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French lessons in Africa: An assessment of three key military capabilities for European defence

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- **The Sahel region is often known as the European southern border. This area is a hotbed of violence and instability where weak states are overwhelmed by a myriad of ethnic conflicts and the proliferation of extremist groups. Local governments are largely unable to control their borders.**

Due to that, the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human smuggling networks abound while these countries, especially Niger, have become the gateways for sub-Saharan migration to reach North Africa and, eventually, Europe.¹ However, despite its relevance, the Sahel does not garner much public attention. The EU's interest in this region dates back to the 2000s, especially in relation to migrant flows.² Nonetheless, it was in the 2010s when the growing instability, drove the International Community to undertake a slew of initiatives, the first of them being in 2012, aimed at alleviating the situation. Among others, the United Nations peacekeeping mission MINUSMA,³ the G5 Sahel Joint Force⁴ and EU CSDP military and civilian missions EUTM Mali⁵ and EUCAP Sahel Mali⁶ and Niger.⁷ However, this paper will review the French performance in Mali (Operation Serval) and the consequent in other countries of the Sahel strip (Operation Barkhane). France has one of the largest armies in Europe and broad experience in foreign military operations throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Furthermore, France has a historical obligation towards Mali and other countries in the region due to its colonial heritage. Yet, an information report addressed to the Senate, made on behalf of the French Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces by the "Sahel" working group, stood out three military

shortfalls in Operation Serval that have persisted during Barkhane.⁸ This is relevant from an EU approach given that the rest of the member states lack as well these military means. The article examines both operations as they constitute an epitome of the challenge to be expected for Europe when it comes to maintain prolonged high-end military operations (be it through the European Union, NATO or ad hoc coalitions) in remote theatres. Finally, it highlights three capability gaps that the EU should strive to remedy in order to reach a certain level of strategic autonomy and assess the relevance of US military aid in European's defence goals. To clarify, this work does not intend to analyse the outcomes of military efforts as a mean to solve such an urgent and convoluted crisis, nor does it assess its relevance within a broader approach to address this scenario; the case studies are utilized in order to highlight the importance of European strategic autonomy in an ever-more unstable world coupled with heightened European geopolitical aspirations.

Operation Serval

In 2012, a rebellion took place in northern Mali. This zone of the country is home to a large ethnic group, the Tuaregs.⁹ When the main Tuareg political organization

¹ Migration through the Mediterranean: mapping the EU response. European Council on Foreign Relations https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration

² The Global Approach to Migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy. EUR-lex <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52006DC0735>

³ Also known as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Its goal is to support "the political process and carry out a number of security-related stabilization tasks" <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/about-minusma>

⁴ A force composed of the G5 countries (Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania) entrusted to improve security along their borders through joint patrols and deepened coordination <https://www.g5sahel.org/index.php>

⁵ The EU Training Mission was designed in 2013 to strengthen the capabilities of the Malian armed forces. Its activities are based on three pillars: training to military units, improvement of the military education system and advice to the

Armed Forces <https://eutmmali.eu/wp-content/cache/all/index.html>

⁶ Launched in 2015, it provides assistance and strategic advice to support the reform in the security sector (the Police, the Gendarmerie and the National Guard)

https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eucap-sahel-mali_fr

⁷ It was established in 2012 with the objective of improving Niger's security forces interoperability and developing security sector's expertise in combating terrorism and organized crime https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eucap-sahel-niger_en

⁸ Rapport d'information fait au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, de la défense et des forces armées par le groupe de travail Sahel <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r12-513/r12-5131.pdf>

⁹ Mali itself has several ethnic groups, for instance: Bambara, Fula, Songhai, Mandinka, Tuareg, Dogon, etc.

joined several jihadist groups (e.g. al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), an armed rebellion broke out. Simultaneously, a military coup d'état in the south overthrew the President Amadou Toumani Touré. Shortly after, part of the Malian army led a counter-coup and the infighting resulted in undermined armed forces. The jihadist reached a dominant position within the rebels and expelled the Tuaregs from important cities like Timbuktu and Gao. By then, the Government witnessed the loss of roughly 60% of the northern territory under the proclamation of the independent state of Azawad, controlled by the insurgents. From the summer of 2012 onwards, these groups established control over this part of Mali and continued to seize territories. On 9 January 2013, they launched an offensive to the south that threatened to conquer the capital, Bamako, and the entire integrity of the country. At this juncture, the newly appointed President Dioncounda Traoré sent an urgent request for military assistance to François Hollande. On 11 January, the French President ordered an immediate intervention. The first stage of Operation Serval sought to secure Bamako, stop the offensive and prepare for the arrival of reinforcements from African partners and France. French military assets stationed in military bases across the region were mobilized, and their performance was decisive to ensure the first part of the mission. The next phase aimed to liberate the occupied territories. By the end of January, Malian towns under control of jihadists were liberated and important towns such as Timbuktu were set free the following month. Finally, by April, the operation reached its main objectives: the troops liberated the northern territories and defeated the jihadists, who dispersed to other places across the Sahel.

Operation Barkhane

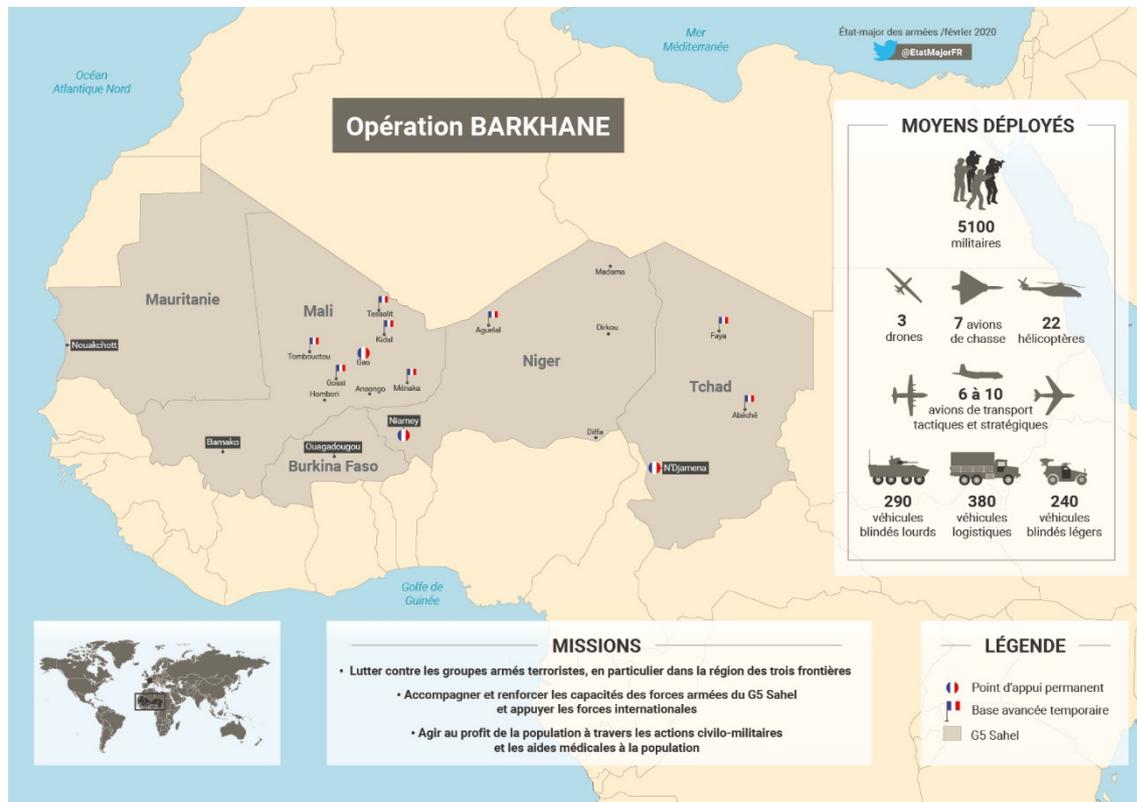
Serval was declared a success and ended on 15 July, 2014. This effort was replaced by a broader regional counterterrorism mission, named Barkhane. It is worth noting that the Sahel strip suffers from widespread activity of terrorism, trafficking of drugs and arms, which have a strong cross-border component. That being said, the instability that haunts these societies has also other causes, such as poverty, inequality, high unemployment rates and ethnic conflict.¹⁰ Barkhane spans across the countries of the G5 Sahel, that is to say: Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Mali (the latter continues to be the main action focus). In close partnership with them, the operation is the military dimension of a comprehensive strategy that aims to help these countries to acquire the capacity to ensure their security independently.

The French army closely coordinates with the G5 Sahel Joint Forces to fight against armed terrorist groups. They usually launch joint operations and patrols where the French provide heavier weapons and advanced technological military assets, while the native partners contribute with their superior local knowledge. These missions are normally designed to disrupt terrorists' logistical networks, reduce their freedom of movement and avert the re-establishment of "safe havens."¹¹ As the map displays, the operation is organized through 3 permanent bases, namely: N'Djamena, Chad; Gao, Mali; and Niamey, Niger. In addition to that, temporary forward bases are set up in distant regions in order to extend the military presence.

¹⁰ For a deeper in-sight, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has published detailed reports examining the causes of instability in sub-Saharan societies
<https://www.sipri.org/research/conflict-peace-and-security/africa>

¹¹ Press pack. Operation Barkhane. Page 8
<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/barkhane/dossier-de-reference/operation-barkhane>

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Source: Ministère des Armées

Assessing military capabilities: airlift

As mentioned before, the course of these missions revealed some shortfalls affecting the French army. Operation Serval presented a big challenge to the EU's largest army due to its lack of airlift capacity. France had no military assets at Mali, instead it had detachments in neighbouring countries.¹² While help arrived from Europe, Paris was forced to mobilize all its contingents to Mali in

order to halt the unexpected attack. This proved quick logistic deployment capability to be of great relevance when preparing a seamless mission against the clock. The French forces were initially deployed with limited provisions and rushed to the north in order to neutralize as much of the enemy as they could before they scattered over the desert. The lack of supplies and logistical support stretched the army to its limits and hindered the accomplishment of its stated objectives.¹³

Having a distance of more than 4.000 kilometres between the two capitals makes logistics a crucial factor. This was revealed to be a shortfall still to address. The

¹² According to the Senate report there were 250 military personnel in Senegal, 450 soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire and 950 troops and several Mirages 2000 D aircrafts in Chad. In addition, they were assisted by a contingent of Special Forces stationed in

Burkina Faso as part of the counterterrorism operation Sabre. Rapport d'information... Pages 18-19

¹³ France's war in Mali: Lessons from an Expeditionary Army. RAND Corporation. Pages 36-37
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR770.html

Operation heavily relied on airlift capabilities, 75% of which had to be provided by allies during the first three weeks. What is more, the Senate report recognizes that “it would have been impossible to deploy our forces within the timeframe required by the situation without the contribution of our allies: United States, Canada, United Kingdom...” Apart from the aforementioned countries, other strategic partners were Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden. Some of the air supplies were delivered through the framework of the European Air Transport Command (EATC).¹⁴ It is a multinational organization whose members are: France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Its objective is to improve European cooperation in three main areas: air transport, air-to-air refuelling and aeromedical evacuation. The French authorities complemented these resources with the leasing to Russia of Antonov cargo planes.¹⁵ In total, 18.000 tonnes of equipment were transported to the theatre of operations by the end of February, of which 8.000 were being transported by private maritime contractors.¹⁶ Finally, once the freight arrived to the port in Dakar, Senegal, it was distributed to the bases in Mali by air.

Airlift capacity remains as a key factor in Operation Barkhane given the breadth of the territory. Washington has continued providing airlift capabilities¹⁷ and so do other European allies. For instance, the French Ministry of Defence revealed that, in the first semester of 2019, allies and European countries were responsible of half of the personnel and 40% of the materiel transport.¹⁸ But military

cooperation has gone one step further with the deployment of armed forces from European countries. Estonia sent 50 soldiers in 2018 to the basecamp in Gao, Mali, to engage in force protection tasks. The United Kingdom contributed as well with 100 troops and three heavy-lift helicopters. On top of that, Denmark announced in October 2019 that it would send a 70-personnel contingent and two medium-lift helicopters used for freight and troops transport.

Air-to-air refuelling

Air-to-air refuelling (AAR) was pointed out as another Achilles’ heel. To illustrate its relevance, this allowed a quick reaction from the Air Force to Mali’s call. The first air strikes took place within hours. They were made from Rafale combat aircrafts that took off from France and consisted of nine hours and thirty-five minutes flights, which needed five AAR.¹⁹ This process enables jets refuelling on air while carrying out a mission without the need of returning to base. Fighter aircrafts can carry up to 7 tonnes of fuel, which allows no more than 3 hour-long flights. Thanks to air-to-air refuelling, fighter jets can operate longer in a given theatre. This entails a great advantage, especially in a scenario with little infrastructure, insofar it facilitates long-lasting operations and makes feasible long-range flights. It even allows the reduction of the military assets required for a mission. According to the Senate report, the allies provided 30% of the aerial refuelling required. It sums up that “Serval confirmed that France no longer has the strategic transport and in-flight refuelling capabilities to enable it to enter autonomously to a theatre of

¹⁴ European Air Transport Command is succeeding at Operation Serval. EACT <https://eatc-mil.com/post/eatc-rising-in-pooling-and-sharing>

¹⁵ Rapport d’information... Page 20

¹⁶ Ibidem. Page 18

¹⁷ US gives lift to French forces. US Army https://www.army.mil/article/217360/us_gives_lift_to_french_forces

¹⁸ Barkhane: L’engagement des pays alliés et européens. Ministère des Armées <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/fre/operations/barkhane/brevs/barkhane-l-engagement-des-pays-allies-et-europeens>

¹⁹ The French insertion force into Mali <https://defense.info/multi-domain-dynamics/2018/05/the-french-insertion-force-into-mali/>

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operations.²⁰ Although France devoted all of their assets (5 refuelling planes) to this goal, as Philippe Gros points out, the American support accounted for 50% “of the AAR capability and contributed decisively to the remote airpower capacity.”²¹ A spokeswoman for the French government pointed out that the fighter aircrafts were taking off from the Capital of Chad, N’Djamena, and the vast distance (more than 1.200 kilometres to the border) made air-to-air refuelling necessary. She said “many of those missions needed not less than three or four in-flight refuelling in order to get a significant time over the engagement area. In that sense, the US assistance has been very helpful.”²² In the same vein, Édouard Guillaud, the then Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, mentioned in a hearing in the National Assembly that France benefited from the US assistance in this domain, which put at their service, “on average, three [tanker] planes a day.”²³

The European Defence Agency as a catalyst to ensure interoperability

AAR was identified as “a critical enabler for air power projection” by the European Defence Agency (EDA) in 2012 after the European military performances in Kosovo and Libya, where the US were responsible of the bulk of in-flight refuelling missions. However, the armed forces of the Member States suffer from shortage and duplications of

platforms. As of September 2017, EU states had 42 tanker aircrafts available divided in 12 different basis models. Conversely, the United States had 550 tankers of four types.²⁴

The EDA has developed a threefold approach in order to address this pitfall. In first place, it seeks to optimize interoperability among existing platforms by streamlining processes and organizing training exercises through the support of third entities. In this regard, the EATC arranges the European Air Refuelling Training (EART) exercises on a yearly basis. The second initiative focuses on diminishing the fragmentation of the systems by enabling existing and new A400M (an advanced Airbus cargo plane that is being delivered to several European countries) to perform aerial refuelling thanks to the acquisition of refuelling pods. Lastly, the EDA incentivizes multinational procurement of A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft. At the moment, there are no PESCO projects in this regard nor further EU-level initiatives underway. Nevertheless, there are multinational programs aimed at fostering the mutual use of AAR capabilities, such as the Movement Coordination Centre Europe²⁵ or the Multinational MRTT Fleet.²⁶

Intelligence, Reconnaissance and Surveillance

The last military weakness underscored is that of intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR). This is

²⁰ Rapport d’information... Page 20

²¹ Libya and Mali operations. Transatlantic lessons learned. The German Marshall Fund of the United States. Page 10

²² The Role of the US Air Force in the French Mission in Mali. Atlantic Council <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/the-role-of-the-us-air-force-in-the-french-mission-in-mali/>

²³ Audition de l’amiral Édouard Guillaud, chef d’état-major des armées (CEMA), sur les enseignements de l’opération Serval <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cr-cdef/12-13/c1213074.asp>

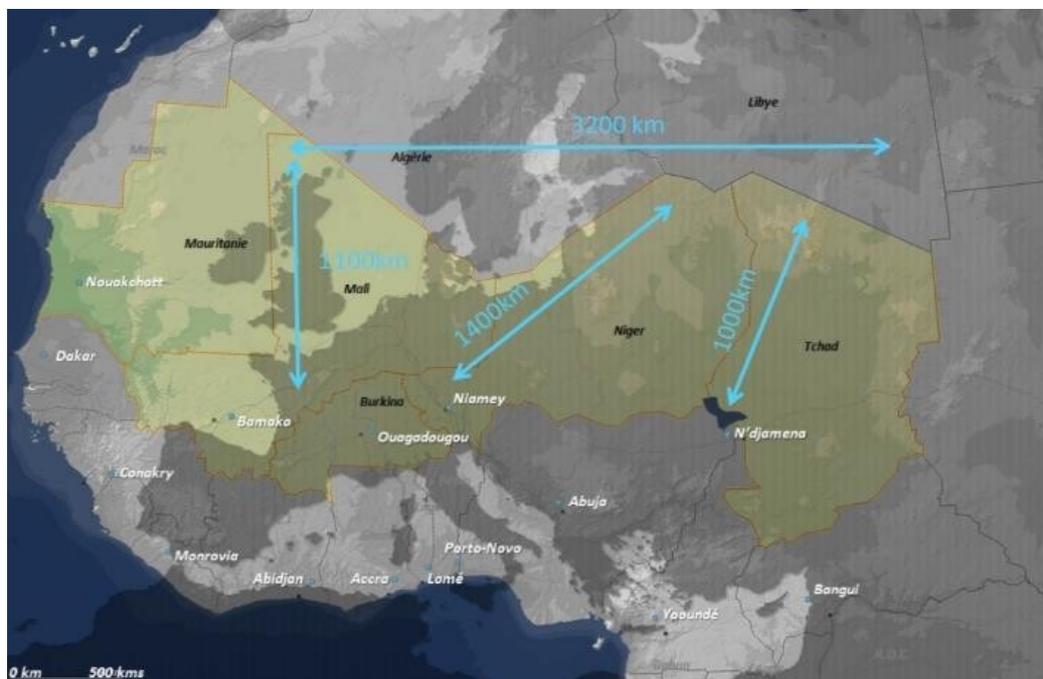
²⁴ Air-to-air refuelling fact sheet. EDA

https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-factsheets/2017-09-28-factsheet_aar

²⁵ Designed to foster cross-border AAR missions to “improve pan-European interoperability capabilities” <https://www.mcce-mil.org/air-to-air-refuelling/>

²⁶ A project that establishes a multinationally owned and operated fleet of MRTT aircrafts https://www.nato.int/nato_static_files2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_10/20191022_1910-factsheet-mrts.pdf

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Source: Ministère des Armées

a fundamental tool for the military decision-making processes and those involved in action-taking as it provides knowledge foundation and situational awareness on the state of affairs on the ground, air and sea. NATO defines surveillance as “the persistent monitoring of a target” and reconnaissance as “information-gathering conducted to answer a specific military question.”²⁷ It nuances that the former is a long-lasting activity while the latter is usually swift and collects specific information. Intelligence is the result of the analytical process made by specialists after gathering information. The Senate report stresses the significance that the US provided crucial assistance in this

domain: “thanks to the action of our allies and in particular the Americans, never before has the French army had such an influx of technical intelligence in Mali, in addition to the data collected by national means alone.”²⁸ Although Paris deployed considerable ISR assets for the operation, the American aid proved highly valuable.²⁹

Nonetheless, ISR has become even more relevant in Operation Barkhane. The map below shows the size of the area of operations that the mission intends to cover. Taking a closer look to the first map (the one that indicates the position of permanent and temporary French bases) reveals that even despite the advanced positions, a huge portion of the territory remains uncontrolled. Due to that, the military often launch missions to establish temporary observation posts in the mountains and other distant areas. Their objective is to monitor borders, potential crossing routes

²⁷ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_111830.htm

²⁸ Rapport d'information... Page 18

²⁹ For further details on the American and French ISR assets engaged in Operation Serval, look on page 11 of the

abovementioned document “Libya and Mali operations. Transatlantic lessons learned”

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and hotspots but their outcomes are limited. Having a force of 5.000 troops for tracking armed groups in such a vast area is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

This highlights the relevance of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), also called remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), as game changing tools in similar theatres. Since Operation Barkhane began in August 2014, the bulk of the ISR missions have been carried out by drones. Concretely, the drone detachment based in Niamey has exceeded 15.000 hours of flight.³⁰ UAVs offer an unrivalled operational flexibility compared to fighter jets as they can stage much longer reconnaissance and surveillance missions (the Reaper and Harfangs' endurance is 27 and 24 hours respectively) and, thus, allowing efficient usage of military assets. During Operation Barkhane, Paris allocated 3 recently acquired Reaper drones to his airbase in Niger. They joined the Harfangs, serving there since Serval, making a total of 5 UAVs. Recently, France reported that they have executed a drone strike, for the first time in its history, during a mission in Mali.³¹ This introduced France in the small club of countries with armed RPAs and entails a key strategic advantage.³² Their ability to overfly over an area or to stealthily approach a target makes them a versatile tool. Up to that moment, they were limited to surveillance and reconnaissance missions and in case of identifying a target, making it necessary to send the fighter jets to the location. This new capability economizes time

and makes of the unmanned systems a better security provider.

Yet, the partnership with Washington seems indispensable. Since last year, Washington has been considering a drawdown of military assets in Africa, as part of a redeployment to areas of great power competition.³³ The plan includes the withdrawal of the drones and troops detachment engaged in Niger, the one that has provided critical ISR assistance to France. This is cause for worry in Paris. Last January, the President, Emmanuel Macron, met his G5 counterparts in a summit that took place in Pau, France. There, Macron said to the press that "if the Americans decided to pull out of Africa, it would be very bad news for us, absolutely." Furthermore, a French presidency official deemed US contributions as "irreplaceable." "We would not be able to get these from other partners, especially when it comes to intelligence" he concluded.³⁴ The US contribution is limited, they do not engage on ground missions, but their resources are critical.

The European drone: the end of the dependence on the US?

In the European Union, the need for RPAs as a military capability was identified at the beginning of the 2000s. Efforts to pursue this technology have been taken through diverse joint programs and national projects. For instance, Germany and Spain began working on the "Barracuda" in

³⁰ Press pack. Operation Barkhane. Page 18

³¹ France carries out first armed drone strike in Mali.

France24 <https://www.france24.com/en/20191224-france-says-it-carried-out-first-armed-drone-strike-in-mali>

³² The French turn to armed drones. War on the rocks <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/the-french-turn-to-armed-drones/>

³³ Pentagon Eyes Africa Drawdown as First Step in Global Troop Shift. The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/24/world/africa/esper-troops-africa-china.html> For a better comprehension of the American

strategy in Africa, take a look at The Evolution of U.S. Defense Posture in North and West Africa. Center for Strategic and International Studies <https://www.csis.org/analysis/evolution-us-defense-posture-north-and-west-africa>

³⁴ Sahel Coalition: G5 and France agree new joint command, will prioritize fight against Islamic State. The Defense Post https://thedefensepost.com/2020/01/14/sahel-coalition-france-g5-islamic-state/?utm_source=Media+Review+for+January+14%2C+2020&utm_campaign=Media+Review+for+January+14%2C+2020&utm_medium=email

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2003, the U.K. is developing the “Taranis” and the Dassault nEUROn drone, which, albeit the UK no longer being part of the EU institutions, has gathered the cooperation of six European countries. However, all of these are either demonstrators or attempts that never went beyond the prototype phase due to the lack of political consensus, differing capability requirements and industrial rivalry.³⁵ As a result, European countries have significantly relied on US imports to match their needs.³⁶ In 2013, the EDA pointed out RPAs as a key defence capability and, two years later, Italy, Germany and France launched a European MALE drone project expected to be operable in 2025.³⁷ With the creation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Eurodrone project has become a PESCO project, which interested Member States can partake in.³⁸ This MALE RPA is deemed the flagship of the European collaborative efforts in the defence sector. As such, the Commission proposed a direct €100 million fund for it under the European Defence Fund,³⁹ at a stage where most of the PESCO projects do not have any resources earmarked yet. This UAV will present an alternative to the Reaper and Predator American drones as it can be armed. Hence, this enterprise will reduce political dependence and military reliance on the US^{40,41} whilst

bringing technical expertise, strengthening the aerospace industry and fostering cooperation.

Conclusions

The European cooperation in the Sahel strip casts doubts on the overarching assumption that Eastern and Northern countries are only concerned about Russia while Southern countries care about Africa and the Middle East. As previously mentioned, Denmark, the UK and Estonia have sent boots to the ground in Mali. Furthermore, Estonia has recently approved to double the size of its contingent and Denmark also contributes to the UN mission MINUSMA. For their part, Italy and Spain play a part in NATO’s initiative Enhanced Forward Presence.

Notwithstanding that, Europe still lacks the military means to undertake ambitious enterprise in foreign theatres, both in size and transversality of armies as the three capability reviews demonstrates. For example, smaller states cannot afford to maintain air-to-air refuelling means in their defence budget. Meanwhile, those countries that can, exhibit the same problem as with many other systems, heterogeneity, which leads to lack of interoperability. Not to

³⁵ Military drones in Europe: the European defence market and the spread of military UAV technology. University of Southern Denmark. Page 27

https://findresearcher.sdu.dk:8443/ws/portalfiles/portal/159305039/CWS_Military_Drones_in_Europe_Report.pdf

³⁶ The majority of unmanned aerial systems operated in Europe are American and, to a lesser extent, Israeli made. Ibidem. Page 19

³⁷ Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) drones, unlike those that operate at higher altitudes, are quite popular as they provide dual ISR and strike capabilities. Euractiv <https://www.euractiv.com/section/transport/news/italy-france-germany-sign-european-drone-project/>

³⁸ The project is partially managed as well by the OCCAR, a multinational organization whose purpose is to manage collaborative defence equipment programmes <http://www.occar.int/programmes/male-rpas>

³⁹ European Defence Fund on track with €525 million for Eurodrone and other joint research and industrial projects. European Commission

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/european-defence-fund-2019-mar-19_en

⁴⁰ Military procurement to third countries can drive to a certain level of dependence. For instance, when France acquired the MQ-9 Reapers, it was contractually bound to ask permission to American authorities to deploy the RPAs to another area. Yet, Paris enjoys a certain level of autonomy since this is the only contractual obligation. They can make use of the Reapers with their own satellites and no need of providing further information. Nouveaux drones Reaper: ce que va faire la France. La Tribune <https://www.la Tribune.fr/entreprises-finance/industrie/aeronautique-defense/20141118trib4af816af3/nouveaux-drones-reaper-ce-que-va-faire-la-france.html>

⁴¹ An opposite case involved the Reaped drones that Italy bought. In 2011, they requested permission to arm the UAVs but the US Department of State did not give its approval until 2015. Defence industrial links between the EU and the US. Institut des Relations Internationales et Stratégiques. Page 15 <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Ares-20-Report-EU-DTIB-Sept-2017.pdf>

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mention drones, where the reliance on third countries is substantial. Fortunately, the European Union constitutes an indispensable framework to merge efforts and alleviate these issues through a wide array of initiatives and institutions such as the EDA, PESCO, the European Defence Fund or the Annual Review on Defence.

Against this backdrop, the United States has acted as a fundamental partner. The French military have stressed several times that its help has been crucial for the development of both operations. The European countries still rely heavily on the US to ensure their strategic interests, at least when it comes to military measures. Despite the shift to other regions of growing strategic competition and the change of priorities of the different Administrations, Washington has not shunned help to its allies. Moreover, it is leading the largest NATO joint exercise in Europe in more than 25 years (if the COVID-19 pandemic allows it)⁴² and

has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in European infrastructure⁴³ while the European Union has allegedly cut the budget to 0 for the military mobility project.⁴⁴ Sometimes the Member States themselves hamper the way of making the Union a better security provider and, eventually, a relevant actor on the world stage. Maybe the problem underlying Europe's security challenges is not so much Donald Trump than ourselves, although Trump's erratic actions and floundering commitment to multilateralism is evidently damaging.



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⁴² The US Army is rethinking how to do its largest European exercise in 25 years amid a coronavirus lockdown. Business Insider <https://www.businessinsider.com/army-rethinking-defender-europe-20-amid-coronavirus-lockdown-2020-3?IR=T>

⁴³ Through the European Reassurance Initiative [https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1199828/2018-budget-request-for-european-reassurance-initiative-grows-to-](https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1199828/2018-budget-request-for-european-reassurance-initiative-grows-to-47-billion/)

[47-billion/](https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1199828/2018-budget-request-for-european-reassurance-initiative-grows-to-47-billion/) and the European Deterrence Initiative https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2020/fy2020_EDJ_JBook.pdf

⁴⁴ Europe's military mobility: latest casualty of EU budget battle. Euractiv <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/europes-military-mobility-latest-casualty-of-eu-budget-battle/>