

“[…] l'entente franco-britannique est l'autre grand axe européen [besides the Franco-German motor, F.O]. Une entente indispensable à l'Europe, dans le domaine de la défense où nos deux pays assument un rôle irremplaçable. C'est pour renforcer cette coopération que j'ai signé avec David CAMERON le traité de Lancaster House.” (Sarkozy 2011-06-22)
The indispensability of this partnership is not at least legitimized by highlighting the overall share France and the UK hold on European defense expenditures, which is numbered at 50 per cent and even two thirds of the research-and-development budget (Sarkozy 2011-08-31; Communiqué conjoint franco-britannique 2011-07-08). Further, as already mentioned in the previous section, Libya is sold as a success story for European actorness, made possible through the Franco-British leadership (Sarkozy 2011-08-31, 2011-06-24, 2011-06-22).

Besides connections being made to EU-NATO cooperation – which I will address in the next section on the NATO discourse –, the claim for Franco-British leadership also reaches out to the Atlantic Alliance:

“Nous avons développé notre coopération dans tous les grands domaines : capacités militaires, industrie, opérations et renseignement. De ce fait, nous sommes aujourd'hui plus forts pour défendre nos intérêts stratégiques et pour assumer nos responsabilités de membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies et de leaders au sein de l'Union européenne et de l'OTAN. […] La France et le Royaume-Uni ont répondu à l'appel lancé par les Nations Unies à protéger les populations civiles en Libye, et ont conduit avec succès la mission de l'OTAN.”

(Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17)

Though underlining the relevance of the Franco-British efforts for Europe (reading the EU) more often, drawing a strong link to the Libya intervention and defying charges about de facto American leadership there (Sarkozy 2011-06-24), the scope of this partnership is thus not limited to Europe alone, and links the EU and the Atlantic Alliance in a way which does not necessarily prefer one organization to the other, as the approaches to both institutions are fundamentally pragmatic, what will be spelled out in the next section. If this development holds true through further analysis, it would not be any news for the UK, but big news for France.

At the end, the discursive manifestation of Franco-British security and defense cooperation during the Libya intervention in texts by Sarkozy is certainly one which uses an utilitarian frame – however, on the contrary to the CSDP one, it is accompanied by a deep feeling of community which uses vocabulary like natural, common vital interests, and joint threat assessments to describe the character and the intensity of the partnership, further referring to common values and responsibilities for action and thus incorporating identity-related elements of the other into the own self-construction. The discursive representation drawn here is therefore concatenating the story of a successful partnership that produces valuable outcomes with value-commitments, a feeling of community, and future prospects of fruitful cooperation. Given the many ambivalences Franco-British rhetoric and cooperation had to live through in the past, this is indeed a striking example of policy change and its discursive constitution. We will be able to further estimate its scope when engaging now into Sarkozy's discourse on NATO.
Given the nature of this case – a military intervention – around which several discourses are mapped, a large part of the statements by the French president are of course concerned with the actual situation and sometimes even ongoing warfare. Though, statements also concern more general remarks on the character of NATO, the EU-NATO relationship, and most prominently the formal reintegration of France into the integrated command structures, which took place in 2009, and they therefore voluntarily relate to other time periods and more fundamental questions about the French attitude towards the Alliance. In that respect, the structure of the French NATO discourse as it will be presented here both concerns situational and fundamental aspects of the relationship, which, in the end, will inform us about the delimitation of appropriate policy choices, without implying determinism, what lies outside the scope of the applied methodology.

While the overall amount of coded passages is not extremely high in comparison with other themes of this discourse analysis, also little aspects contribute quite interesting insights to the presidents positions. Starting with some issues more directly related to the Libya intervention, we can find an interesting and rapid development of the discourse on NATO before and during the early weeks of the intervention. Eight days before the intervention starts, during the extraordinary European Council session on Libya and six days before UNSCR 1973 was endorsed, we see Sarkozy expressing “his principal reservations on a NATO engagement” (Sarkozy 2011-03-11, my translation). However, this statement is related to a full-scale military intervention with ground troupe, when “everybody is in favor of a political and diplomatic option” (Sarkozy 2011-03-11, my translation), founded on the belief that a no-fly zone is sufficient for supporting the Libyan people. So, despite a pending subordinate clause indicating the military character of NATO as an organization, we cannot deduce from these statement a general dismissal of NATO as security and defense actor; regarding the whole text of the press conference, we may better understand this comment with respect to the preceding remarks on the self-determination of the Libyan people and the conduct on their own of their revolution.

Two weeks later, one day after NATO took control of the arms embargo mission and one day before the decision to leave the implementation of the no-fly zone, endorsed by UNSCR 1973, to NATO, we do not only see no hesitations about the involvement of NATO, but a very pragmatic position by the French president, opting for a political leadership outside the Alliance – due to the Arab non-NATO members participating in the implementation – while using the “machinerie” of NATO to lead the mission operationally (“coordination opérationelle, technique” vs “coordination politique”) (Sarkozy 2011-03-24):
“L’OTAN prendra la machinerie, coordonnera notamment par l’Etat-major de Naples où nous avons d’ailleurs des officiers de liaison. Cela ne pose aucun problème. Mais la coordination politique, vous le comprenez bien, ne peut pas être le seul fait de l’OTAN puisqu’il y a dans la coalition des pays qui ne sont pas membres de l’OTAN.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-24)

Accordingly, political decision-making and military leadership are hold clearly apart here, and we might recognize in this the in the past well-known opposition of France towards a politicized NATO. Nevertheless, the apparent downplaying of the NATO option to a decision of purely practical matters and therefore the framing of the choice in a utilitarian way is striking (poser aucun problème, franchement, “un problème pratique qui n'est pas du tout un problème politique” (Sarkozy 2011-03-25)). Further, this reasoning is connected to an argument about the inability of European command options – neither to lead the operations, nor to be unable to act due to inner-European divisions – but to integrate extra-EU partners, what does not count for NATO (also later Sarkozy 2011-08-31). The two passages below present this important argument and they are worth being quoted at length:

“A partir du moment où nos amis Américains [...] ne veulent pas être cette nation-cadre, [...] il faut bien que quelqu'un le fasse. Pensez-vous que c'est la France qui devrait le faire ? Il y a une structure à l'OTAN, il y a une machinerie, on s'en sert par l'intermédiaire du commandement à Naples, cela ne pose aucun problème. Et vous le savez bien d'ailleurs. Cela fonctionne, et la meilleure preuve, c'est que deux pays, non membres de l'OTAN, comme le Qatar et les Émirats, participeront aux vols, aux actions en Libye sans que cela ne pose la moindre difficulté. Et le pilotage politique, il est suivi par la coordination. Quel est le problème ? Qu'est-ce qu'il aurait fallu faire différemment ? Je ne demande pas mieux de débattre de cette question, cela ne me gêne pas, mais quelle était l'autre solution ? C'était très simple : il y avait deux solutions, il n'y en avait pas trois : soit les États-Unis sont la nation-cadre et coordonnent, et on m'aurait dit : « ah, vous vous mettez à la traine des Etats-Unis », si ce n'est pas les États-Unis qui le font […], pourquoi devrais-je m'opposer à la machinerie de l'OTAN ? Si le contrôle politique est celui de la coalition, la France doit être la nation-cadre ? Nous ne sommes pas assez engagés ? Cela voudrait dire que j'aurais dû inventer un système qui fasse concurrence à la machinerie de l'OTAN ? Qui aurait pu penser que c'est du bon sens ?” (Sarkozy 2011-03-25)

“Mais la coordination politique […], ce sont les 11 pays de coalition. Vraiment, cela ne pose pas de problème politique pour nous. Et je ne vois pas, est-ce qu'un commandement européen... alors que faisons-nous de nos amis Américains et de nos amis Canadiens ? Qu'est-ce que l'on fait du Qatar et des Émirats alors ? On les intègre dans le commandement européen ? C'est intéressant. Moi, je ne demande pas mieux que de regarder ça, mais enfin, pour mettre en place un système concurrent à celui qui existe déjà, cela n'avait pas de sens. Franchement, je ne suis pas du tout géné de répondre à vos questions là-dessus, mais vous voyez bien qu'il y a un problème pratique qui n'est pas du tout un problème politique. […] Utiliser la machinerie de l'OTAN, ce n'est pas un problème politique, franchement.” (Sarkozy 2011-03-25)

What we can see here at work is the construction of a utilitarian argument that presents NATO as the natural option for action, literally shows France incapable and unwilling of solitary leadership, and discards action through the EU as an impossibility of partnering, thus claiming an ontological
community or solidarity problem for the EU, which does not exist in NATO. The concept of self constructed here by Sarkozy for France is therefore one which integrates France primarily into a larger community of transatlantic and even more international character, while Europe almost seems to be an other incapable of integrating this wider idea. Without throwing out the baby with the bath water, this turns known French discourse on the EU, NATO, as well as their relationship and tasks since the 1990s upside down. This de-complexed and utilitarian view on NATO as a military toolkit is stabilized later during the year, when Sarkozy expresses his opinion that “NATO has revealed itself as an indispensable tool for our military operations” on the 19th Conférence des ambassadeurs (my translation of "L'OTAN s'est révélée un outil indispensable au service de nos opérations militaires", Sarkozy 2011-08-31), praising also the fact that NATO first time decided to act for a broader coalition of states (what could be refereed to as the coalitions-of-the-willing model). Remarkably, at that place, he also links this argument to the debate about having lost national autonomy or not due to NATO reintegration, what he negates, and what I will deal with further in the last part of this discursive study. Additionally, at the beginning of 2012, Sarkozy and David Cameron make a common statement for the strengthening of the Alliance, related to a plea for more effectiveness in CSDP, as already mentioned above (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17).

In the same way then as the relationship of France to NATO is presented as decomplexed, the statements on EU-NATO cooperation subscribe to this pragmatic and utilitarian approach. Formerly known discursive elements like the talk about *competition* or *complementarity* (Dumoulin 2007) between the two organizations are completely absent. Both Franco-British and Franco-Italian declarations ask for “increasing the effectiveness and the capacities of Europe through NATO” or CSDP (Réunion du Groupe de haut niveau sur la coopération en matière de défense et de sécurité, créé par le Traité de Lancaster House 2011-11-09, my translation) and “a better burden-sharing and strengthened cooperation between them [the EU member states, F.O.] and within the EU-NATO framework” (Sarkozy 2011-04-26, my translation). There is further neither any assertion of a somehow hierarchical relationship, nor a specific distribution of tasks, nor of action of the EU where NATO as a whole is not engaged (*NATO first!*) – as it is stipulated in the 1996 *Berlin plus* arrangements between the two organizations (e.g. Hunter 2002) – nor of a priorization of action in any of the two. Solely, Sarkozy expresses the

“[...] joie de tous ceux, dont je suis, qui souhaitent que l'Europe pèse d'un poids plus grand au sein de l'organisation intégrée de voir que l'OTAN sous la direction du Royaume-Uni et de la France a fait son travail en Libye et si on veut comparer à ce qui s'est passé en Bosnie à l'époque où c'est nos amis américains qui ont fait le travail que les Européens auraient dû

18 This observation is reinforced by the argument that NATO reintegration as approached France towards its European partners (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21).
Accordingly, we can still see here an idea of European-states leadership for European security and defense affairs, of Europe being the task of the Europeans, though the usually implied consequence of letting the EU act in these situations is converted into its contrary to Franco-British leadership for Europe through NATO, while summoning the Yugoslavian trauma at the same time, which normally served to legitimize and develop CSDP. Again, a pragmatic language focused on capacity-building and unconditioned partnership prevails and thus constructs a decomplexed, pragmatic representation of NATO as a means or a toolkit for French and European security and defense policies which indeed showed its usefulness and also its Europeaness during the Libya intervention. Neither NATO first! nor Europe first! thoughts are given any leeway.

In sum then, can we argue that – as limited as this conclusion must be with respect to the exclusively presidential documents under scrutiny here so far – NATO has become part of the French identity construction, or the French security and defense self? With this analysis of presidential documents, the answer must be yes. Although – when asked a question on a European Council press conference in late March 2011 on the very date of the decision of NATO to take-over control of the UNSCR 1973 no-fly-zone implementation – Sarkozy downplays the importance of the French NATO reintegration in 2009 to the admission of a nineteenth out of 20 committees, whereas it has been part of the other 18 before, and stipulates that nothing has changed on the Franco-British leadership of “Europe de la défense” (Sarkozy 2011-03-25), the vast majority of his statements suggests that another option for security and defense action has come to the French – though, maybe less through a completely new NATO policy, but more through an adaptation of the approach to the EU’s role in security and defense. Normalization than has indeed taken place on the EU side of the realm of appropriate policy choices, and now joins a reinforced Atlantic pragmatism, which took a long way since the mid-1990s.

Last but not least, this discourse analysis shall close with a more general consideration of the norm of autonomy and ideas about integration respectively. The discursive representation of these ideations, which have necessarily shown up already as elements of the former discourses, will finally shed light on the discursive construction of French security and defense identity by the French president.

**Autonomy and Integration: The Refreshing Irrelevance of Independence**

As it has been laid out in the introducing words to French security and defense policy, for a long time during and even after the Cold War, the French were just willing to bargain autonomy for
integration in order to achieve influence in the realm of European institutions, while within NATO, they stood firm to de Gaulle's concept of influence by autonomy, and were not willing to adapt their approach even when it backfired in the time of pragmatic, operational France-NATO cooperation, setting France apart in the allied decision-making process due to its reduced presence, creating a participation-representation gap (Pesme 2010, 47).

It might lie in the nature of a cooperative and integrated mission that autonomy does not play a big role in discourse during those times, and therefore just a broader document analysis can tell a more comprehensive story about concepts of autonomy in security and defense policy. Accordingly, discursive moments dealing with the norm of autonomy are rare in the 46 documents under study here, and reserved to three documents at total.\textsuperscript{19} Then, autonomy is portrayed as both the ability for territorial defense – remembering the defeat of the Second World War and legitimizing elevated levels of military spending – and as diplomatic and military \textquote{\textit{capacity}} assuring that France's voice is heard internationally when it wants it to be heard. (Sarkozy 2012-01-13). It is further connected to vocabulary like \textquote{nationalism}, \textquote{pride}, or \textquote{patriotism} (Sarkozy and Gül 2011-02-25), reminding concepts of cultural distinctiveness. Altogether, autonomy is therefore seen as a necessary means of self-determination, also referencing the appeal this idea has in the ongoing Arab revolutions (Sarkozy and Gül 2011-02-25), while it generally occupies little space in the whole empirical apparatus.

As a consequence of these case-related conditions and empirical findings, the framing of integration might inform us much more about the realm of French security and defense policies and the relevance of the Libya intervention in it. Retaking the value-loaden democracy, law, and community frames of the discourse on Libya – and referencing to the Ivory Coast intervention, too –, integration is occasionally presented as necessary condition for implementing this policy of the support of self-determined, democratic change:

\textquote{\ldots la France sera toujours là pour défendre la liberté des peuples, mais la France ne peut pas le faire seule. Elle peut convaincre la communauté internationale, comme elle l'a fait pour la Libye ou la Côte d'Ivoire, mais elle ne peut pas s'y substituer. La France est une puissance qui agit dans le cadre strict du droit international, qui comprend aussi le droit humanitaire et la responsabilité de protéger.} (Sarkozy 2012-01-13)

The need for integration is thus portrayed in relation to the overall commitment to responsibility to protect and the strive for democracy, which France cannot and (sic!) does not want fight alone: \textquote{on n'en a pas les moyens, on n'en a as la volonté.} (Sarkozy 2011-08-24). Vocabulary like the right for

\textsuperscript{19} This finding has been cross-checked with an automatic text search for \textit{autonomie} and \textit{indépendance}, including stemmed words and synonymms, which besides the mentioned results mostly produced references to energy security and the autonomy of French universities.
liberty and democracy as well as the respect of international law are central in this discursive element oriented against regimes violating these basic values. Comparably, common values and “responsibilities” – together with interests – are put forward for the increasing Franco-British cooperation in security and defense (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17).

Related to the European peace project as discussed in a previous section, European integration is also legitimized as lesson of the historic experiences of European warfare until the first half of the 20th century and even longer disunity due to dictatorial regimes within Europe and the presence of the Iron Curtain (Sarkozy 2011-06-22). These historic references, though, are presented both in historic (reading maybe civilization) terms and a realistic assessment of the cruelties of former times, so that history is framed as expression of community and more rational calculations. The latter aspect is also prevailing when Sarkozy adopts the historic lesson that “One better defends one's sovereignty with allies than alone” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01, my translation).

Accordingly, rationalist framings of integration as means to get influence and to overcome different sorts of peril are all but absent from Sarkozy's discourse and indeed take the largest place in his references to integration. For the defense realm of Franco-British integration, we can find explicit connections to the financial crisis and resulting budgetary constraints as motivation to integrate, policy objectives being “threatened by the crisis” (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21, my translation), and deepening integration therefore being necessary to achieve the manifold capability needs and other goals, resulting even in various treaties as strong sign of integration (Sarkozy and Cameron 2012-02-17). Integration thus relates to a situation of external pressure.\(^20\) The increase of influence through integration is also argued for NATO and the French 2009 reintegration in particular and framed as a strategic rationale for the future (“peser bien plus qu'avant”, participate in “choix stratégiques” (Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21). In his reading, reintegration has not diminished French autonomy, but strengthened it through successful common action in Libya (être heureux, être en première ligne (Sarkozy 2011-08-24; cf. also Sarkozy 2011-08-31). More cautiously, but at the same time with great rhetoric verve – which might be due to the occasion of the speach for the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks –, Sarkozy stresses at least that France has not lost autonomy through reintegration (also Faire respecter la voix de la France 2011-04-21):

“Pour ma part, je resterai très fier d'avoir été le président qui a fait revenir la France dans le commandement intégré de l'OTAN, pour le plus grand bénéfice de l'OTAN et pour le plus grand bénéfice de la France. En faisant ce geste, la France n'a pas renoncé à son indépendance. […] La France défend ses intérêts, porte ses valeurs. Parce que la France les défend avec force, elle

\(^20\) We can also find this argument for integration in the realm of economic and fiscal reforms to solve the financial crisis (e.g. Sarkozy 2011-12-01).
n’a pas peur d’être aux côtés de son grand allié, non pas comme un vassal mais comme un ami debout, pour regarder l’avenir ensemble. États-Unis d’Amérique et France. Nous devons cette solidarité à tous ceux qui sont morts, nous n’avons pas le droit de nous diviser en souvenir des morts du 11 septembre.” (Sarkozy 2011-09-09)

The linkage between NATO and France is conceptualized here as mutually beneficial and therefore again testifies of a rational frame of interpretation. However, we can again note a value commitment, which at least does not conflict with reintegration and independence. Underlined by formula about a common outlook towards the future between France and the U.S., a duty to solidarity, the reference to victims of terror, and wordings like “son grand allié”, a strong frame of community again stands parallel to more pragmatic considerations about NATO. He further objects any thesis that the rapprochement with NATO has worsened the French image in Africa and the Arab world, of what the Libyan intervention could give testimony (Sarkozy 2011-08-31).

The commitment to European integration in general is not less strong. We find clearly outspoken claims for European integration in the data in order to enable France to “stay an agent of history”; Europe is characterized as condition for the “rayonnement de la France” (Sarkozy 2011-06-22, with my translation). Sarkozy further quotes Pompidou directly (“accroître son rôle dans le monde”, “s’unir”, faire entendre sa voix “grâce à l’Europe”). In his Toulon speech in December 2011, Sarkozy clearly relates the exercise of sovereignty to European integration – “la souveraineté ne s'exerce qu'avec les autres. L'Europe, ce n'est pas moins de souveraineté, mais davantage de souveraineté, parce que c'est davantage de capacité d'agir.” (Sarkozy 2011-12-01) – and positively attributes shared sovereignty with increased possibilities for action.

What in the end stays from this elaboration of the presidential discourse on autonomy and integration during and after the Libya intervention is a representation of integration which is tied to both utalitarian and more emphatic, community-related frames fed by both historic lessons and value commitments for democracy. Integration is the prevailing policy norm in the European (EU, bilateral, and more than security-related fields) and transatlantic context, up to defining sovereignty as a shared resource. Integration is further positively related to increased capacities for action and the possibility to advance democracy with partners. – Vice versa, the norm of autonomy plays a subordinate role and is almost absent in discourse. If relevant at all, it refers either back to the ultimate ability for territorial defense – one time! – and sometimes to nuclear deterrence, or it is positively connotated with self-determination as prevalent idea of the Arab spring. Altogether then, the way the president sees France and its security and defense policies in the central organizations of NATO, EU, and its bilateral relationship with the UK is fundamentally integrated, a part of a bigger community with which it defines itself in emphatic solidarity and necessity; in particular, this
self does no longer show any reluctance with respect to NATO. The concept of influence by autonomy has discursively ceased to exist.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this paper, analyzing presidential documents during the Libya intervention, was three-fold. First, the document analysis should decipher how the Libya intervention was discursively framed by the person in charge. Second, arguing that the intervention concerned more fundamental questions about French engagement in and positions towards NATO, the EU’s security and defense policies, Franco-British cooperation, as well as concepts like autonomy and integration, the respective discourses have been investigated for their major elements which add up to a discursively constructed security and defense identity – so far only in its presidential part. The decision to map these discourses around the Libya intervention has been built on the assumption that beyond the renewal to French actorness in Libya we find more fundamental developments going on with respect to French NATO and EU/CSDP policies, hypothesizing an orientation of French policies towards Washington (NATO) via Tripoli (the Libya intervention) and therefore away from its formerly strong commitment to foster security and defense policies within the European Union. Methodically, this paper has relied on qualitative content analysis, interpretive methods like framing, and concepts from discourse analysis, e.g. self-other constructions, and the general attention to how ideations are constructed through socio-discursive practice. In the end, conclusions for French security and defense behavior – or more precisely: for its realm of appropriateness – shall have been drawn, what I will do now while resuming the empirical results from the discourse analyzes. However, it must be underlined again at this point that the conclusion can just be preliminary, as more actors involved have to add up to a thorough presentation of the discursive structure, or identity of French security and defense policy.

With respect to Libya, the analysis has established a presidential reading of the conflict embedded in strong value commitments to democracy and self-determination, shared by the international community and endorsed by the UN Security Council as legitimizing institution, but violated by a dictator who was threatening a people who was striving for the same values as the international community. The norm of responsibility to protect was therefore forwarded as main reason for action to prevent massive casualties at a people who was integrated into the own self-construction of the intervening powers by this very communality of democratic values, permeating the borders of self and other and thus leaving little leeway not to intervene with the backing of international law; the
latter aspect has further been stabilized as general principle of foreign intervention beyond Libya on behalf of the responsibility to protect as leading norm of the international community. In the eyes of the French president, accordingly, France has conducted a policy change from a preference for the stability of states – including the toleration of non-democratic leaderships – to the support of democracy and self-determination of its constituting people, what strongly appeals to elements of the own French identity construction as the cradle of democracy.

Regarding Europe, while a fundamental Europeaness of France in the statements of the president comes without surprise, the analysis has found out that this European self lacks a positively connotated internal affirmation of identity and is almost exclusively constructed as a defensive necessity against vague, external perils. More specifically, when it comes to security and defense, the analysis has shown that *European actorness* no longer necessarily falls together with *EU actorness*, but might be realized by bilateral and other forms of cooperation which might even circumvent EU institutions or use them as a mere vehicle for capacity-building, void of a larger identity-related project. The Franco-British cooperation in particular positively constructs identity as a community of values, interests, and destiny, joined by pragmatic considerations and success without preferring any of the two institutions – the EU or NATO – as primary policy realm. The EU and CSDP as institutions are confronted with widespread skepticism about their effectiveness for dealing with the necessary issues. Claims for European or CSDP actorness seldomly trespass humanitarian problems. With some reserves on the comprehensiveness of the analyzed data, I then carefully argued that we can interpret this representation as a normalization of French CSDP politics which ends the *Europe first!* policy that was prevailing for roughly speaking two decades and therefore changes the realm of appropriate policy choices for French security and defense.

Accordingly, Biscop's analysis that "*the military option [of European strategy, F.O.] is too narrowly identified with EU-only military action*" (Biscop 2011, 2) – despite all starting French reluctance in engaging NATO – does not hold for the French president anymore; his confinement that command and control "*is but a technical matter*" (Biscop 2011, 2) is the very change that appeared in the French approach towards CSDP as this study shows as of now – the EU has become one option amongst others. Biscop's somehow regretful conclusion that "*European countries are in the lead, but Europe is not.*" (Biscop 2011, 4) thus hits the bull's-eye in another way than he thinks.

The analysis of the NATO discourse further shows that the well-established pragmatic cooperation with the transatlantic organization has now been joined by an inclusive self and identity construction, too. *Leading Europe through NATO* has become an option which is no longer making the French president anxious. NATO is even attributed advantages in terms of the organization of
unity and agency in comparison to the EU, turning French policies literally upside down. The rationalist normality of NATO policies is therefore joined by a new normalization of Europeaness in the French president's thinking, opening space for policies involving NATO on the one hand, while strongly conditioning EU action on the other. We find here a paramount example of the discursive constitution of a policy. – This is not to say that France might never choose again the EU option in the future to conduct military operations. This would neither be a reliable generalization of this still limited case study, nor would it fit the ontology of the approach, attributing power and the ability for choice and change to discursive agents, rejecting the systemic determination of foreign politics. Anyways, what this discourse analysis claims is that the configuration of a both (established) pragmatic and (newly) affective NATO discourse with a discourse on the EU that explicitly underlines the necessity of effectiveness inasmuch as structural deficits of the institutional and political set-up of CSDP – first – disaffiliates CSDP as the first and foremost French option for European security and defense leadership and – second – that this configuration is a new discursive structure in French politics, ending the equation of Europe de la défense with the European Union. France might neither stop acting European or even unionized, but will make its choices on behalf of a more equal or relaxed approach towards the two institutional horizons.

Finally then, when it comes to autonomy and integration, the French president's discourse suggests a relative decline of the value of autonomy, the acceptance of shared sovereignty as a reality, and integration as the rule for being able to exert influence on world affairs through an increased capacity for action. Both pragmatic and emphatic frames stabilize a deeply integrated self-image of French security and defense identity from the president's perspective, defining community stronger in and outside Europe than ever before. French security and defense identity as discursively constructed by president Sarkozy is therefore democratic, combining self-determination with a responsibility to protect, legal, impassionately European and Atlantic while not necessarily EU-European, and fundamentally integrated in nature. France will supposedly exclusively intervene in respect of the legal framework provided of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and support the consolidation of responsibility to protect as fundamental norm of the international community in its dealing with the needs of people. It is unlikely to undertake unilateral action in areas which NATO and European partners define as relevant for their own policies, and will probably also opt for ad hoc and permanent bi- and multilateral frameworks elsewhere due to practical advantages of cooperation on costly unilateralism. It will probably just reserve unilateral action – if at all – to the last challenge of territorial defense, including the maintenance of its nuclear forces.
With respect to NATO and the EU, reflecting the analysis as of now, it is unlikely that France will strongly engage into institutionalization policies within the EU framework in the near future, as long as the latter does not overcome its fundamental problems of willingness (unity) to develop a coherent security and defense policy involving military components, developing the related capabilities, and showing effectiveness. Conversely, an increased number of institutionalization moves within a NATO that endorses the modus operandi of coalitions of the willing from the positive Libyan experience and that continues to be characterized by benevolent American restraint and leadership from behind is at least possible. As many of these conclusions count equally for the UK, consequently, the capacity of the European Union to assert itself as a global actor in security and defense is severely harmed. The EU may have lost its most committed supporter of CSDP, and help from the Germans is all but clear. By normalizing its EU policies in security and defense, France has become both more European and Atlantic than ever before. And although France never left any doubt on its solidarity towards the Alliance even when the relationship was far more reserved in the past, it seems that now, at least his president has (figuratively) finally arrived in Washington, or at least in Mons and Naples. Might we therefore be part of an enterprise of giving testimony about The End of the French Exception (Chafer and Godin 2010)? Certainly, such a conclusion would be premature with respect to the current empirical basis of this study and needs further input from the ongoing research project, both with respect to discursive moments and agents, especially parliament. However, the indications for this development in the various discourses where the French president as most important actor in security and defense participated in are strong. Tripoli therefore achieved an importance for French security and defense policies way beyond the Arab spring. Whether Washington will be the final destination remains to be seen.

Bibliography


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21 This argumentation therefore does no neglect the fundamental importance of the U.S. Decision to lead from behind and to take a more restraint position within the Atlantic Alliance. However, again in accordance with the ontology of this study, the mere existence of this U.S. policy cannot be causally linked to French behavior but through researching its discursive impact. As such, in opposition to former times, the U.S. position has not led to fostering the EU option, but was accompanied by a position of almost EU indifference of the French president while praising the pragmatic advantages of NATO in conducting the operation and acknowledging the own (national) difficulties for being a lead nation.


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