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A CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH MINISTER OF DEFENSE
JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: I'd like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of The Brookings Institution. I'm Fiona Hill, the director of the Center on the United States and Europe, and it's a great honor for us today to host the French defense minister at what is actually a very difficult time for his country.

So before we begin the event, I would like to say to Monsieur Le Drian that I hope that he will accept on our behalf -- on the behalf of Brookings and everyone here -- our most sincere condolences to the victims and families of the terrible atrocity in Nice. And to all of our colleagues and friends in France who have been affected by this great tragedy, we'd like to again express our most sincere condolences. It's a very difficult time for you and your country.

Before I introduce the minister and we begin with the event, I want to make a few quick announcements, which are quite important for all of you here. First of all, this event is going to be on the record and the minister is going to speak in French, so for those of you who do not speak French, I want to make sure that you have headsets for the simultaneous translation. If you do not, we have them just outside of the auditorium. So I just wanted to make sure that everybody has what they need. And Channel 2 will have the English translation for when we begin.

I also want to make sure that everyone is mindful of their cell phones, for this equipment is quite sensitive, so if you do have a cell phone close to the equipment, if you could switch it off or put it under your seat and away from the equipment, that would be very helpful.

We also have a hashtag for this event. It is #USFrance. And we'd like to welcome our C-SPAN audience who are joining us for this very special presentation by the minister. And I'd also like to acknowledge and thank our French senior fellow, Philippe Le Corre, for his work on facilitating this and other important events on current developments in France and Europe.

Minister Le Drian is here in Washington, D.C., as part of a group of defense and foreign ministers from more than 30 states who are here to forge a common approach with U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter on how to combat the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, which is clearly an issue of great importance to France, as well as the United States.

You probably have the biographical material of Minister Le Drian in the packets that you

have, but for those of you in the TV audience who clearly do not, Minister Le Drian is originally from Brittany, as is, coincidentally, our colleague Philippe Le Corre, who is going to be moderating the event. He was formerly the mayor of the city of Lorient and he's had several national level positions in France, covering defense (inaudible) before he was appointed minister of defense by President François Hollande in May of 2012. Minister Le Drian has also published a new book, which we're very excited about at Brookings because we like books. It's on security issues, "Who is the Enemy?" It's just out in English and for those of you who would like a copy, we have several copies outside, again, of the auditorium.

Minister Le Drian is going to address us here from the podium and then we will turn over to the chairs to have a discussion moderated by Philippe Le Corre along with our colleague, Senior Fellow Michael O'Hanlon, who has published many books. Perhaps it would be a discussion about the book, but knows a thing or two about defense issues, especially about the topics that Minister Le Drian is here to cover today in Washington, D.C.

Minister Le Drian, it's a great honor to host you. Thank you for joining us today and thank you for the audience, also, for coming. Sir, the podium is yours. Merci beaucoup. (Applause)

MINISTER LE DRIAN: Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, first of all I'd like to thank you for your invitation. It's with great pleasure that I'm here and I will talk here at The Brookings Institution, in this house which has just celebrated this year its centenary. One century which is a difficult century in which thinking, being able to stand back away from the sometimes frightening events that we are living should help us to improve our analysis and the efficiency of our action.

As you know, France has just been hit one more time in this, on the day of a national holiday by an extremely violent terrorist action. This is the third time in only 18 months, without mentioning all the attempts that have been foiled. This is the tragic information that something we were already certain of in France. France, its society modeled the quality of its democratic life, its art of life are unbearable in the eyes of those barbarians who want to hit us.

As a state, the situation gives us a number of duties. The first is to guarantee the safety of our citizens. In all legitimacy, French people want increased security, but at the same time they want to preserve their mode of life, including their liberties, which are at the very basis of our social contract.

Who then is this enemy who is targeting us? I would like to try with you to define specifically the shapes of the threat on us and how it is possible to face it as efficiently as possible. We have to start from a simple fact: today a number of terrorist groups around the major (inaudible) Daesh -- that is, ISIS and al-Qaida -- are ready to use any means to hit us with, as an objective, not to beat us militarily because this fight is lost in advance, but in order to put us in a state of stupefaction, hoping that our institutions are going to vacillate. And ISIS is a multi-shaped enemy in this way.

It can be seen in three different shapes, which are closely linked. If it is not a state, legally speaking, strategically it is a proto-state which is trying to exercise the powers of a state. This proto-state has as a companion a transnational jihadist movement, which is partly like al-Qaida, of a vast number of groups operating through borders and all the way to our national lands. So hitting ISIS or ISIL is for us also protecting our own territory. And then, ISIS is an extremely dangerous ideology. They want to go back to the days of the caliphates and fashion in this way a new society.

I'd like to insist on this by saying that, in my opinion, ISIS is a fully totalitarian enterprise. Why? It is based on a geological basis which is deeply unequal, by putting human beings in hierarchal groups who are higher and lower, all the way to reintroducing slavery in its most object way, the sexual slavery of the Yazidi women. It is based on an eradication will of all the groups opposed to the caliphate. It is based on the mobilization of a number of society, financial, and human resources on the service of a permanent fight against the rest of the world. And it is based on a very strict police control of population, under an extreme violence, like we can see in the executions performed in the territories dominated by ISIS.

This multiform shape calls for a number of reactions to traumas. Militarily we have to destroy this jihadist proto-state. At the level of the police and the judiciary, we have to protect our citizens under national territory and the French army is contributing to this today because the adversary itself and its kind of terrorism has been militarized.

At the economic level, drying out the recruiting by ISIS of jihadists will go through de-modification of its financial resources. And lastly, at the political and ideological level, we have to use every means available to fight against the influence of ISIS. Our efforts, in particular, should go on the

FRANCE-2016/07/20

cyber field to fight against what I would call the virtual caliphate, which could be reinvested as the physical caliphate is moving backwards in Syria and Iraq.

The threats represented by ISIS is new in the way it is shaped, but not by its nature. Domaining a territory and creating a proto-state, managing a population already existed in Mali in 2012 with Acme, and using terror against civilians in Baghdad, as in Paris, as in Istanbul, as in Brussels, whereas the will to major societies resisting more fragile is something not new. And the American people is in a better place than most others to know this.

Our action should adapt to the fact that the threat is continuous, they're targeting us far from our borders, just as well as at the heart of our lives. Our actions should be external and internal at the same time. We must call on a number of instruments, starting from our armed forces deployed in the eastern Mediterranean on the Sahel, all the way to the intelligence services, police, and justice, without forgetting the capacity of civil security to face the enemy when we are attacked.

And as this is the field I have the most interest in, allow me to center what I'm going to say on the military side of action led by France against these terrorist armed group threatening us. France is not a country that goes to war for pleasure, but it can recognize the fact that sometimes wars are imposed on it. It was the case in 2001 in Afghanistan, when we intervened out of solidarity with our American allies. And this is the case today, as well.

In 2003 we were brave enough to say that the Iraq war should not be led -- there were other ways and risks were immense. I don't see this to insist on the fact that we were right, that's not what I want to say. I simply observed that when France goes to war, it's because it has very well-founded reasons to do so. In Syria and Iraq, France is not fighting terrorism in general. We are not fighting a war against terrorism, but against well-identified enemies which have led to acts of war or destabilization at the very heart of our territory, and with which no negotiation is obviously possible. These groups should be destroyed.

I want to repeat here that the idea according to which we could buy our tranquility by fighting only ISIS is meaningless. ISIS's program is without any ambiguity. It's the world of a national body caliphate. If we let in the strength that is empowered on the Middle East, it would have even more

FRANCE-2016/07/20

resources, more fighters, more capacity to plan to hit us, just as they did last in November, when a non-commando was projected at the very heart of Paris, according to a very precise plan that had been elaborated for a long time.

The French contribution to this campaign of the coalition, which justify my presence here in Washington today, is significant. We are training in Baghdad the members of an elite corps against terrorism. We are training the Iraqi army. We work hand-in-hand with the Peshmerga. Our aircraft are mobilized and, since September 2014, have hit the coalition and its targets almost daily. These actually made it possible, with all of the coalition under the leadership of the United States.

All of this has allowed us to reach extremely important results. I'm thinking of the liberation of Fallujah, which is a major symbol as it was the first major city controlled by ISIS when it started acting. I am thinking of the imminent loss of Manbij, which will cut ISIS from its last access to the external world. I'm thinking of the taking of Khira, which make it possible now to very concretely plan or move towards Mosul, one of the major centers of the terrorist organization.

All of this makes it possible for us to see the moment, very soon I hope, when ISIS will have lost its territorial domination in the advance for the Near East. This will reduce its capacity to act against us and to plan complex attacks over the long term. We know that, as I've already mentioned, the terrorist attacks of November 2013 were planned and designed and prepared from Syria, and in particular from Manbij and Raqqa, with the projection of commandos into France through the immigration flows and the transfer of resources from the Middle East to Europe.

But this territorial loss should also allow us to hit directly at the propaganda machine of ISIS. This machine, this incubator, which makes it possible to mobilize people who have weak minds or are fanatics, who are incited, as indicated of this, to take alone the initiative of terrorist actions. I would like to mention here that the use of vehicles as a weapon in a rudimentary and violent way with the only objective to kill, is a mode of operation which has been proposed by al-Qaida already in 2010 and by ISIS in 2015.

What they want to do is terrorize, even in a totally disorganized way. What matters is to hit at symbols. The French Republic and the idea of liberty are closely linked to the national holiday of

FRANCE-2016/07/20

the 14th of July; Jews whose integration into the French Republic would have been the earliest in the Western world in 1789; the youth at the Bataclan or journalists and the press cartoonists, as was the case in the attack against "Charlie Hebdo." So we must destroy the territorial empire of ISIS because this is the heart of this organization and it's an objective that we are about to reach with the Coalition.

The terrorist organization has lost about 40 percent of its territory in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria. Its resources are much reduced now, in particular in terms of oil. And the flow of fighters helping it is progressively being reduced. At the same time, our action in the field allows us to gather an important quantity of intelligence about the ISIS. The fact that Daesh has left Manbij, where a number of French citizens were in transit, made it possible to get information which will be useful to protect the national territory from the threat that the French fighters, or foreigners, are for us. Today about 680 French are members of ISIS; 187 would have been killed and about 200 came back to France.

But they keep hitting us -- hitting us in France, in Belgium, in the U.S., elsewhere. It is our duty to reduce as quickly as possible this phase of backing up in order to hit it with decisive strikes, in order to disorganize it in a definitive way. This is the reason why, in the present phase of the operation in the Near East, the president of the Republic has announced an increase of our military contribution. The Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier will be deployed again and the support that we bring to the Iraqi forces and to the Peshmerga forces will be increased generally in Iraq.

Faced with the size of this challenge, we must have a common answer in the United States, in this perspective, are more than ever indispensable. The U.S. and France are the two major targets designated by the propaganda of the jihadist groups. The kind of threat on us remains very similar, since the individual responsible for a mass killing, as in Nice or Orlando, to the foreign fighters who are an extremely dangerous threat.

A fight against ISIS, against its metastasis and, in a general way, against Islamic terrorist groups is a fight in which both France and the U.S. work together with their allies on all the theaters. This is true in Syria, this is true in Iraq. And I must say that the excellent quality of the work relationship I have developed with Ashton Carter in the last few months, in very difficult times in France, has allowed us to have a shared strategy for the Middle East.

It is true as well in Africa, where today France is fighting against al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and other jihadist groups, with the help of the United States in terms of intelligence, transport, supplies, et cetera. These are extremely precious elements which are one of the conditions of our success. And France also benefits from the support of the United States, thanks to the vote of a special part of your loan and finance, the Section 1207 of National Defense Authorization Act for 2016, which allows your country to bring in operational aid and financial aid to states fighting against terrorism with the same strategic objective.

I see in this bipartisan support that it received, it is recognition of the efficiency of the French forces; another sign of how close our links are. And this closeness, and I am seeing this here, made it possible to bring out military relation to a unprecedented level in our recent history and, of course, I'm extremely happy about this.

The fact that the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier headed, at the beginning of 2016, the Task Force 50 is also an extremely strong sign about the high level of interoperability between the French and American forces and of the confidence on us. This was the first time that a foreign admiral was in charge of a task force including American vessels. In the same order of ideas, in the morning of this tragic 14th of July during the military parade, the fact that the Champs-Élysées was overflown by an American plane, a Hercules C-130J, followed by two French Caracal helicopters, was very important for me because it symbolized an operational cooperation which is extremely efficient in the Sahel.

Our cooperation is also extremely strong in terms of operational intelligence exchange within the special instructions given by Ashton Carter to the intelligence agencies under his authority which led to shared instructions, which I have given to my own services and to the French military command. This proximity which has been verified so many times allow us to work on difficult fights like this hand-in-hand.

In Libya, the fact that ISIS had been pushed back, particularly in Surt, is a very positive signal. We support the national government which must be at the head of an inclusive security system. This effort must rely on the constitution of a real Libyan army, an army which is not putting together a number of militia, but it should represent the diversity of the country.

This effort must be strengthened by the effective application of embargo on armaments to Libya for ISIS and al-Qaida, which has been recently authorized by the Security Council with a very strong and robust mandate given to this mission called Sophia. France contributes to this mission with naval means to guarantee the control of the suspect vessels which feed the terrorist groups in Libya with weapons.

Further, through our fight against the jihadist terrorist groups is a very close relation between France and the U.S. should also allow us to face the threat of force and other challenges which are emerging in terms of security. I think, for example, of the (inaudible) which should be ours, faced with Russia. Like the president of the Republic said in Warsaw, France and NATO are in a strictly defensive posture. We do not threaten anyone, but, however, we have to guarantee the safety of the member states of the alliance, in particular the most fragile of those members. And this is the reason why France will take part, starting in 2017, to the advanced presence of allied troops in the East, and most specifically in Estonia.

But among these security challenges I also have in mind the Southern China Sea where we maintain that it is necessary to contribute to reduce tensions, guided only by international law which guarantees the freedom of circulation in the maritime space and constitute a stabilizing element of the international order. If we let this right be challenged somewhere, it will be challenged everywhere.

There is another aspect -- more political, this one -- which comes to mind, the way that we will have to go along with the Brexit in the field of defense. It is not up to me as minister of defense to give my opinion on the will of the British people or to comment on internal political decisions or to make positions on what diplomatic mechanism should be used, but I cannot disinterest my attention from the geo-strategical impact that this major decision will have on the strategic balances in the future of Europe. And I hope that we'll be able to find modalities for the separation which will preserve stability of the European continent.

There are some causes for concern here that we have to look at squarely. They are three kinds, I think. First of all, we have to avoid that the United Kingdom would fall back into itself and it might be totally absorbed by negotiation on separation. It would not be, for us, in the interest of the

FRANCE-2016/07/20

British, with whom we have excellent relations in terms of defense, to turn its back on Europe or the world. That's what we have told them. That's what we have written in the British press. At least that's what I've done. And that's what we'll keep telling them.

In the same way, we think that it is not anymore in the interest of Europe to look at the separation with revenge in mind. Secondly, we have to avoid disuniting Europeans within the European Union because this would have a negative impact on its cohesion and the unity of NATO, which we have just reaffirmed in Warsaw.

Thirdly, we have to avoid that Europe would lose its position as a major actor of security, as a compliment to the American power further than the projectory aspects, which are obvious. The exit from the EU of the only other nuclear and expeditionary power could reinforce the position of countries which do not wish to see Europeans take charge of their own security. This is a major subject, a personal preoccupation for me.

And the state of mind in Berlin as shown by the most recent German white book is an excellent thing. And I will continue to work closely with Ursula von der Leyen to propose two European modalities to reinforce the defense of Europe. In the interest, also, of Americans which regularly call for a better sharing of the weight of defending the two sides of the Atlantic, but I remain confident. I'm confident because we still see the signs of a British will to keep working with the rest of Europe and to maintain a strong presence on the international scene.

I'm confident because I see the capacity for mobilization of France and of Europeans. First of all, bilaterally, France will continue to help with the United Kingdom -- an extremely rich defense relationship in an international context. It calls for pragmatism. The United Kingdom remains our partner in Europe, which has the will and the capacity to intervene in the world. It remains a nuclear power in a very uncertain world. The strengths of our defense relation, strengthened by the treaties of Lancaster House and the strengths of our links, will allow us to wait against all temptation of strategic stepping back.

Paris and London have recently validated the concept of the common joint expeditionary force which should be able to be the prime force if such a situation called for it. Furthermore, we worked to re-launch the European Project within the redefinition of the security policy, the PSDC. Brexit is a

symptom, we have to analyze the causes for it and give a sense to the European Project for our citizens.

Security is a major provision for our society and Europe will be a major actor of their own security or it will fail. This is a file on which we are working a lot at the time. Any troubles, strategic and political context, ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that the French-American friendship is stronger and more important than ever. It is shown in the fight that we are waging together now against the jihadist terrorist groups which are threatening us. It also gives us a special responsibility to go along with the geopolitical changes that is Brexit.

And further than the interest that we are sharing at the moment, the American-French relation is very deep because its roots go back into past, more than two centuries of strong solidarity when we are about to commemorate, in particular, the century of the giving into war of your nation in the First World War, next to ours. This friendship is a real story and when there are people on both sides of the Atlantic which are calling for closing up onto one's selves, this is an element we should never forget.

For all these reasons, in this electoral year for both our countries, I wish that the Franco-American friendship grows even stronger and that our defense relationship keeps deepening. We all have, including yourselves, a major role to play in this. Thank you very much for your attention.

(Applause)

MR. LE CORRE: Well, thank you very much, minister, for this very powerful speech. I'm delighted to be here with you and I welcome you at Brookings. Thank you, Fiona, for your nice introduction. Thanks to Michael O'Hanlon for being here, one of our best defense experts here at Brookings and the director of research for the Foreign Policy program.

Minister, I read your book just before you arrived and I recommend it to the audience. And there's one point in particular which attracted my interest, one sentence: "There is no internal enemy. If the fighter is in Syria or in Iraq, he is an enemy. If he's a terrorist on national territory, he is a criminal."

Before asking Mike to take over for his comments, I just wanted to remind everybody that the French military is quite involved in protecting French citizens domestically, which is somewhat new and somewhat unusual for the military. But let me turn to you, Mike, and perhaps ask you some comments about the minister's speech and how you see transatlantic relations in the sector of

FRANCE-2016/07/20

counterterrorism, in particular?

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thank you, Philippe, and good afternoon, everyone. And, Mr. Minister, it's an honor to be with you. I'd like to begin my brief remarks by thanking our brothers and sisters in France for the alliance that's now 240 years old. You had a very tough Independence Day last week. We had a very good and happier -- luckily -- Independence Day 10 days prior, and it's the 240th anniversary of the United States, which exists largely because of France and which continues to protect itself and its citizens and its allies working with France. So I just wanted to say thank you and, also, I know that all of our hearts are with you in these difficult times for all of us, but especially in France in recent days.

Secondly, I wanted to just underscore my appreciation for the specifics of what you said in your speech about what we're doing today, together on the battlefield and intelligence cooperation, and in so many other ways, and just to very quickly highlight two main aspects. The main aspects are simply this: In many places we're working together, hand in glove. In Iraq and Syria, for example in Afghanistan through about 2012. But the second key point is that in many places France is doing things that is much different and complementary to what the United States is doing, for which we benefit enormously. And Mali, of course, is the case study here. It's the most prominent recent example.

But, of course, France also has a very important relationship throughout much of the Middle East and North Africa. And the Tunisian model -- and obviously Tunisia and France have a lot of history going back -- the Tunisian model in some ways represents still the best last hope for the Arab Spring. And I want to wish our, again, brothers and sisters in France and Tunisia well, and commend the French for their role there.

So in many places in this broader struggle against extremism, France is doing things that are leading the way. In other cases, they are doing things that are complementary to us or in conjunction with what we're doing. And it really varies across the entire broader Middle East region. I think that point is worth underscoring, that France is an independent actor and also very often a very good guide or advisor to our action, and the debate we have internally is often very healthy.

As you pointed out in your speech, on Iraq policy we disagreed and many Americans

would now look back and say that France was right. But regardless of who was right, we didn't dwell on the disagreement. We focused on the path forward. So that's the other point to underscore.

And then, finally, and then I'll stop here, I still do have some questions and concerns about the state of overall Western policy in this broader struggle against violent extremism against talk theory extremism. If you want to call it Islamic extremism, call it what you will, depending on which convention you're following or which party you're a member of, I think we all know what we're talking about.

And the point is that we're doing relatively well in some places, we have a long way to go in others. And the two specific countries in the broader Middle East where I'm still most concerned about overall Western strategy are Syria and Libya. I'm not yet persuaded that we are on the right track in either place, and so maybe I'll just leave it at that for now, hoping we'll come back to these issues.

This is not a critique of French policy in the first instance. This is more a questioning really of American policy, especially in regard to Syria, where I think we are more clearly in the lead. Maybe our European friends are more clearly in the lead in Libya, but in both these countries I think we have to ask if we've settled yet on the right strategy and if we need to have a little more fundamental debate about first principles.

But in general, I just want to say it's an honor to be on the stage with the French minister of defense and I appreciate very much what France is doing to help our security, as well as its own.

MR. LE CORRE: Minister, perhaps you could answer to that? And I'd like to know, also, on this Washington summit that you've been taking part in today and which is carrying on tomorrow, do you expect an international coalition to produce results? And do you expect the United States, in particular, to -- you alluded to this in your speech -- provide some help to the current wave of terrorism that is taking place in Europe?

MINISTER LE DRIAN: In order to answer your questions -- and I'll come back to what you said. I said earlier, and I'll say it even stronger right now, I mentioned the reasons why we absolutely have to attack the very heart of ISIS, that is to say the territorial realm of ISIS, because their territory has not the will to create a caliphate, territorial caliphate. Well, it's that in part, but not only that. It is also a

FRANCE-2016/07/20

place where they organize terrorists' actions in the entire world. In France, we've been hit many times, the U.S., as well; and others: Russia, Tunisia, Indonesia, Egypt. I mean, there's a long list and I've forgotten some. And it is from this place that all these actions are planned and plotted.

And then number three, this is what I was calling the incubator. That is to say this place that spreads certain contamination, the individual act, the lone wolf that we saw in Nice. You saw it in Orlando yourself, which gives people who are not quite right in their mind an action which is then claimed by ISIS. So in order to stop all this, first of all, we have to hit the center, even if it's not enough, but at least we have to do that and start with that.

Since we started the coalition, the coalition exists. It is alive and well. It started after the Newport Summit, and broad results, I was listing some of the results earlier. ISIS has lost a lot of surface of land, of real estate, and they're losing a lot of real estate. They are losing their image. They are getting weaker. Their image is weakening because they are about to lose. They are not always winning.

And thanks to the coalition, ISIS has seen its income quite reduced, quite. As soon as the coalition was well organized, when we supported the Iraqi forces, we supported the Kurdish forces, and we also intervened on the command centers, on financial resource centers such as oilfields, and on logistic points, like roads. So we disorganized them. Now what is left -- and this is why we are meeting today and we're going to meet tomorrow. Today was the defense ministers, tomorrow it's defense ministers and foreign affairs ministers, over 30 people.

Now we have to go to the next step. It's going to take some time, but we are in a new configuration. Our aim now is Mosul and Raqqa, the decision centers, the logistics centers, the major centers of ISIS action. Its terrestrial caliphate, its virtual caliphate is there. And they're the ones who encourage all these lone wolves everywhere, and so we are now working on our different plans for this decisive action. Our global security is at stake, not only the security of the local countries.

I think that what we are discussing is going the right way and I wanted to mention that. You asked me about two or three other topics.

On Libya, which is a major problem, also, because ISIS is in Libya, around Surt, but not only around Surt; with some who came from the Levant, from the Middle East, but they're not the majority;

with some local freelancers and also with other foreign fighters who also have made it to Libya. In a state which has a hard time existing, which is dislocated right now, we have to be extremely vigilant so that the actions that we're going to start in the future be globally planned together in Syria and in Raqqa, Mosul, but also which should be the same logic as what we intend to do in Libya, where they have a government. Mr. Sarraj is there. And I said earlier that we absolutely must support him. He's still not quite secure and we have to intervene with the National Libyan Army, with different militias coming from Tripoli. All this has to be unified around a national union government that's recognized by everybody and validated by the Security Council. And we have to see that they help us eradicate ISIS in Libya. You were talking about Libya, right?

Libya is a country that is quite special because beyond ISIS it's a place for all kinds of trafficking: weapons and drugs, human beings, migrants. Everything is trafficked there. And if, unfortunately, ISIS groups were to lay their hands on all these groups, on all these traffickers, it would be a lot worse for our security. So that's the way we are moving right now. When I say "we," we with all the pressure that we can use and the action that is going to take place thanks to the naval force called Sophia will control the flows of arms. This is the task of the European Union, but also with the Security Council decision.

You mentioned the interior enemy in the book that I have written. I said that the exterior - there are enemies inside, they are criminals. Of course, the interior enemy, his vocation would be, if it were an enemy, would be to take over, but that's not their vocation. Their vocation is to destabilize. That's why I made a distinction between the label that we give them. And people who act like this on French territory, they are criminals. They should be treated as criminals.

And you also mentioned the presence of our armed forces on the national territory. It is true that this is new. It's never happened before to have like we have now, 10,000 troops patrolling the national territory, our streets around sensitive spots where there's a lot of people, train stations, airports, where people gather, and especially in the summertime when we have sports or different cultural manifestations, and on our borders. But this is not the mission of armed forces.

In France, we have what we call the white paper, which very regularly decides on the

FRANCE-2016/07/20

different orientations that the country wants to take for its future security and future defense. This exercise started in 1972. And since 1972, there were five or six white papers. I think it's the sixth one. Every new white paper insisted on the necessity for our military to ensure the protection of the territory. I mean, this is the vocation of an army normally.

And we had a different interpretation when we decided to do away with the draft. Because back then, in France, we called it the operational defense of the territory because we had a draft for this kind of mission especially. Sometimes they could ask themselves what the use could be, but this was in the white paper. And in the 2008 white paper, this was not under François Hollande, but it was under Nicolas Sarkozy, the 2008 white paper says that our armies have to ensure interior protection. And in the white paper, and I wrote a lot of it for 2013, we have repeated and we have commitments with figures, so the president, when there is a crisis, such as is the case right now, the president can mobilize on the national territory a certain number of troops in order to ensure security. So this is a long story except that it is not written as such in the white paper.

I think I answered part of your questions.

MR. LE CORRE: (inaudible) how you felt about the transatlantic cooperation at this very moment, especially when it comes to counterterrorism and the emergence of the new actors that the minister is talking about in his book; and the fact that, you know, there are lone wolves as well as organized camps or tacks as we've seen in Europe. Do you feel services are cooperating enough perhaps at the European level as well as a transatlantic level?

MR. O'HANLON: Excellent question, Philippe. It's always easy in difficult times to say we're not doing well, and obviously there's a lot of room for improvement. But I'm still struck at how well we are cooperating in many domains. Let me begin, if I could, on the Russia issue and the Warsaw Summit because the minister, of course, spoke about that, as well.

And even though Americans are often frustrated that most NATO allies, unlike France, do not meet their goals for burden-sharing of spending 2 percent of their gross domestic product on their armed forces, most European countries don't come anywhere close to that standard; France does. But despite the fact that we're frustrated by burden-sharing, we made some important decisions together as

FRANCE-2016/07/20

an alliance to sustain, I think, more or less just the right amount of military capability in the Eastern NATO member states, which I saw personally.

We can have plenty of disagreements about this, of course, but I saw personally it's just about the right response, clarifying, if there were any doubt, that NATO views an attack on one as an attack on all; that the Eastern member states are just as important as anyone else. Even though of us who were dubious about NATO expansion, including myself, at this point would generally say that. There can't be any appearance of daylight between us. And the Warsaw Summit, largely because of French leadership, accomplished the goals that I think it needed to. That was crucial.

Also, the European Union, with or without Britain, has been sustaining economic sanctions on Russia, which I consider the other key pillar of our broader strategy for dealing with the Central European crisis of today. And Europe is a lot more vulnerable on this front, of course, as you well know, Philippe, than we are. A lot more trade with Russia. And the fact that Europe has held together -- and, in my opinion, will continue to hold together even in the event of Brexit, even in the reality of Brexit -- on this issue is crucial.

So I think the deterrence of Russia has been actually, despite all the problems, the lack of burden-sharing, the difficulties of how to handle the situation, we've been together as an alliance and it's been very, very important.

On the intelligence sharing, and I'll finish on this point, there's obviously a long ways to go. Our colleague Bruce Riedel has just offered a suggestion to France specifically that it creates something like a national counterterrorism center, not unlike what we created here after 9/11, which our good friend Nick Rasmussen runs today and which assembles a lot of the relevant information on terror watch lists, makes sure this information is collected in real time, and shared at the right level.

But it wasn't just the creation of that. It was the way in which New York City and other cities then worked to cooperate through the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, the FBI, many other things, some of which we're working on at a project at Brookings with JPMorgan Chase that I have the pleasure of co-directing with General Ray Odierno. There have been a lot of things we've done, but there have been a lot of things France has done. And I think France probably has a ways to go in improving its

FRANCE-2016/07/20

domestic coordination, but they're good.

And I remember back in the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of colleagues here were studying France for how to deal better with this terrorist threat because we started to see al-Qaida rising in the mid-1990s. And France, in many ways, showed us the way on how to deal in real time with the kinds of threats to national territory that have, of course, experienced since then.

So, yes, there's a long ways to go, but, again, I would say that France is one of the leaders in this area along with the United States at this point. You know, we need more countries like France and Britain and the United States. A number of continental European countries need to up their game. And France may need to consider a couple additional reforms like this concept of a national counterterrorism center, but overall I'm fairly impressed; fairly impressed even in these dark days how well we're holding together as a Western alliance.

MR. LE CORRE: Minister, I'd like to ask you a question about Nice because it happened all of a sudden really last week on July 14th. And the first part of my question will be how do you reassure the French public after such traumatic attacks, three of them in less than a year?

And secondly, on the military, how do you deal with a military force that is obviously a little bit overstretched with not only the external operations, but also the domestic ones? And that is basically, in many cases, doing the job of the police. And I'm sure the police is also overstretched, but this is obviously a big problem for a country of a certain size, but it's not unlimited, especially with no military service, as you mentioned in your talk. So I'd like to hear your views about this since you obviously were on the spot with the minister of interior, your colleague. And it's obviously been a big shock to a lot of us, including here in this country.

MINISTER LE DRIAN: On the first question on the transatlantic cooperation, I must say that it is based on a very strong confidence, confidence between the ministers, but also distrust has reached all levels of decision-making as has not been the case for a long time. And as I've said, Ashton Carter had decided to provide special instructions about intelligence and that, of course, we did it, as well, in reciprocity. This led us to establish an incredible trust in many fields and this is not going to stop. Following, of course, ISIS, following terrorism all this came about, but I think it should go on. And the

military people in operation, when I can see them, they confirm this when it comes to training, to intelligence, to decisions.

About Warsaw, first of all, I will be a little more modest than you were and I will defend my own case. We are not at 2 percent. France is not at 2 percent of the defense forces as the NATO Summit in Wales requested. We are at 1.8. Well, that's not so bad, but we want to reach the 2 percent. And others are much lower, of course, you are right.

But what was important in Warsaw was unity, make sure that the basic core of NATO is reaffirmed, and this is what has happened. There could have been distortions and I think that we were able to take the right decisions to make sure that there will be a real reassurance for the Eastern countries in relation to their concerns about a Russian presence. But this reassurance is based on reality and it is not going to lead necessarily to breaking up of the dialogue. And with Russia you have to be firm, as we were, but you also have to keep possible dialogue ways.

And other risks, other threats were also taken into account because the South. We have been talking a lot about it now during these meetings, but also the necessity to make sure that what is at stake in terms of cyber defense, naval defense, hybrid threats, et cetera, make sure that these concepts which did not exist a few years ago be taken into consideration by the allies, but also the subject of sharing complementary with the European Union. So I think this summit was extremely useful and it made it possible to reaffirm our unity.

Now, on reassuring the French, it's true that the country has been traumatized. It is true that this is exactly what ISIS was looking for, and fear to prevent our mode of living, to create divisions among us. And it's important that people in charge, the elected people and the political powers, can overcome this situation. This is not done overnight.

You mentioned the army, okay. The fact that the armed forces are visible, are present, also contribute to reassure the people. But you also have to realize that we are in a situation when one individual out of his mind had a certain death wish. And because there is this ideological speech which is propagated by ISIS do incredible things, a few days later in Germany, I think you have also seen this, another person tried to aggress people in a train. He was shot.

But this period is going to go on and it is going to stop only if we eradicate totally on its territory, but also at a level of the ideology. That destruction which would be, of course, performed by the coalition. This is what we talked about earlier. But also, to make it possible for a humanist Islam -- which exists, of course, and which is the most common practice of that religion -- to bloom. This is a sectarian radicalism that has to be fought against. And our country, but not only our country, will have to fight for quite a while. We have to be determined. We have to show unity. We have to show determination. It's a long-term work, but we have to do it. It will be easier, of course, once the territory will be won.

Now, on the question you had about the size of the armed forces, well, yes, France has a strong defense. We are intervening today in the Sahel, in the coalition in the Near East. We are also present in Lebanon. We have forces present in various places in the world. We are assuming our role as a major country in the coalition against ISIS and terrorism in other ways, in the framework of the Barkhane Operation with the support of other countries, like the U.S.

And then on our national territory this means, of course, that we've had to make the decision to strengthen the defense budget and recruit more foot soldiers of the army, which are essentially responsible for securing the national territory. This is what is being done, the weight of their presence for these soldiers. The long-term presence is heavy. Recruiting and training are being done. The situation should improve within the next few weeks, but it is also the way that we are affirming our conscience as a nation. We have to guarantee our own security. This is a question which is present for us, but also for our neighbors.

MR. LE CORRE: (inaudible) we turn to the audience to ask a few questions. I would ask that you ask real questions, not make a speech because we just had a speech by the minister.

(Laughter) So I will take three questions and ask that you identify yourselves and the minister will answer.

The lady first, please, here.

MS. SLAVIN: Thank you very much. I'm Barbara Slavin from the Atlantic Council. No one has mentioned Turkey. How do the developments in Turkey affect your ability to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria?

And also, if I may, there's a recent report that three French military personnel have died

FRANCE-2016/07/20

in Libya, where they were assisting General Haftar. And I thought you said you supported a unity government for Libya and General Haftar, as you know, has not been willing to sign on to this agreement. So I wonder how you explain French support for General Haftar. Thank you.

MR. LE CORRE: The gentleman over there. Yes. One after the other. You first and then your neighbor next to you.

SPEAKER: Okay, thanks. Jean (inaudible). Should I ask my question in French or in English?

MR. LE CORRE: English.

SPEAKER: Okay. I was also going to ask about Turkey, but my second question was, Mr. Minister, which probability do you see of what you call virtual Daesh to subside even if Mosul and Raqqa fall and the risk of having the simple Daesh inspiring acts of violence and terrorism over France or the rest of Europe over the next how many years?

MR. HUDSON: Hi. John Hudson with Foreign Policy Magazine. I basically had the same question as Barbara, but just wanted to add a question. If you could describe what the special forces were doing in Libya and what part of the country, they were operating in. Thanks.

MR. LE CORRE: Okay, I'll let you answer the three questions.

MINISTER LE DRIAN: A minister of defense is never going to make comments on intelligence activities anywhere, even if, unfortunately, some actors have paid with their life for their action. We have an institution which is the parliamentary delegation to intelligence. It's the only place anywhere in the world I would have to answer questions. But the parliamentary to whom I would answer the questions have to respect the strictest confidentiality, so I cannot answer this question.

Now, on the question about Libya, well, I think I was very clear just a moment ago it seems to me, but I will repeat if you want. We are helping the national union government directed by Mr. Sarraj, and we think that Libya should unite its forces in a coordination of all its actors, whoever they are. That's it. This has always been the position of France.

Now on Turkey. Well, Turkey was itself a victim of ISIS. There were terrorist attacks performed by ISIS. It is then one of those countries which are threatened by ISIS, that ISIS is trying to

destabilize.

Secondly, Turkey is essential to secure the border between Turkey itself and Syria. The Manbij operation, which is still going on, if it reaches a success, and this is very likely, should strengthen security on this border provided that Turkey is willing to guarantee the total closing of the border. This is what I wish, of course. We need Turkey in particular to do this. It is also in the interest of Turkey, of course, because it is itself under threat.

So I don't remember what the question was really. It was about Turkey, but following what is the recent events in Turkey, will Turkey still be part of the equation? I hope so. But as for us, the major fight is fighting ISIS. We need that partner there in the conditions I have just mentioned. This is what I could tell you concerning Turkey.

Now, the last question was the virtual ISIS. This is going to be a long fight. I don't remember who asked the question. From the moment when the broadcasters will become silent, it will be much easier. But it's going to be a long-term fight because others can take over later on, maybe not with the same strengths or the same power, but they may reproduce the same kind of activities, so we have to really aim at the death-wishing, radical, sectarian philosophy of ISIS, which can seduce weak minds and which can inspire other dramatic situations in the future.

But this morning I was very pleased to notice that the coalition wants to work on this together to fight against the ISIS action, their virtual caliphate, on social networks in particular. We have to renew messages to mobilize people in this way. This is essential, but it takes time. When we will first eliminate the platform itself it will help, of course, but that's not going to be enough.

Michael, would you like to comment?

MR. O'HANLON: I was going to say this is consistent with much of the thrust of what the minister said, that for me the importance of the U.S.-Turkey and NATO-Turkey relationships or the rest of NATO with Turkey in regard to Syria is less about Incirlik, even though that's been played up a lot in the American press, and it's more about this cooperation along the border because the Incirlik base is convenient, but it's not essential. We can figure out workarounds if we need to. They're not convenient, they're not cheap, but they exist.

By contrast, any kind of a meaningful cooperation along the border today and then in the future, if and when any of these safe haven concepts that General Petraeus, that Secretary Clinton, that others have discussed, if these begin to blossom we're going to need to reinforce them and also provide relief within them in a way that will require cross-border movement on the ground, and that requires Turkey. So for that reason and, also, for diplomatic reasons, if we get to a place where we can actually negotiate some kind of a settlement, I think we're going to need Turkey.

I don't believe we're on that path right now, by the way. I think the United States-led policy of trying to negotiate a strong unity government to replace President Assad is not promising. I'm much more interested in a confederation or Bosnia model concept. But be that as it may, when we get to a negotiation that has some promise, we're going to need Turkey in that, as well. And if we get to a peacekeeping force, which I believe any peace deal in Syria would ultimately require, we're going to need Turkey's cooperation for that, too. So Turkey is important more on the ground than it is for Incirlik in my judgment.

MR. LE CORRE: Two questions very quickly. The gentleman here. Yes.

MR. PUSCALEK: Elliot Puscalek, (speaking French). Mr. Minister, I was born in Larmor-Plage.

MINISTER LE DRIAN: So that makes three of us. He's from Lorient, me, too, and you almost, so there's three of us.

MR. PUSCALEK: You said quite rightly that criminals were people out of their mind. Unfortunately, most of them are not performing their first action. Some of them had already a long police file. So my question is more domestic. Would it be possible to have a stricter policy with people who have a title, say, in France and perhaps expel them? Would this be a contrary to the spirit of unity that you mentioned?

MINISTER LE DRIAN: The answer is very simple. Well, first of all, I'd like to specify something. I made the distinction clearly between two types of terrorist actions on the territory of our countries: those which are organized, planned, with means, logistics, or guys out of Mosul or Raqqa. There France has (inaudible) other countries, as well. It was, unfortunately, the case in January and in

FRANCE-2016/07/20

November 2015. Such movements, we have to fight against them through intelligence, cooperation with other countries, but, also, we can fight by destroying their central core.

But the other subject which is far more complicated is what has happened in Nice, one where one man, totally unknown by the police services, becomes "radicalized" very, very quickly and then acts. And there are no proven links between him and ISIS except that ISIS is claiming this attack.

Well, let's not go into this, but what he did was not indicating that there would be a possible radicalization in the future, if those crimes are real, but this is part of his history. But my major concern is the fact that this kind of risk can happen anywhere. It's totally unpredictable. So we have to fight the source.

Now, against organized groups, since the events in question legislative measures have been taken in France, a law on information, a law against terrorism, which make it possible to acquire information very efficiently. Maybe there used to be some holes in the cover and now these holes have been filled, but we have to use the system.

One last question because after that I have to leave.

SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is (inaudible) and I'm a student at American University. You've emphasized the importance of the collaboration between France and U.S. I'm curious to know how a possible means of mitigating any concerns should resources be reduced any further in the cooperation's that are currently going on.

MINISTER LE DRIAN: How can we do more? Is that a question? Yes. Well, I think that today the relationship is already at a very high level. There can be -- I'm talking about the ministers of defense and military action, intelligence action. My wish is that this level is maintained and I make no -- I don't have any thoughts about American political life, but this should last. If we can maintain it like this, like it is now, it will be an excellent thing for the transatlantic relationship.

MR. LE CORRE: Minister, we thank you for your candor and your very strong words. We feel France is in good hands, at last the French defense. It's not giving up, that's for sure. And thank you for coming to Brookings. We wish you a successful summit tomorrow and we look forward to seeing you again at Brookings in your capacity as minister or as president of the Brittany region. (Laughter) And

FRANCE-2016/07/20

the answers you didn't get are in the book. (Applause)

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