

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the Visit to Paris and Nancy, France by the Defence and  
Security Committee Sub-committee on Transatlantic Defence  
and Security Co-operation**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)**

**Paris and Nancy, France  
April 27-29, 2009**

# Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the Visit to Paris and Nancy, France by the Defence and Security Committee Sub-committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Co-operation, held April 27-29, 2009. The visit was led by Sub-committee Chair, Senator Joseph Day.

## OVERVIEW

The group, composed of 25 members of parliament from 15 different NATO and partner countries, held discussions with senior French officials and parliamentarians and visited several military facilities. The main themes of discussion included French defence planning and deployments, its approach to the Atlantic Alliance, the development of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), and the challenging evolution of security in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. The delegation also discussed French and NATO efforts on cyber-defence.

Among the conclusions taken away from the visit by the Delegation were the following:

- \* France is in the midst of a major defence reform, guided by its 2008 White Paper on Defence as well as the Multiyear Military Programme Act 2009-2014, which mark significant shifts in the French strategic outlook and mandate important modifications in its physical facilities, equipment and manpower;
- \* The full return of France into the integrated military structure of NATO, although hotly debated in France before its approval by Parliament, is in line with the evolution of French strategic thinking over the last 15 years and allows France its full position in planning for Allied operations in which it is one of the principal contributors;
- \* France currently deploys approximately 36,000 troops abroad, including 13,000 in operations in five theatres, 37% of which serve under the NATO banner;
- \* Despite the financial crisis, French defence spending is increasing and will remain substantial through 2020, and indeed is described as contributing to the government's simulative response to the crisis.

## FRENCH DEFENCE PLANNING AND REFORMS

The delegation's visit was opened by French Defence Minister Hervé MORIN. Mr. Morin described the ongoing reforms of French defence policy and institutions. A major milestone in the process was the 2008 White Paper on Defence and National Security. The Paper redefined the strategic context for defence planning and presented a new national security strategy for France, according to Mr. Morin.

The Paper codified the evolving French view that the threat of territorial conflict on the European continent had receded, but that France had to be prepared to face a wider array of challenges in an instable world and general strategic uncertainty. It identified an arc of potential instability, from Mauritania to Afghanistan, and identified potential threats from such non-traditional challenges as global warming and proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction. In the face of such a changed world, French defence also had to evolve, according to Mr. Morin.

Defence officials suggested that the White Paper emphasized five main areas:

- 1) knowledge and anticipation, through capabilities that ensured French autonomy of assessment and decision
- 2) deterrence, relying on the French nuclear force which remains the ultimate guarantee of the national security and contributes to the security of Europe
- 3) prevention of conflicts and crisis, using a comprehensive approach and relying on a balanced and legitimate international system
- 4) protection of the country against large scale crisis, as well as reinforcing national resilience against, for example, attacks against critical infrastructure
- 5) and intervention where necessary across the entire spectrum of operations, from stabilisation to high intensity warfare.

In line with the new priorities outlined in the White Paper, Mr. Morin announced in July a major restructuring of the French armed forces, which was to be subsequently approved by Parliament in the Multiyear Military Programme Act 2009-2014. The main purposes of the restructuring included an increased focus on operationally deployable forces through rationalization of spending and the elimination of redundant support structures.

More specifically, Morin outlined plans for the closure of a number of facilities, as well as the mutualisation across services of basic administrative and other support systems (to be completed by 2014). Altogether, plans called for a total personnel reduction of 54,000. In contrast to other ministries, which must return budget savings to the general budget for re-distribution, all savings generated by the restructuring would remain with the Defence Ministry, largely for investment in equipment.

Morin also stated that in addition to the above efforts, 3.7 billion euros had been budgeted over 2009-2010 to address essential unfunded budget expenditures inherited from the previous government. In all, France has planned for a defence budget increase of a scale unseen since 1958.

Josselin DE ROHAN, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee at the Senate and Head of the French Delegation to the NATO PA, underlined the importance of these measures, suggesting that it was imperative not to let our guard down in a world in which the number and complexity of crises was only increasing. France would continue to support a strong defence while seeking to spend its budgets more effectively, prioritizing operational capabilities.

One area of particular focus for new investment is the area of awareness and intelligence. Several speakers made reference to the lessons learned from the Kosovo conflict, in which France had had to rely on American satellite imagery because French assets lacked all-weather capabilities. New investments were being made to correct such deficiencies.

The French Air Force was reforming in accordance with the broader defence reforms outlined above, according to Lieutenant General Jean-Paul MARTIN, the Commander

of Air Forces Command. The closure of at least eight bases is envisaged, as well as a reorganization of the command structure. In the NATO context, the French Air Force has contributed to air policing operations in and over the Baltic's as well as Iceland, twice delegating firing control to NATO authorities – a first for French forces. France also makes an important contribution to NATO efforts in Afghanistan; approximately 600 Air Force personnel are deployed in Central Asia, with 400 in Afghanistan proper, supporting 11 to 15 combat airframes.

## **FRANCE AND NATO**

Axel PONIATOWSKI, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly, admitted that at first he had doubts about President Sarkozy's plans to reintegrate NATO's military command structure. However, on reflection, he understood that the global strategic context had changed, and that France had been moving closer to NATO for decades, participating in up to 38 of 40 NATO Committees and in all NATO operations. In this light, it made no sense to remain outside of the structures which planned operations French forces participated in. Mr. Poniatowski suggested that French influence in NATO would increase, and allow for the further development of ESDP by, for example, dispelling false impressions that France had a 'hidden agenda.' He also suggested that it was important that France would retain its full nuclear independence from NATO, a position set out by President Sarkozy from the beginning of discussions on the issue.

Several interlocutors, including Senator De Rohan, insisted that NATO and the EU must be complimentary and work together based on where each could add value. Mr. De Rohan suggested that the European Union (EU) needed independent means of action; in this light, France continued to seek solutions to develop an independent EU Military Operational headquarters, a move opposed by the UK.

Regarding France's role in NATO, Defence Minister Morin suggested that this would change little in the armed forces' day-to-day operations, other than the addition of 800-900 French officers to the NATO command structure, costing approximately 90 million euro to support.

The Defence Ministry's Colonel Philippe MONTOCCHIO described the French view of the Alliance in the context of the coming debate on a new NATO Strategic Concept. Warning that the development of a new concept had the potential to expose deep divisions within the Alliance, Montocchio suggested the exercise should not be taken for granted. He suggested that France sought a NATO that was realistic, reasonable and balanced, in which member states fully took on their responsibilities. The Alliance, whose principal mission is collective defence, must also take on other functions while not presenting itself as the solution to all security problems facing any given Ally. It must also work to continue to reform and seek ways of ensuring budgetary contributions are spent as effectively as possible. Finally, he suggested that acquiring collective capabilities in the context of one organization does not allow for the necessary flexibility to confront today's challenges; France would therefore prioritize national or multinational (groups of several states) acquisition programs.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

Discussing operations in Afghanistan and the closely linked political situation in Pakistan, Jean-Luc RACINE from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique suggested that among Pakistan's fundamental goals was to prevent the emergence of a pro-Indian government in Kabul. Within Pakistani security structures, the situation remains confused, with some elements in continuing contact with militant groups used as proxies against India in Kashmir, which turned against the Pakistani state. The expansion of militant groups and radical tactics beyond the tribal areas is a major challenge. It remained an open question whether the Taliban, in its view having gained territory both in Pakistan and Afghanistan over the last years and facing a weakened Karzai government and fading international commitment, would seek agreement to end the conflict on terms acceptable to the west.

France was deeply involved in anti-piracy operations, according to defence officials, who reminded the delegation of France's early involvement and key role in proposing the EU's Operation Atlanta. France continued to operate principally in the EU context given that organization's comprehensive and coherent military and legal approach to the problem. It was suggested that a longer-term approach would have to seek to bring regional actors to bear and encouraging them to appropriate the problem. Cooperation between NATO and the EU has been excellent on this issue.

The cyber attacks on Estonia in the spring of 2007, as well as evidence that French diplomats had been targeted by cyber-spying later that autumn, alerted the French Senate to the extent of this new and rising threat, according to

Roger ROMANI, Deputy Speaker of the Senate and author of the report

« Cyberdefence: a New National Security Issue ». Along with Patrick PAILLOUX, an expert from the General Secretariat of the National Defence, he briefed the delegation on French efforts to combat this significant threat to national security.

Cyber attacks constitute a multi-faceted threat, including for example information theft, denial of service attacks, efforts to impact critical physical services such as electricity or transportation, and battlefield efforts to disrupt military communications. The attacks are perpetrated by criminal groups, national intelligence services, and potentially terrorists groups. Mr. Romani called for increased resources for cyberdefence efforts, including money, expertise, and equipment. He also called for better organization across government agencies, the private sector, and information network operators, as well as international organizations. Finally, he commended the efforts of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in compiling a report on the subject this year, and recommended to national parliaments to also take up this critical issue if they had not yet done so.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit,  
Chair

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Visit to Paris and Nancy, France by the Defence and Security Committee Subcommittee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Co-operation
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Paris and Nancy, France
<b>DATES</b>	April 27-29, 2009
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Senator Joseph Day
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$1,269.99</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$1,270.48</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$546.40</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,086.87</b>