

Sentry Box in the Backyard: Analysis of French Military Bases in Africa

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***Abstract:** Foreign military bases are the important means for power projection. In Africa, military bases represent the symbol of France's sphere of influence, which have strengthened France's protection of her economic, political, cultural, overseas national and security interests. The bases are of great significance to enhance French intervention capabilities, making France the most influential external power in the African continent. After the upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, France will likely want to return to North Africa militarily and seek to restore a military presence in the region within a multilateral framework, with the objective of linking her domestic Toulon naval base with her military presence in North Africa, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Djibouti, and Abu Dhabi, thus making France a dominant player in the "Arc of Instability" which extends from West Africa to the Persian Gulf.*

***Key Words:** Foreign Military Bases; France and Africa; Overseas Interest; Military Presence; International Military History*

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Foreign military base (FMB) refers to an area on land or on sea beyond a sovereign state's jurisdiction, which is stationed with a certain number of armed forces having military activities, organized institutions and military facilities (Harkavy, 2007: 2-9). It's an important means for states to project power, interfere in regional affairs, spread culture, safeguard overseas interests and enhance political influence. Based on different criteria, foreign military bases can be put into different categories. For instance, according to the difference of duration, they can be divided into permanent (with a long-term target) and *ad hoc* (with a short-term target) bases; based on difference of functions, they can be divided into army bases, air bases, naval bases, logistic bases, communication bases, arsenal bases, etc. As of 2011, the US has established over 700 military bases and installations in 38 sovereign states (38 foreign bases are large ones). Its total foreign bases are as many as that of Roman Empire in 117 A.D. and of the British Empire in 1898 when the two empires were at their respective heyday. Besides, currently Britain has foreign military bases in Cyprus, Ascension Islands, Kenya and Falkland Islands, etc., while Russia, Japan and India also boast foreign military bases to protect their respective vital interest. It seems that foreign military bases are universally taken advantage of by both traditional western powers and emerging powers.

I. French Foreign Military Bases in Its Security Strategy

Since modern times, France has enjoyed a status of mid-size "world power," with strong global influence, partly because she has deployed military bases over four continents—from the Caribbean Sea to South America, from Indochina to Oceania, and from the Pacific to the African continent. France, with her Overseas Departments and Territories (Départements d'Outre-Mer et Territoires d'Outre-Mer, DOM-TOM), is a geographically dispersed nation. For instance, French Guyana is 7,000 kilometers away from the Metropolis; Mayotte

8,000 kilometers; and, New Caledonia 18,300 kilometers.^① However, the deployment of foreign military bases actually lessened French geographical disadvantage by providing it with an outreach it would not otherwise have. France's military bases in foreign countries, former colonies, the DOM-TOMs and trust territories made it a *de facto* global power. Since the end of the Cold War, French troops abroad totaled 50,000, performing three different functions: the first are for peacekeeping missions within the UN framework, such as in Lebanon; the second are for peacekeeping and military operations within the framework of NATO or the EU, such those in Afghanistan; and, the third, are stationed in foreign military bases, such as in Djibouti and Gabon. The first and second operational leadership is out of France's hand, while France exercises full leadership over the third one (See table 1).

Table 1: French Foreign military Presence: Categories and Deployment (2008)

Host Nations	Regions	Troops	Military Components	Categories of Military Presence
Djibouti	Africa	2900	2 regiments; 1 transport aircraft; 10 combat aircraft; 10 helicopters; 1 maritime patrol aircraft	Permanent military bases
Gabon	Africa	800	1 infantry battalion; 2 transport aircraft; 6 helicopters	Permanent military bases
Senegal	Africa	1150	1 infantry battalion; 1 transport aircraft; 1 maritime patrol aircraft; 1 helicopter	Permanent military bases
Chad	Africa	1200	6 combat aircraft; 2 transport aircraft; 1 infantry company	Temporary military bases

^① French Ministry of Defense, *The French White Paper on Defense and National Security*, New York: Odile Jacob Publishing Corporation, 2008, p. 188.

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Chad	Africa	1550	1 support base; 1 tactical group	EU peacekeeping mission
La Réunion	Africa	4000	1 paratroop regiment; 2 frigates; 2 patrol boats; 2 transport aircraft; 2 helicopters; 1050 gendarmes; 1150 SMA	Permanent military bases
Gulf of Guinea	Africa	100	Navy	Temporary military bases
Ivory Coast	Africa	1850	Unknown	Permanent military bases and UN peacekeeping mission
Mayotte	Africa	350	2 patrol boats; 1 infantry detachment; 300 gendarmes	Permanent military bases
Maritime Presence in Indian Ocean	Indian Ocean	1250	Navy	Temporary military bases
Bosnia and Kosovo	Europe	2250	Unknown	NATO peacekeeping mission
Lebanon	West Asia	1750	Unknown	UN peacekeeping mission
UAE	West Asia	450	Unknown	Permanent military bases
Afghanistan	Central Asia	2300	Unknown	NATO peacekeeping

				mission
New-Caledonia	Oceania	2950	1 infantry regiment; 1 frigate; 3 patrol boats; 3 transport aircraft; 6 helicopters; 900 gendarmes; 350 SMA	Permanent military bases
French Guyana	South America	3800	2 infantry regiments; 2 boats; 7 helicopters; 800 gendarmes; 700 SMA	Permanent military bases
French Polynesia	South America	2400	1 infantry company; 1 frigate; 3 maritime patrol aircraft; 2 transport aircraft; 2 helicopters; 540 gendarmes; 250 SMA	Permanent military bases
Martinique	Caribbean Sea	3200	1 infantry regiment; 1 frigate; 1 tug; 3 transport aircraft; 3 helicopters; 550 gendarmes; 550 SMA	Permanent military bases
Guadeloupe	Caribbean Sea	1000	1 infantry battalion; 1 patrol boat; 1 helicopter; 800 gendarmes; 550 SMA	Permanent military bases

Source: Ministry of Defense, *The French White Paper on Defense and National Security*, New York: Odile Jacob Publishing Corporation, 2008, p. 150.

II. French African Military Bases in Evolution

Charles Pasqua, former French Interior Minister, said, "European security strategy relies on three rings, namely, the Mediterranean, European continent and the Atlantic. France is the only country that could play an active part in all the three rings (Keiger, 2001: 227)." From mid 19th century to the end of the Cold War, Africa had been consistently regarded as the "backyard" and "sphere of influence" of France; the Mediterranean had been seen as the "inner lake" instead of its "border", which connected France's homeland in the north with the African colonies in the south, and both territories were regarded as

inseparable parts of the French Empire. According to the logic, France is an empire standing on two continents of Europe and Africa, and “the Mediterranean Sea flows across France just as La Seine flows across Paris (Andrew & Kenya--Forstner, 1981: 250).” French policymakers have always believed that for France to remain in the concert of nations as a mid-size power, she must project a certain degree of power outside her borders to acquire and maintain a zone of influence which could become source of supplies of strategic raw materials in order to achieve her grand foreign policy design.^① This has been deeply rooted in the French conscience. For instance, on February 3, 2000, François Bujon de l'Estang, French Ambassador to the US delivered a speech in the US National War College. He opened by calling the Mediterranean-Africa-Middle East regions France’s “backyard,” which is of vital importance to the state (Oleynik, 2001: 165).

Africa is the backbone of the French Empire. By the time the Department of Colonies was founded in 1894, France’s colonial territory ranked the second in the world, next only to Britain’s. After Morocco became its protectorate in 1912, the French colonial territory expanded to 10 million square kilometers, including its 750-thousand-square-kilometer colony in Indochina, Madagascar as well as tiny islands on the Pacific and Indian Ocean (Andrew & Kenya--Forstner, 1981: 9). At the eve of the outbreak of World War Two (WWII), French colonies totaled 11.75 million square kilometers with a colonial population of 41.1 million, mostly in Africa (Maclean & Szarka, 2008: 7). In the early 1940s, about half of Africa was under its rule; after WWII ended in 1945, France restored its huge colonies of 12 million square kilometers with a colonial population of 65 million. Among them, France had 21 colonies in Africa, covering 10.39 million square kilometers, making up 37% of its general colonial territory, and 24.5% of its colonial population (Baycroft, 2008: 147).

Why do the French have a strong sentiment towards Africa in the past two centuries? And why are France-Africa relations so special?

^① See John Chipman, *Vème République et Défense de l’Afrique*, Paris: Bosquet, 1986, pp. 6-7.

Before answering the questions, it is necessary to notice that since modern times, France was frequently defeated by its European rivals, especially Britain and Germany, making it a disputable power in Europe. For instance, France failed in the war with Prussia in 1870 and was humiliated again in WWII by Germany. To recover from that, France was determined to expand its colonies and increase its military presence abroad to make up for its disadvantages in its own neighborhood. To achieve rejuvenation, France strove to integrate its homeland, départements d'Outre-Mer, colonies and Trust territories, and wished to constitute a virtual empire – “the French Union”, which was comparable with the Soviet Union in terms of territorial influence. The African continent is an area with the most concentrating overseas interest of France and is also the backbone of the virtual “French Union.” It was the French government’s enduring task to exclude other powers from the region, prevent them from interfering into African affairs and meet the challenge of decolonization from the inside.

The deployment of foreign military bases is one of the French key endeavors to achieve that goal. Since the end of WWII, France established four war zones of North, West and Central Africa as well as the Southern Indian Ocean, and deployed several dozen military bases. France took every measure to suppress nationalists who advocated self-determination. On May 8, 1945, a large-scale anti-France demonstration swept Algeria, which was finally cracked down by French troops, and the casualty was over 45 thousand. The Algerian demonstration and the subsequent tough suppression caused a chain reaction. Three days later, a general strike happened in Syria, and French forces raided Damascus for three successive days, which caused a serious casualty too. In 1946, the Fourth Republic of France was founded, which highlighted that the new Republic was composed of three parts: French homeland, Départements d'Outre-Mer, and other foreign territories (Keiger, 2001: 207-208). Gaston Monnerville, the former French head of the Senate said at France’s congress that, “Without overseas territory, today’s France would decline to be a lesser power needing to be liberated instead of the winner of WWII”;

the Former President François Mitterrand also said, "Without Africa, there would be no history of France in the 21st century (Andrew & Kenya-Forstner, 1981: 250)."

Before the decolonization of Africa reached its climax in the 1960s, France had over 90 legions with 60 thousand troops and several dozen military bases on the continent (Zhang, 1987: 37). France's security strategy relied on three rings of NATO, United Europe and military bases in Africa in that period.

After the founding of the French Fifth Republic, President Charles de Gaulle was determined to make France the third world power after the US and the USSR, and he was convinced that France would be the spokesperson of the third world. To achieve that status, Africa was of great significance. Africa to France is like Latin America to the US and East Europe to the Soviet Union. As to French interest in North Africa, de Gaulle underlined that the Mediterranean Sea should be the Sea of the neighboring countries, not the American or the Soviet "inner lake." Despite the sweet words, the African nationalists failed to echo de Gaulle. Instead, they regarded French military bases in Africa as the remnant of western colonial rule, compelling Paris to close some of the unimportant bases. As a result, from 1962 to 1964, French troops in Africa declined from 59 thousand to 21 thousand, but the conviction that "Africa is France's backyard" remained unchanged. After the successive independences of French colonies on the continent, France struggled to maintain military cooperation with the newly independent states, and signed new military defense treaties with all the new countries (excluding Algeria) with the name of preventing communist penetration and keeping African internal security. From 1960 to 1994, France updated defense pacts with 27 African nations, which laid a legal foundation for the continuous deployment of French military bases (Charbonneau, 2008: 61). In the 1970s and 1980s, France deployed bases in over 20 African states, and the host nations represented 40% of the continent's territory, so that France remained the most influential external power among the youngest countries.

Table 2: French Military Defense Treaties with African Countries

Partners	Year	Partners	Year
Benin	1975	Malawi	1980
Burkina Faso	1961	Mali	1985
Burundi	1969	Mauritius	1979
Cameron	1974	Mauritania	1986
Central Africa	1960	Morocco	1994
Chad	1976	Nigeria	1977
Comoros	1978	Rwanda	1975
Congo(Brazzaville)	1974	Senegal	1974
Congo(Kinshasa)	1974	Seychelles	1979
Djibouti	1977	Togo	1963
Equatorial Guinea	1985	Tunisia	1973
Gabon	1960	Zimbabwe	1992
Guinea	1985	Madagascar	1966
Ivory Coast	1961		

Source: Bruno Charbonneau, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Burlington, VT and Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008, p. 62.

Based on Table 2, a conclusion can be drawn that military base deployment is by no means an isolated event, and it reflects the host nation and the user nation's military, political, economic and cultural relations. Defense pacts not only can legitimize base deployment, but also can guarantee French privilege in Africa, such as the right to fly over an ally's territory, to rent its seaports and airports, to use the forward military facilities, and to host joint military rehearsals. Besides, in the early 1970s, French military officers acted as consultants and trained a huge number of local police and special forces (Corbett, 1972: 155-157). French military bases in Africa also became an important bridgehead to project its military power.

French military bases also have political implications, such as to show flags and to symbolize France's world power status. The bases are the crystallization of French national dignity and resolve. As

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President Charles de Gaulle put it, “if France falls into a second-rank country, it would no longer exist.” To secure its world power status, France has consistently restructured its military bases in Africa to meet new challenges. For instance, in the 1970s, its base deployment mode is a “cross.” The horizontal axis connected Dakar of Senegal, N’Djamena of Chad and Djibouti in the Horn of Africa; the vertical axis linked Algiers of Algeria, N’Djamena of Chad and Brazzaville of Congo with N’Djamena as the converging point. Later on, due to turbulence in Congo, France’s military bases in Brazzaville were moved to Libreville, Gabon; and its N’Djamena military bases were moved to Bouar, Central Africa, but French “cross-shape” deployment mode remained unchanged. The total number of troops in Africa was around 80 thousand, so that they could reach any regions within 24 hours when crisis erupted (Zhu and Xu, 1988: 13-14). In the early 1970s, the number of deployed troops increased to 108 thousand, and they were mostly concentrated in Djibouti, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Madagascar, etc. (See table 3) .

Table 3: French Troops in Black Africa in 1970s

Host Nations	Troops	Host Nations	Troops
Djibouti	3800	Madagascar	2000
Ivory Coast	450	Chad	800
Gabon	450	Senegal	2300
Niger	450	Others	550
Total		10800	

Source: Edward M. Corbett, *The French Presence in Black Africa*, Washington D.C.: Black Orpheus Press, 1972, pp. 146-147.

In 1981 when François Mitterrand took the presidency, France placed a greater emphasis on relations with the third world and opposed both US and the Soviets to encroach Africa. French “cross-shape” base structure, however, had totally collapsed due to the fierce torrent of decolonization. To guarantee France’s southern flank security, Mitterrand proposed to rely on four pillars of permanent military bases in Africa, i.e. Senegal, Central Africa, Gabon

and Djibouti. Meanwhile, France maintained flexible military presence in Cameroon and Ivory Coast to reestablish a new framework. In the mid 1980s, the primary rival of France in Africa was apparently the Soviet Union, which expanded its military presence in Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Libya, Angola, Algeria, etc in a step-by-step manner. About 4/5 of the Soviet warring ships in the Indian Ocean were deployed near Aden (Yuan, 1979: 26). To balance the Soviet influence and prevent its penetration into black Africa, Mitterrand's administration restored part of its military bases in Africa and the deployed troops rebounded to eight thousand. Among the top ten France's foreign military bases, three were located in Africa: Djibouti, Senegal and Gabon, revealing the French strong resolve to deter "communist penetration into Africa" (Charbonneau, 2008: 65). Besides, France strengthened its control of francophone Africa by other means, such as political persuasion, trade concessions, economic aid and cultural influence; France also made great efforts to train the host nations' military and police forces, and as many as 1900 African officers received training in the 1980s (Staniland, 1987: 55-56). Geopolitically, French military bases echoed American and British military bases in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and the three countries actually encircled the Soviet military presence in the Horn of Africa and the West Indian Ocean.

III. French Military Base Redeployment in Africa since the End of the Cold War

Since the end of the Cold War, a weak Russia inherited most of the Soviet Union's legacy, but had to close all military bases beyond the Eurasian continent, such as the ones in Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, leaving France unchallenged in Africa. Yet, due to fiscal problems, France was confronted with a serious economic slowdown at home. In the early 1990s, there were over 2.8 million unemployed workers and 400 thousand homeless residents in France. In 1992-1993, the French unemployment rate reached a historical record, and as many as 3 million were jobless (Kedward, 2006: 544). Economic

depression forced Paris to reduce its military bases in Africa. In 1994, according to the military treaties signed after the summit of francophone countries, France reserved its military bases only in seven francophone countries, i.e. Cameroon, Bangui of Central Africa, N'Djamena of Chad, Djibouti, Libreville of Gabon, Bouet of Ivory Coast and Dakar of Senegal (Riding, 2009: 8). As of 1994, 8500 French troops were deployed with 1.2 thousand extra military officers in Africa (Keiger, 2001: 228).

In February 1994, French Department of Defense issued a White Paper, claiming that, the future threat to France would be more unpredictable, dispersed, complex and multi-faceted, so France would, on the one hand promote democratization of African regimes; on the other hand, it would reduce its military presence there (Gregory, 2000: 435).

The White Paper exerted a far-reaching effect on France's African military bases. After taking the presidency in May 1995, Jacques René Chirac declared that France's total armed forces would be reduced from 573 thousand to 440 thousand by the end of 2002, a drop of 23% (Chafer, 2008: 45). In 1995, 23 African francophone countries had military cooperation treaties with France, but only six were still stationed with French permanent military bases: Cameroon (10), Djibouti (3500), Gabon (610), Ivory Coast (580), Republic of Central Africa (1500) and Senegal (1300). Besides, Chad had a flexible French military base with 850 troops (Gregory, 2000: 438).

In 1996, the new defense report (*Une Défense Nouvelle*) came into being, and the report reiterated Chirac's new idea, which put French security strategy into three categories: protecting the vital interests of territorial integrity, sovereignty, physical and property security of French nationals; protecting France's strategic interest in the Mediterranean region; and protecting France's interest as a world power (Rynning, 2000: 63; He, 2007: 135-136).

Later on, France carried out the "Millon Initiative", which was named after Charles Millon, French Defense Minister (1995-1997). According to the Initiative, France would reduce its troops in Africa by 40% in the following six years, namely from 8350 to 5000; one of the

six permanent military bases in the continent would be closed, and each of the rest of the bases would be equipped with more advanced army, navy and air forces as well as gendarmes, and each would have an average level of troops of around 1000. The new bases would be more flexible, small-scaled and efficient. After the Initiative was implemented, French troops in Chad decreased from 840 to 550; the troops in Gabon dropped from 600 to 550; the troops in Djibouti were reduced from 3250 to 2800; the troops in Ivory Coast shrank from 580 to 550; and the troops in Senegal diminished from 1300 to 1100 (La France Sonne la Retraite à Bangui, 1997; Gregory, 2000: 438; Shi and Ren, 1998: 63-64). After readjustment, French military presence in Africa concentrated on some key positions, which enhanced its capability in action, defense and response at a lower economic cost. Thanks to the Initiative, about \$ 30 million (4.9%) of French military expenditure was cut, which was used for training the local African armed forces and police. Through the Initiative, the African counterpart was able to shoulder more obligations than before, and France's involvement in African conflict was lessened (Keiger, 2001: 229).

Entering the 21st century, African countries were basically stable, so French military bases have functionally evolved from intervention into regional affairs to tackling non-traditional threats, such as combating terrorism and preventing WMD. In 2001, there were about 30 thousand French troops abroad working on different tasks, and 5500 were in Africa. Since then, France had to participate in the new military campaign in Afghanistan and later on in Iraq within the framework of NATO ("Operation Enduring Freedom" and "Operation Iraqi Freedom") (Chafer, 2008: 44-45). Accordingly, French troops in Africa dropped to 5300, and its bases in Cameroon and Central Africa were closed, while Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Senegal continued to host French facilities (Utley, 2002: 134-137). However, the reduction of the French force did not mean that Paris would disengage from the continent. On the contrary, France would like to have a smaller but stronger force with higher efficacy. As Defense Minister Charles Millon put it, despite the reduction of French forces, France

would honor its commitment to defense pacts with francophone countries (Zhao, 1999: 31).

IV. The Dynamics of French Deployment of Military Bases in Africa

Since the end of WWII, despite the side effect of African decolonization, most of French military bases survived. They were not only the legacy of French colonial rule, but also the crystallization of Paris' special ties with francophone countries. These military bases aimed at protecting France's five-layer interests.

The first layer is France's economic interest. Geographically, although France looks over the sea on three sides, it is cornered by Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain in Europe. Thanks to its global military bases, France boasted a huge exclusive economic zone of over 11 million square kilometers, second only to that of US (French Ministry of Defense, 2008: 57). At the eve of WWII, French investment in the colonial regions made up 50% of its overseas investment, and 27.2% of its foreign trade. France's trade volume with North Africa, Syria and Lebanon reached 15 billion francs then (Andrew & Kenya-Forstner, 1981: 238). In the early 21st century, although France-African trade made up only 5% of France's total trade volume, Africa remained an undisputable huge continent for it has one billion people, a big potential market, and there exists a great complementarity of trade between the two sides (Utley, 2002: 130). From 1991 to 2008, Paris remained the largest trading partner of Africa with an astonishing trade surplus of 32 billion francs (Zhao, 1999: 34).^① The 2008 White Paper of France highlighted that, "France and Europe cannot turn their backs on the continent closest to them. Africa possesses numerous strengths and has a considerable human and economic potential. In the long term, these capacities could enable it to play a leading role in global economic growth and security (French

^① According to the statistics of China's Ministry of Commerce, China-Africa trade volume exceeded \$ 100 billion in 2008, and in 2009, China became Africa's largest trading partner.

Ministry of Defense, 2008: 43).” In June 2010, the 25th summit of Francophone countries was held in Nice, France, and about 230 French companies and African trade organizations attended the conference. President Nicolas Sarkozy promised at the conference to promote economic and trade cooperation with his African counterpart, and to help some African countries obtain the membership of G20 and UNSC (Marquand & Baldauf, 2010).

The second layer is France’s cultural interest. There is a popular aphorism in France which says that “Portuguese tended to build churches in colony; British tended to set up trading centers in colony; while the French tended to run schools in colony (Williams, 1968: 72).” French military bases in Africa play an important role in popularizing French language and culture as well as expanding its cultural influence, particularly in francophone countries of Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Central Africa, Chad, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Djibouti, etc. France not only strengthened its political control, but also enabled the French language to be their official language. As of early 21st century, there were about 105 million people who took French as their mother tongue, and there were 55 million more people who frequently used the language. The francophone summit is an important symbol of France’s cultural influence, and the first summit was held in Paris in November 1973. Currently, it has over 50 member states, including 15 members in West Asia and Africa, and the French government has dispatched over 6000 language teachers to Africa in the past two decades (Covarrubias & Lansford, 2007: 30; Oleynik, 2001: 82).

The third layer is France’s political interest. In the process of colonization, French colonists believed that they enjoyed a moral high ground, and even held a strong conviction that western values were universally acceptable. They regarded themselves as “mothers” and “tutors” to spread advanced civilization to barbaric Africa. On July 28, 1885, French Prime Minister Jules Ferry said, “the superior nations have ultimate rights to conquer the inferior ones, and meanwhile bear responsibility to transmit civilization (Keiger, 2001: 202).” The so-called “civilization” refers to mostly French political values. President François Mitterrand pointed out that, “In the 21st century,

the fate of France hinges on the special ties with former colonial countries. Without Africa, there would be no history of France to speak of in the new century (Maclean & Szarka, 2008: 12-13).” Since WWII, particularly during the Mitterrand presidency, France’s “value diplomacy” was an important part of its African strategy, and its African military bases helped topple several autocratic regimes in Africa, such as in the Republic of Central Africa. In 1990, Mitterrand advocated resorting to a “stick and carrot” policy towards authoritarian African states, and reiterated that French aid to these countries would be conditioned with free elections, free media, multi-party alternation of power, judicial justice and democratization (Védrine & Moisi, 2000: 88). In March 2011, France initiated the Odyssey Dawn Operation with Britain and other allies to overthrow the Kaddafi regime in Libya; in April 2011, President Nicolas Sarkozy declared that France would participate in an UN military operation in the Ivory Coast to disarm former President Laurent Gbagbo, and thereafter French troops increased to 1500 in the country. The two military operations were both under the banner of “anti-dictatorship” and “promoting democracy,” reflecting French political interest in Africa.

The fourth layer is French nationals’ interest. Before WWI broke out, there were 855 thousand French nationals abroad and about 600 thousand were in Algeria; since the end of the Cold War, there were 200 thousand French nationals in Africa, and 60% were in francophone countries (Zhang, 1993: 32). As of 2008, French nationals in Africa were 240 thousand, representing 16% of the total number abroad, which is an integral part of France’s national interest (Hansen; Keiger, 2001: 11, 202). Undoubtedly, French troops regarded it as their primary task to ensure physical and property security of these nationals. In November 2004, a French peacekeeping force in the Ivory Coast was attacked by local rioters, French nationals’ properties were looted and French schools were burned. Within several days, nine French soldiers were killed, two nationals were missing and over 30 nationals were injured. As its response, France dispatched 700 more troops to assist the 4000 French soldiers that had already been

deployed there. The enforced French troops then cracked down on a sweeping anti-France demonstration, killing 67, and injuring 1256 local demonstrators (Chafer, 2008: 48). Although such military operation is offensive, it effectively protected French nationals' security and interests in the country. As President François Mitterrand put it, "If France abandoned its presence in Africa, our nation would be incomplete in the eyes of international community (Jiang, 1996: 18-19)."

The fifth layer is French security interest. French military bases in Africa enabled the country to engage in military diplomacy, increase the share of arms sales, interfere in the local security affairs and participate in African peacekeeping operations. From 1962 to 1995, France initiated as many as 19 military operations in African Arab countries alone (Hansen). As to the principles of intervention, former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing emphasized that, "First, France honors its commitment to allies' security based on the defense pacts; second, France only intervenes when being requested by the local friendly governments; and third, French intervention is defensive instead of offensive, and it is aimed at guaranteeing security instead of sabotaging stability (Zhang & Zhou, 1993: 389)."

Table 4: French Military Intervention to African Arab Countries, 1954-2011

Target	Code of Operation	Date of Beginning	Date of Ending	Troops implemented
Algeria	Algerian War	October 1, 1954	July 1, 1962	80 thousand to 400 thousand
Egypt	Mousquetaire	October 30, 1956	November 24, 1956	30 thousand
Mauritania	Ecouvillon	February 10, 1958	May 5, 1959	Unknown
Tunisia	Charrue courte	July 17, 1961	July 23, 1961	Unknown
Tunisia	Secours Tunisie	October 11, 1969	November 3, 1969	Unknown
Djibouti	Saphir 2	April 1977	December	Unknown

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			1977	
Tunisia	Scorpion	January 27, 1980	March 3, 1980	Unknown
Somalia	Myrtille	May 1981	May 1981	Unknown
Libya	Mirmillon	September 1984	November 1984	4000
Tunisia	Hortensia	April 1986	April 1986	Unknown
Comoro	Oside	December 4, 1989	December 20, 1989	1500
Somalia	Bérénice	January 3, 1991	January 9, 1991	500
Mauritania	MINURSO	October 1991	Ongoing	25
Djibouti	Iskoutir	February 25, 1992	June 1999	120
Somalia	Sanaa	November 15, 1992	November 18, 1992	Unknown
Somalia	Restoring Hope	December 7, 1992	April 12, 1993	2400
Somalia	ONUSOM2	April 12, 1993	December 15, 1993	100
Algeria	Caravane	1994	1994	Unknown
Somalia	United Shiled	January 1995	March 1995	Unknown
Comoro	Azalée 1	September 30, 1995	October 8, 1995	1070
Comoro	Azalée 2	October 15, 1995	March 23, 1996	Unknown
Algeria	Algérie	November 1996	2003	129
Djibouti	Khor angar	January 24, 1999	February 28, 2001	490
Djibouti	Ardoukoba	June 1999	2000	Unknown
Libya	Dawn Odyssey	March 19, 2011	Ongoing	Unknown

Source: Bruno Charbonneau, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Burlington, VT and Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008, pp. 68-72.

To protect the above-mentioned five-layer interests, France endeavored to maintain military bases on the former colonial land, and made every effort to consolidate them, such as economic aid, trade concession, cultural attraction and political intimidation.

To most of the poor African nations, foreign military bases are politically sensitive, but economically rewarding. Despite sporadic politicalization of these military bases, French troops in Africa do bring a handsome fiscal revenue for the host nations. For instance, in 1960s, the French government offered the host nations about \$35 million per year as compensation; the 30 thousand troops there spent about \$100 million each year, which provided thousands of jobs related to bars, restaurants, supermarkets, entertainment and gym centers. With the shrinking size of these military bases, France's expenditure on African bases dropped to \$25 million in the early 21st century, but that is still attractive to local African governments (Corbett, 1972: 153).

VI. Conclusion: The Prospect of French Military Bases in Africa

Since early 2011, following the "Jasmine Revolution" in North Africa, Western powers have gone to great lengths to interfere in African security affairs. Particularly after the UNSC passed Resolution 1973 on Libyan situation, France took initiative to help Libyan opposition parties overthrow the Kaddafi regime. There seem to be four reasons for President Nicolas Sarkozy to passionately participate in the Libyan War: to consolidate EU leadership in African affairs, to monopolize the West's control of Libyan oil resources, to secure a moral high ground of promoting democracy in North Africa, and to win popular support at home for reelection in 2012. With the turbulence of the North African situation, particularly with the downfall of the Kaddafi regime, Sarkozy will probably readjust base deployment in Africa in the future.

First, it is likely that France would further cut its traditional

military bases. French military bases in Africa are by nature an extension of its colonial rule in the 19th and 20th century. Since France's national interest is dynamic instead of static, and shifting instead of fixed, these bases can hardly meet the need of the changed situation and interest. Since 2008, some of the African countries hope that Paris could honor its promise to "build new partnerships with African nations" and "close the rest of their military bases" on the continent. For instance, in February 2010, France had to close its permanent military bases in Senegal, and only Gabon and Djibouti are still hosting French permanent bases. It can be estimated that, since France's vital interest region is shifting from West Africa to North Africa, it may reduce the military presence in the Ivory Coast and Gabon, and increase its presence in North Africa. Tunisia, Morocco and post-Kaddafi Libya are three potential countries that could accept French military presence.

Second, France may break the barrier of the "Francophone Zone" and welcome other western partners to participate in African affairs. In the past two centuries, France has regarded Africa as its "backyard" and opposed any other powers to penetrate into it, including the US the former Soviet Union and China.^① After the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, France's influence in the continent faded away; so did the idea of "backyard." France is now more open-minded and more tolerant to other powers in Africa. For instance, in recent years, France welcomed US and Japan to open new military bases in Djibouti, and the three nations have shared the military facilities in the horn of Africa. Sarkozy's administration has also welcomed the UN, EU and NATO to participate in peacekeeping missions in Chad, Ivory Coast, Central Africa, etc. Meanwhile, Paris has broken the fence of

^① Yahia H. Zoubir, "US and Soviet Policies toward France's Struggle with Anti-Colonial Nationalism in North Africa," *Canadian Journal of History/Annales d'Histoire Canadiennes*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 1995), pp. 439-466. Although allied with the United States, France was very suspicious of American intentions in North Africa. France was also quite wary about Soviet intentions in the North African region, especially, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Today, the French are quite nervous about increasing Chinese presence in Algeria, where the Chinese have secured many major business contracts in strategic sectors.

“francophone” and “non-francophone” countries. For instance, recently, Paris expanded its strategic relationship with South Africa, which belongs to the British Commonwealth; France launched Dawn Odyssey Mission against Kaddafi’s Libya, which was originally an Italian sphere of influence.

Finally, France may redeploy its military bases according to its new concept of the “Arc of Crisis.” The 2008 French White Paper points out, “This region is not a homogenous ensemble. Each country in it has its own identity and history, and its political, social, economic and human wellsprings. Each part of the region has its own logic: that of the Sahel area, from Mauritania to Somalia, is clearly different from the Mediterranean littoral, the Near East, the Arabian-Persian Gulf, or from Afghanistan and Pakistan. But essential changes now taking place are modifying the security situation for France and Europe in this part of the world, which lies in Europe’s neighborhood and is central to global security strategic interests. The upsurge in radical Islam, the antagonism between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, the Kurdish question, and the fragility of political regimes in the region, form an explosive mixture (French Department of Defense, 2008: 41).” To better protect its essential interest in the greater “Arc of Crisis,” France launched new military bases in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2009 following Sarkozy’s visit to the Gulf.

To sum up, after the North African upheaval in 2011, it is likely that France will return to North Africa militarily and establish its military presence within a multilateral framework, so that its domestic Toulon military base, military presence in North Africa, in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Djibouti and Abu Dhabi, UAE will be interconnected, and France may secure a dominant position in the “Arc of Crisis” ranging from West and North Africa to the Persian Gulf.

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