

## Sub-Saharan Africa and French National Security<sup>1</sup>

Christopher Griffin<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract:

Is the African continent still a strategic priority for France? Most recent discussions about France in Africa focus on the closures of French bases on the continent starting in 2022 and continuing into 2025. The reductions in prepositioned forces in West and Central Africa represents a significant loss of operational capacity for the French Army to respond to crises in those regions. Despite these setbacks, sub-Saharan Africa remains a concern for the French Government but has become less of a priority over the last three years, particularly with the French preoccupation with the Ukraine War. This paper will look at how the French Government has situated sub-Saharan Africa in its global strategic thinking after the base reorganization. The French Government has reoriented much of its military assets toward a rearmament program aimed at preparing for a high-intensity conflict in Europe. The military commitment to Africa remains a part of French strategy, however, due to concerns about the security of the French population in the region, the continuing threat of terrorism, including for the littoral states, the perceived weakness of ECOWAS after the Niger coup d'état and the influence of other actors in the region. There is also substantial disagreement within the French Government about the future of military cooperation in Africa.

### Keywords:

France in Africa;  
Military Cooperation;  
Terrorism in the Sahel;  
ECOWAS; Sahel  
Alliance; French  
Military Strategy;  
French Rearmament.

---

<sup>1</sup> DOI: <https://10.12700/jceas.2026.6.1.452>

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor/Maître de conférences in Political Science Université Catholique de l'Ouest, Nantes Campus, France; ORCID: 0000-0002-4530-5436; cgriffin@uco.fr.



## Introduction

Since 2022, France has had a series of major setbacks in its military presence in sub-Saharan Africa. The French military has had to withdraw from its bases in Mali, Senegal and Chad, and undertake a reorganization of its military relations with Côte d'Ivoire and with Gabon. The French operation in Mali was viewed as a failure, even before its official end in 2022 (Guichoua 2020), so the decline in French military power in the region was not sudden and was already in progress prior to the main series of coups d'état. In other words, the series of coups d'état that started with Mali in 2020 likely accelerated a process of French military decline that was already at work due to events in Mali.

Recent research work on the subject tends to focus on the reasons for the French failure in Mali. Certain analysts argue that France's military approach in the Sahel backfired due to the lack of a political element (Bertrand et al., 2024), while others have pointed to the lack of a sufficient understanding of local domestic political imperatives in France's partners (Guichoua 2020). Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2025) has claimed that French authorities failed to learn from previous experience in the region, which ultimately led to disaster. The subsequent series of coups d'état has attracted some scholarly attention (Akinola & Makombe 2024), but the effects on the French military presence has been addressed to a much lesser degree. Ndongo Symba Sylla (2024), has attempted to situate the coups in a larger framework, however, that characterizes the phenomenon as a revolt against residual French imperialism, *la Françafrique*.

This article intends to contribute to the literature by going beyond the Mali experience to examine the more recent phenomenon of the French military reorganization in Africa in detail. The argument is that France is in fact reorganizing and redeploying but not undertaking a full withdrawal. The second contribution is an analysis of how this redeployment fits into overall French national strategy. What is the role of Sub-Saharan Africa in France's worldwide military strategy? What is fundamentally changing in French strategy in the region? In this sense, the article does not seek to cover the entire political, economic and cultural relationship between France and its former colonial empire but focuses in on the military strategic implications of recent events on the continent. It is not a study of *Françafrique*, but of the evolution of France's military presence.

The article will first examine the larger context of current French military strategy in examining the priorities set out in key national security documents published since the outset of the Ukraine War in 2022. Second, the base closures and the French reorganization of its African forces will be examined in detail in this context. Third, the operational consequences of this reorganization for France's capacities for military action in Africa will be assessed. Finally, France's cooperation and/or conflict with other actors in the region of military importance will be addressed to demonstrate that France may no longer be the most important or the strongest external actor in the region.

### *French National Strategy after 2022*

President Macron stated on September 4, 2025, that there was a “coalition of volunteers” comprising 26 countries, who have “agreed to deploy a reassurance force to Ukraine...the day after a cease-fire or peace (Macron, September 2025).” This was just the latest statement of a French government and military turn back toward a conventional warfighting posture, which rapidly became evident after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In France’s National Strategic Review, published in late 2022, Macron stated in the introduction that the reorientation toward conventional warfare had already begun in 2017, and that by 2030, France needed to maintain “a role in the balance of power (Premier Ministre 2022, 3).” French military priorities were first to “reinforce our strategic autonomy,” notably with credible conventional forces that were integrated with the nuclear deterrent. The second focus was on shoring up European alliances and NATO. The third priority was about ensuring the stability of neighboring regions (Premier Ministre 2022, 20-21). While not absent from French strategic analysis, as we will see below, intervention in crises abroad, and in Africa in particular, had fallen farther down the list of priorities than in the post-Cold War period.

Africa was third on a list of geographical priorities for 2030 in the 2022 document, following the security of metropolitan France, and the defense of Europe and the Mediterranean area. Prepositioned forces were assumed to be still in place in Africa as far out as 2030, with the capacity to maintain a large training mission in the Sahel region as well as normal limited intervention capacities (Premier Ministre 2022, 27). This was already ambitious, given the resources to be allocated to high-intensity conventional and nuclear capacities aimed at the defense of France. A renegotiation of treaties with African partners, however, was already on the table in 2022 (Premier Ministre 2022, 43).

The worry about a Russian threat to NATO was clear in France in 2022. Russian nuclear forces were the subject of several significant studies by French think tanks as early as 2018 (Maitre 2018). The mainstream French media picked up the issue in 2022, with descriptions of the Russian Sarmat missile as capable of destroying all of France in a single shot (Gazzane, 2025). This threat, repeated in a few sources, certainly focused French political and public attention on the Ukraine conflict. *Revue de Défense Nationale*, quickly refocused many of its publications around analyses of the Ukraine War, current and future alliances, and technological developments for future high-intensity conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa were not forgotten completely in the journal, however, as we will see below.

France’s response to the Ukraine War has been to provide a large quantity of military equipment to the Ukrainian Government, in line with its NATO allies. In 2022 and

---

<sup>3</sup> A list of RDN issues and articles can be found at: <https://shs.cairn.info/revue-defense-nationale?lang=fr&tab=numeros>.



2023, France sent 420 million euros of equipment directly to Ukraine, and 900 million euros via Europe. Ukrainian soldiers were also allowed to train in France. French troops have not been deployed in Ukraine, but military assets were deployed in Romania, Estonia and Lithuania (Ministère des Armées 2024b). This large commitment by the French Army to Ukraine means that most other operational issues no longer have high priority. The French military budget also reflected both the commitment to Ukraine and the return to conventional warfare, as military spending was set to increase from 47.2 billion euros/year in 2024 to 67.4 billion euros/year in 2030 (Legifrance 2023, Article 4).

In February 2025 (Ministère des Armées 2025c), French General Rodolphe Hardy explained some of the lessons that the French Army had learned from the Ukraine War. He highlighted the importance of drones in the war, but at the same time, emphasized that the difficulty in gaining air superiority led to problems of vulnerability for ground forces on the battlefield. Being able to rely less on airpower would increase the relative importance of artillery, an arm which had been less visible in expeditionary operations over previous decades. France is also putting a great deal of importance on technological innovation for high-intensity conflict.

The Hamas attacks on Israel of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza also turned French attention away from other strategic issues. The priority after the attacks was to secure the French national territory and to also attempt to prevent what the French Government identified as a rise in antisemitism (Macron 2023). The French Navy also provided support ships for humanitarian aid for Gaza's hospitals during 2024 (Marine Nationale, January 2024). There is little to suggest, however, that France's military saw an immediate or significant terrorist threat stemming from the Middle East conflict. French officers instead looked to the war for lessons about future urban warfare, which corresponded with the new preparations for high-intensity conflict (Molinié 2023). When Iran and Israel went to war in 2025, France indicated early on that it could not intercept Iranian missile strikes from the Djibouti and Abu Dhabi bases (Barbarit 2025). Later in the conflict, however, the French Defense Minister admitted that France had shot down Iranian drones that threatened the airspace of the two French bases, without being more specific about French defensive measures (Masson 2025).

Terrorist threats remained a reality in France, and in 2024 there was worry about the possibility of an attack on the Olympic Games. This was particularly salient after the attacks on a Moscow shopping center by ISIS-K on March 22. Marc Hecker, of the French Institute for International Relations, said in an interview in January 2025 that the risk of terrorism in France was still real, with potential attacks regularly prevented (Mirkovic 2025). He argued that a few armed groups see France as in "a war against Islam," which makes it a special target. The fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban in 2021 and the Ukraine War marked a change, however, according to Hecker: "The fight against Islamist terrorism no longer appears as the main threat. The battle continues, but

with fewer resources.” He also warned about the continuing shift of terrorist groups towards Africa.

At the time of the coup d'état in Niger in 2023, the immediate French strategic concern in West and Central Africa was the security of French citizens. French parliamentary reports, however, indicated in the aftermath that French intelligence services were surprised by the Nigerien coup d'état, as “the DGSE was entirely focused on the battle against terrorism (Assemblée Nationale 2023).” The terrorist threat was seen as increasing in West Africa, but there was no indication that it was seen as a potential problem for metropolitan France, but only for the countries in the Sahel and in West Africa. Terrorism as a larger, worldwide threat continued to be taken seriously, as President Macron stated in a speech on March 5, 2025, saying that “the terrorist threat is not weakening (Macron, March 2025).

In the same speech (Macron, March 2025), the French President called for the rearmament of France as a part of a larger European project to prepare for war. He indicated the problems in the relationship with the Trump Administration in the U.S., notably, at the time, the threat of tariffs. The implicit idea of the speech was that it was no longer possible to rely on the U.S. for military support, and that the Trump Administration made any U.S. commitment unpredictable. Europe and France had to begin to make up the difference, which translated into greater French defense spending. The Military Program Law for 2024-2030 (Légifrance 2023), which was approved in 2023, already highlighted the preference for preparing for high-intensity operations. Defense spending would increase by 3% each year between 2024 and 2030, from 47.2 billion euros in 2024 to 67.4 billion euros in 2030. The focus is on procurement and improvement of heavy weaponry in the French arsenal.

In July 2025, France produced a new National Strategy Review, which was nearly twice as long as the 2022 document. Interestingly, in the introduction, President Macron put the civil war in Sudan on the same level as the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and the war between Israel and Iran (Premier Ministre 2025, 3). The President still identified the main problem as Russia, however. The other countries seen to pose threats to France were Iran and China, in that order. There was particular concern about Chinese economic influence in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, as well as the U.S. focus on the Chinese threat. The American focus on China was linked to the unreliability of the transatlantic partnership in 2025 (Premier Ministre 2025, 13-14, 20). Another major issue is the “centrality of nuclear weapons” in the policy of the major powers, which is leading France to put deterrence at the head of its list of priorities (Premier Ministre 2025, 14). Africa is seen as having problems with terrorism, organized crime and regional conflict in the cases of the Congo and Sudan. The “renegotiation” of the French partnerships in West and Central Africa is clearly seen as negative in the document, as it opened the door for “strategic competitors” with an “anti-French” agenda and “predatory strategies (Premier Ministre 2025, 16-17).” The criticism here indicates that the conclusions of the Bockel Report in late 2024 were not universally accepted in the French Government, as we have already observed above.



Drones, missiles, and other new technologies were seen as making military intervention abroad more difficult in the years to come, which ties into the assessments of General Hardy mentioned above (Premier minister 2025, 29-30). African security does not appear until the sixth strategic objective (nuclear deterrence being the first), and even then, the operations are seen as being European led (Premier minister 2025, 58). The French Government stated that “France would recenter and deepen the cooperation with countries that were interested in the French offer (in particular in training, equipment and support for the development of [defense] industrial capacities (Premier minister 2025, 64).” The message was clear: if countries in Sub-Saharan Africa wanted to work with France, it was ready to do so, but only when asked.

It is clear that, at least on paper, Sub-Saharan Africa is not high on the list of French national security priorities. What is missing in more recent analyses is the fact that this is not a new way of thinking for the French Government. As early as 1972, when the French Government published the first Defense White Paper of the Fifth Republic, African security was relegated down the list of French national security priorities. First was the security of metropolitan France, second the European continent, and third the protection of the African partners (Ministère de la Défense Nationale 1972, Chapter 1). At the same time, France frequently intervened on the continent in the period following the publication of the document (Dumoulin 1997, Bat 2012). The operations in Chad have often been addressed most frequently, but France also intervened repeatedly in the Central African Republic, in Gabon, in Côte d’Ivoire, to take just a few examples. Thus, the relegation of Africa down the list of French military strategic priorities in printed national strategy did not necessarily reflect operational realities, a situation that would persist through to the present-day. The subsequent two White Papers in 1994 and in 2013 would also maintain Sub-Saharan Africa in the third place for French national security priorities. A significant difference in the 2013 text (Ministère de la Défense 2013, 53-56) is the attempt to enlarge the scope of France’s African priorities to states outside of the Francophone network. In the 2008, White Paper, however, Sub-Saharan Africa was one of four critical zones, in a less hierarchical assessment of French strategy, and the Sahel was separated into another zone, an “arc of crisis” from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (Ministère de la Défense 2008, 43-47).

There have also been attempts to reduce the French military presence in Africa in the past. One of the more notable attempts was the introduction of the *Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix* (RECAMP) program in 1997. This was essentially to attempt to make security in Francophone Africa a multilateral affair, first in working with the European Union and subsequently with the African Union after 2002 (Griffin 2016, 901). President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009 took this further in announcing a renegotiation of the defense agreements that France signed with its former colonies at independence (Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy 2009). As is clear today, this attempt to reduce the French military footprint in Africa was called into question with the beginning of operations in Mali in 2013 as well as the less prominent Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic in that same year. The following discussion of

the French reorganization of its military presence in Africa should be seen in this context, in that previous French military reductions in Sub-Saharan Africa has not proved to be long-term, despite the region's relatively low importance in official French strategic documents.

### *The Reorganization of the French Military Presence in Sub-Saharan Africa*

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the French military has had a few setbacks in Africa since 2022. This accelerated in 2025 following the decisions of several African partners to terminate the French presence on their territories. Given the large deployments in the Sahel between 2013 and 2022, this represents a very significant reduction in French forces on the continent, but as we will see below, it is still a long way from a complete withdrawal.

On Thursday, July 17, 2025, the French military officially handed over its last military bases at Dakar to the Senegalese authorities. France had already withdrawn its remaining naval forces from Dakar in May 2024 (Groizeleau 2024). Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye announced on November 28, 2024, that he had "instructed the minister of the armed forces to develop a new doctrine for defense and security cooperation, which implies, among other things, the end to all foreign military presence in Senegal as of 2025 (Le Monde 2024a)." The French military withdrawal from the Dakar base was a significant setback for the French presence on the continent. The naval base had been designated a "*point d'appui*"<sup>4</sup> for the French Navy in the Atlantic as early as 1898 (Dramé 2007, p. 312). The French Colonial Ministry viewed Dakar as important in the immediate post-World War I period for the imperial port facilities network that encompassed at the time Diego-Suarez (Madagascar), Mers-el-Kébir (Algeria), Saigon and Fort-de-France (Martinique). It was seen as necessary in 1919 to "class the place [Dakar] as a naval base and to organize it along the same principles as the large bases in metropolitan France (Dramé 2007, p. 303)."

The Dakar base continued to be important after World War II. According to Mathieu Le Hunsec (2011, p. 45), it served as a site for maintenance and repair for French ships patrolling in the region. This in turn allowed for a continuous presence of the French Navy, even after decolonization. Dakar's naval and airbase was important for French military interventions on the continent as well, with units being deployed from that location in most cases. French amphibious units were deployed there after 1971. At the same time, the Senegalese government has never made a secret of its interest in reclaiming the territory from the French, as there were significant signals to that effect sent as early as 1970 (Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 48-49).

Another major historic French base closure occurred in 2025. The Chadian Government stated, also on November 28, 2024, that it was unilaterally ending the defense agreements with France (Laloupo 2024). The Chadian decision coincided with

---

<sup>4</sup> A useful translation of the term in English may be "support base," though it loses some of the sense of the interconnected nature of the port with the other strategic positions in the French Empire at the time.



that of Senegal, and as in Senegal, was not a new request, as the first call for full Chadian sovereignty over the three French bases dated back to 1964. French soldiers only partially withdrew from the country in the middle of the 1960s, however, and returned for major operations in 1968. Since 1975, however, there have been repeated requests for France to turn the bases back over to the Chadians (Laloupo 2024). All three bases, at Faya, Abéché and N'Djamena were concerned by the 2024 decision, and the last French troops left Chad on January 30, 2025 (France 24, 2025). President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno stated that the defense agreements were “obsolete due to current political and geostrategic realities (France 24, 2025).”

The French withdrawal from Chad comes as something of a surprise, even when considering the other base closures in the region and the history of Chadian opposition to the French presence. Chad has often been referred to as the “aircraft carrier” for France in Africa, due to the capacity for French aircraft to intervene in neighboring theatres of operation from the bases in that country (Beillard 2025).<sup>5</sup> Like Dakar, this made the country a vital base, this time as a central hub for the deployment of French airpower on a regional basis. Chad was also France’s most important ally in the initial stages of Operation Barkhane, the French stabilization mission that employed up to 5,000 French troops across the Sahel after 2014 (Griffin 2016, pp. 902-903). With Chad, France lost an important strategic position as well as a powerful regional military partner in January 2025.

Significant adjustments were also made to the base agreements in Côte d’Ivoire in 2025. President Alassane Ouattara stated on December 31, 2024, that the Ivorian Army’s “modernization had been achieved” and that “Port Bouët would be ceded back to the Ivorian Armed Forces in January 2025 (Le Monde 2024b).” The timing of the announcement, which coincided with that of the presidents in Senegal and in Chad, was not a coincidence, and may also have to do with the presidential elections in October 2025, in which Ouattara won another term in office. The transfer of power was effective on February 20, later than had originally been announced. The base has been renamed “Camp militaire Ouattara-Thomas d’Acquin.” France’s Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu was present at the handover ceremony (Courrier International 2025).

Unlike in Senegal and in Chad, the French Army did not withdraw completely from Côte d’Ivoire. According to the French Army Ministry, about 80 soldiers will remain in place<sup>6</sup> in what is being called a *Détachement de liaison interarmées en République de Côte d’Ivoire* (Joint Forces Liaison Team in the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire) (DLIA-I). This unit will cooperate with Ivorian forces for training, joint exercises and possible joint operations. It can be reinforced as necessary. The main priorities are fighting terrorism, maritime security, dealing with migration and the theft of natural resources (Ministère des Armées 2025a). Côte d’Ivoire has not had to deal with major terrorist attacks coming from the Sahel in recent years, but some analysts suggest that the country may face problems soon (Tull 2024). The partial French deployment could potentially

---

<sup>5</sup> The term was also used for the Central African Republic base in the 1990s.

<sup>6</sup> In 2024, there were between 900 and 1000 French soldiers in Côte d’Ivoire.

support a large operation in the case of a major assault or significant attacks in the northern part of the country. A major training exercise at Bouaké in May 2025 was also aimed at improving interoperability between the French and Ivorian air forces for future operations (Ianni 2025, p. 83).

Gabon is the final piece of the puzzle for understanding the French base reorganization of the first half of 2025. Unlike in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, the coup d'état in Gabon in August 2023 did not lead to an anti-French backlash. The military authorities sought to avoid a situation in which French interests would be targeted (Molinié 2024). In November 2024, Jean-Marie Bockel, President Emmanuel Macron's special envoy to Africa, returned from a fact-finding mission to the continent with a report that recommended the reduction of French prepositioned forces in Africa from 2,300 to 600 soldiers (not counting Djibouti). Bockel's son, Lieutenant Pierre Bockel, was killed in a helicopter accident on operations in Mali in November 2019 (Lepiouff 2019). Bockel's report was drafted prior to the requests for the total withdrawal of French forces from Chad and Senegal. Bockel argued that the main strategic issues in Gabon were maritime security and forest preservation, which implicitly allowed for a reduction in French forces at the Libreville base (Assemblée Nationale 2024, 12).

"Camp de Gaulle" in Libreville has been rebranded as an "*Académie militaire*" with significant French force reductions. The emphasis has been put on joint training missions and the development of the regional military training school located on the base (Hivert 2024). As in Côte d'Ivoire, the French Forces in Gabon have become a *Détachement de liaison interarmées* (DLIA-G). There will ultimately be 200 French soldiers in Gabon, down from 350 in 2024, and 900 before the coup d'état, in what is mainly intended as a training mission. Two further new elements of the DLIA-G are the opening of a commando school for the equatorial forest region (Ministère des Armées 2025b) and a new Academy for the Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources (*l'Académie pour la protection de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles* (APERN)) (Ianni 2025, p. 83).

At the regional level, France has reorganized its forces into a single military command structure in the region, the *Commandement pour l'Afrique* (CPA). This command, formed in April 2024 and officially launched in January 2025, is directly attached to the French Chief of Staff (Etat-Major), but is under the authority of the diplomatic missions in the region (Ministère des Armées 2024a). This is intended to maintain close cooperation between the French Embassies in West and Central Africa and French military units. The command is in Paris, and its first commander was General Pascal Ianni.

General Ianni, in a 2025 article for France's primary defense journal, *Revue de Défense Nationale* (RDN), highlighted the role of the rise of anti-French sentiment in sub-Saharan Africa. He even claimed that there were efforts at "subversion," particularly online, that contributed to a fundamental mistrust of the "former colonial power," by the younger population (p. 78). Throughout his analysis of the situation, General Ianni



continued to insist on the importance of the increase in false information about the French presence in the region and the dangers that posed for the French Army (p. 79).

Ianni laid out four common priorities for cooperation between France and the countries of Central and West Africa in 2025:

1. Fighting terrorism
2. Eliminating illegal trafficking in drugs, weapons and people
3. Protecting the environment and natural resources
4. Responding to climate change (p. 79)

This is a significant reorientation from the earlier priorities of the French prepositioned forces system, which focused on defending partner states from external attack and internal unrest. A “lighter footprint” was seen as necessary for French forces in the region (p. 80).

In the space of three years, France lost access to the bases in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Chad, and has significantly reduced its presence in Côte d’Ivoire and in Gabon. The main French operational base on the continent, with 1,500 soldiers, is now Djibouti. The French government renewed its treaty for the use of that base with Djibouti’s government in 2025 and pays 85 million euros/year for that privilege (Sénat 2025). The Djibouti base in turn is supported by the 700 soldiers present at the Abu Dhabi base. Despite this reduction, it remains a reorganization, and not a total withdrawal of French forces from the continent.

### *The Operational Consequences of the French Military Reorganization in Africa*

The question is whether this reorganization presents a major barrier for French intervention in Africa and to what extent it was seen as a setback for France. Despite Bockel’s report, which called for a significant rethink of French partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa, not all French politicians agreed with this approach. A French Senate report of January 2025 (Sénat 2025) argued that the French military reorganization on the continent was badly managed and negotiated. The report argued that “French prepositioned forces allowed for emergency interventions,” notably in Mali in 2013, which used units in Chad, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire to stop the insurgent offensive. The same year saw the French intervention in the Central African Republic employ French forces from Gabon, Chad and Djibouti, and the operational headquarters was in Gabon. More recently, the evacuation of French and other foreign citizens from Sudan in Operation “Sagittaire” in 2023 also relied on prepositioned forces.

The same Senate report (2025) pointed to the fact that the French drawdown would limit the capacities for French soldiers to evacuate its citizens in the region, notably due to longer time needed for deployments from metropolitan France. The prepositioned forces system and the base infrastructure allowed for much more rapid military responses. The initial operations of the troops in place could buy time for metropolitan units to be deployed in the region. In 2025, the Senate claimed that there were 270,000 French citizens in Africa, and that their security had not been considered in the

renegotiation of the defense agreements. Finally, the Senate pointed to the competition with “new” actors on the continent, notably an increase in Chinese military cooperation with Gabon as well as the move by the United States to establish bases in West Africa. The report ends by arguing: “the French bases were perceived by other powers as occupying strategic positions. The reduction or closure of the bases risks being seen by France’s competitors as a cry for help.”

The closure or reduction of so many bases will result in a limitation of French expeditionary capacities. French airlift capacity remains limited, and the A400M transport aircraft has had a large share of problems. Janes reported in 2024 that Airbus said, “Risks remain on the qualification of technical capabilities and associated costs, on aircraft operational reliability, on cost reductions, and on securing overall volume as per the revised baseline (Jennings 2024).” The future of French military air transport remains uncertain, and recent evacuation operations in Sudan and Niger put a great deal of pressure on the existing fleet (Lagneau 2023).

France’s permanent naval presence in the Gulf of Guinea will also potentially be called into question due to the loss of the Senegal base. France maintained naval forces in the area throughout the period after decolonization (Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 69, 92, 114, 131). In 1990, France established Operation Corymbe, which was designed to deal with possible crises in the region and to maintain a permanent naval presence. A definition of Corymbe’s mission in 2002 reads:

*“Similar to prepositioned forces, it was a mission to have a combat ship present off the African coast, notably in international waters off the Gulf of Guinea. The mission was to show that France maintained an interest in the Gulf countries, and to be able to support all necessary operations in the zone, notably for rescue or for the evacuation of our citizens”* (Assemblée Nationale 2002, cited in Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 193-194.

The Yaoundé naval agreement in 2013, which created the “Yaoundé Architecture” also allowed for cooperation between the states in the area with French support for operations and naval exercises (Marine nationale 2024). For the moment, there are no public indications that Corymbe or that the cooperative structures based on the Yaoundé Architecture are endangered by the base closures. It is clear, however, that the French Navy will have a much more difficult time maintaining the continuous French naval presence without the facilities available at Dakar.

The closing of French bases will almost certainly limit the capacity for military intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa over at least the medium term. The question is, however, how much of an impact this setback will have on overall French global strategy and national security? President Macron’s Special Military Advisor (*Chef d’Etat-Major Particulier* – CEMP) from 2017 to 2020, Admiral Bernard Rogel, wrote in his memoirs that the French military after the Cold War focused more on expeditionary operations, in Afghanistan and Africa. This was seen as way by the service chiefs not



only to respond to crises but also to maintain spending on defense (Rogel 2025, 124-125). Previous experience, as detailed in the sections above, have shown that even when France relegated Sub-Saharan Africa to a lower level of strategic priorities and attempted to drawdown forces, the interventions continued. It will be more difficult for France to intervene quickly in crises in the region, but the 2013 operations indicate that when France claims that it is reducing its military footprint in Africa, that this can be reversed quickly, despite the operational obstacles involved.

### *French Cooperation and Conflict with New (and Old) Actors in Sub-Saharan Africa*

As mentioned above, the French Government and military have tried to work with regional organizations for African security since the RECAMP program in the late 1990s. A more recent initiative from 2014, the G5 Sahel, which was intended to create a joint force between Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. The joint force that was created in 2017 became ineffective in 2022 and 2023 after the withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from the organization (Daoura and Salia 2026). The subsequent creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (*Alliance des Etats du Sahel* – AES) by those three states had significant effects on French efforts to undertake multilateral security cooperation in the region. This in turn also affected the capacities of ECOWAS to deal with security in the region.

Given the problems arising from the withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS in early 2025 in favor of the newly created AES, it is important to briefly look at the role of that organization in French strategy. There is no mention of the regional organizations in Africa in the French national security documents of 2022 and 2025. France has close relations with ECOWAS, however, and the appointment of France's ambassador to Nigeria in 2021 was also approved by the organization (Ambassade de France au Nigeria 2021).

Could ECOWAS “replace” the French military in the region? The withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS at the beginning of 2025 was seen as a major setback for the organization. Colonel Aboagye (2025) in *Amani Africa* has written that the AES “signals a shift toward fluid, issue-based regional cooperation rather than strictly geographical arrangements.” The AES was created as a collective defense organization, after unrealized threats by ECOWAS to intervene after the Niger coup d'état (Bagayoko 2025). France openly supported the ECOWAS military option in Niger (Chauveau 2024). At the same time, when the operation did not occur, France did not attempt to intervene on its own. Any potential expectation that ECOWAS could replace French intervention, at least in the Niger case, turned out not to be possible.

In early December 2025, the situation changed again regarding ECOWAS and France in West Africa. An attempt at a coup d'état in Benin was repressed not only by Benin's armed forces, but also by an intervention by ECOWAS, which included air strikes by the Nigerian Air Force. Nigeria also sent ground troops to help stop the coup d'état, in

Nigeria's first intervention abroad under ECOWAS since 2017 (Dzirutwe 2025). France was also involved in the effort to stop the coup leaders, as Paris said that President Patrice Talon specifically asked for French help. That French aid included "surveillance, observation and logistical backing to Benin's armed forces ("France backs Benin" 2025)." This was a clear indication that France has not ruled out the possibility of military intervention in West Africa, even if French troops were not deployed. The coup attempt comes as well in a context of increased JNIM attacks in northern Benin (Nsaibia 2025), which may have influenced the French Government to back the intervention. It remains to be seen if France will concentrate more on military cooperation with ECOWAS, and notably Nigeria, after the apparent success of the Benin operation.

Can ECOWAS and the Sahel Alliance fill the security vacuum in the region by working together. Chatham House analyst Romane Dideberg (2025) has pointed out that there are possibilities on that front. She stated in December 2025 that "ECOWAS and the AES already appear to be edging towards an understanding on some form of open framework for the free-flowing trade, travel and migration that are fundamental to West African life." The question remains to what extent this rapprochement between the two organizations is in the French interest. The AES has been openly hostile to France, with its states even accusing France of sponsoring terrorism in the region (Omar 2024). Thus, France may be less inclined to support ECOWAS if it is working in conjunction with the AES. At the same time, the alternative to the regional organizations has already been clear, with the intervention of other major powers in the region, notably Russia.

The replacement of Wagner troops in the Sahel region by the "Africa Corps," which has much closer links to Moscow, was seen as a major concern for security in West Africa. More recent research has shown, however, that Africa Corps is increasingly seen in a negative light by public opinion in the region (Africa Defense Forum, 2025). Africa Corps has not distinguished itself on the battlefield either, as in August 2025, JNIM successfully ambushed one of their units near Ténenkou in Mali (Maurice 2025). The battlefield losses, which were already evident with the Wagner defeat in Tinzinouaten in 2024, calls into question some of the concerns about growing Russian influence in the Sahel. If Russian forces cannot hold off the insurgent groups in the area as promised, the states in the Sahel may need to look elsewhere for help. The summer 2025 issue of *Revue de défense nationale* contains two articles about the Russian military influence in the region (Quideller 2025 and De Jong 2025). It is clear, however, that the local actors have seen Russian paramilitary groups as a viable alternative to French intervention in the region in recent years.

Other external actors continue to attract attention from France. One does not find any official indications that China is seen as a military threat to French interests in Africa, but there is considerable interest in Chinese economic power. The Chinese-African Summit in 2024 was seen as a strategic step forward for China by the French Government in consolidating its partnerships on the continent (Ministère de l'Économie

2024). Given the trepidations about China in the French National Strategic Review in 2025, this is surely a closely watched issue.

The United Arab Emirates is viewed as a strategic partner by France (Ministère de l'Économie 2025), and the issue of UAE involvement in Africa, including in conflicts, seems to be less of a strategic concern. The French base in Abu Dhabi is a strategic interest for France, and French economic interests in the Middle East are also important in this case. The United States and other countries are more worried about the increasing influence of the UAE in Africa (Hochet-Bodin and Brachet 2024).

The U.S. is also still present in West Africa, as mentioned above. The Trump administration largely cut off humanitarian aid but promised more investments and to continue to station American military force in Côte d'Ivoire (Sylvestre-Trainer and Vincent 2025). The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has a training mission in Côte d'Ivoire, which was reinforced in 2024 (U.S. Embassy Côte d'Ivoire, 2024). U.S. Special Forces were moved to Côte d'Ivoire from Niger in 2024 following the coup d'état and the closing of the U.S. base there. In the same year, the U.S. also was working on improving airfields in Benin and sent Special Forces to Chad (Babb 2024). AFRICOM also carried out a limited bombing mission in Nigeria in 2025, but there was no real follow-up to the operation, as the Trump Administration turned its attention back to South America and the Middle East at the outset of 2026 (Obadare 2025).

France has never been alone in its operations in Africa, and recent years have shown that the states in the region have been looking for alternatives. As of writing, the Russian option has been the most prevalent, but there is considerable skepticism about Russian military efficiency on the battlefield. In a major crisis, no single actor has yet emerged that would be expected to intervene in force to stop a major terrorist group offensive as France did in Mali in 2013.

## *Conclusion*

The role of Sub-Saharan Africa in French strategy since the end of the colonial period has been one in which there is a significant disconnect between printed strategy and national security documents, official declarations and the reality on the ground. National security documents in France tend to relegate Africa to a relatively low-level of importance. Official speeches since the 1990s first emphasized multilateral solutions to security problems as well as a will to reduce the French defense commitment to the region. France continued to intervene militarily throughout the period, coming back each time in force to deal with the immediate military problems of West and Central Africa.

As France is turning its attention back toward Europe and the Middle East, and rearming for conventional warfare, will this be the final break with the (post)colonial defensive system? France has retained the capacity to intervene on the continent with the DLAs in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, which could be used as staging points for larger missions. The troops in Djibouti also remain available, so the French withdrawal is not total. A French military buildup on the continent in the event of an emergency or a change of government in France cannot be ruled out.

What would be a “best-case scenario” for France in its security relations with West Africa? Given official statements and documents in recent years, it would likely be an increasing ability of international organizations and African states to take the lead in African security over time. This would reduce the need for French involvement in the region and allow France to concentrate its limited resources in other theatres, while retaining a capacity to help in exceptional circumstances, such as a full invasion of an allied country. A “worst-case scenario” would be that same full invasion of an allied country, but this time successful, due to the inability of local and regional actors to stop it, and the operational incapacity or lack of political will in France to carry out an intervention.

### *Notes on Contributor*

Christopher Griffin holds a PhD in international relations and is an Associate Professor/Maître de conférences in the Political Science Department of the Nantes Campus of the Université Catholique de l’Ouest. He is also the head of study abroad programs and the foreign language studies coordinator for the campus. Dr. Griffin has published extensively on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, with articles on French strategy in the Algerian War and in the Sahel, on French involvement in the Nigerian Civil War, and articles on allied strategy in Afghanistan. He has published in *Security Studies*, *Comparative Security Policy*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, and French journals.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

### References

- Aboagye, F. B. (2025). *The Withdrawal of AES from ECOWAS: An opportunity for re-evaluating existing instruments for regional integration?* *Amani Africa*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-withdrawal-of-aes-from-ecowas-an-opportunity-for-re-evaluating-existing-instruments-for-regional-integration/>
- Africa Defense Forum. (2025). *Selon un rapport, à mesure que la Russie se tourne vers l’Africa Corps, le déni plausible disparaît.* *Africa Defense Forum*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://adf-magazine.com/fr/2025/08/selon-un-rapport-a-mesure-que-la-russie-se-tourne-vers-lafrica-corps-le-deni-plausible-disparait/>
- Akinola, A., & Makombe, R. (2024). Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 60(5), 2847-2863. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231224680>



- Ambassade de France au Nigeria. (2021). *L'ambassadrice de la France accréditée auprès de la CEDEAO*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://ng.ambafrance.org/L-ambassadrice-de-France-accreditee-aupres-de-la-CEDEAO>
- Assemblée Nationale. (2023). *Compte-rendu : Commission de la défense nationale et les forces armées. Audition, à huis clos, de M. Sylvain Itté, ambassadeur de la France au Niger, n°28, session ordinaire du 2023-2024*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/comptes-rendus/cion\\_def/116cion\\_def2324028\\_compte-rendu](https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/comptes-rendus/cion_def/116cion_def2324028_compte-rendu)
- Assemblée Nationale. (2024). *Compte-rendu : Commission de la défense nationale et les forces armées. Audition ouverte à la presse, de M. Jean-Marie Bockel, envoyé personnel du Président de la République pour l'Afrique, n°19, session ordinaire du 2024-2025*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/17/comptes-rendus/cion\\_def/117cion\\_def2425019\\_compte-rendu](https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/17/comptes-rendus/cion_def/117cion_def2425019_compte-rendu)
- Babb, C. (2024). *VOA Exclusive: US General explains US movements, partnerships in West Africa*. Voice of America. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.voanews.com/a/general-who-oversaw-us-military-withdrawal-from-niger-explains-us-movements-partnerships-in-west-africa/7791629.html>
- Bagayoko, N. (2025). *AES versus CEDEAO : vers la fragmentation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*. Fondation Méditerranée d'Etudes Stratégiques. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://fmes-france.org/aes-versus-cedeao-vers-la-fragmentation-de-lafrrique-de-louest/>
- Barbarit, S. (2025). *Conflit entre Israël et Iran : quel rôle peut jouer la France?* Public Sénat. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.publicsenat.fr/actualites/politique/conflit-entre-israel-et-liran-quel-role-peut-jouer-la-france>
- Bat, J.-P. (2012). *Le Syndrôme Foccart : la politique française en Afrique, du 1959 à nos jours*. Gallimard.
- Beillard, M. (2025). *La France rétrocède sa dernière base armée au Tchad et au Sahel et tourne une page historique*. RMC. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://rmc.bfmtv.com/actualites/international/la-france-retrocede-sa-derniere-base-armee-au-tchad-et-au-sahel-et-tourne-une-page-historique\\_AV-202501310623.html#:~:text=Personnels%20et%20mat%C3%A9riels%20de%20combat,'op%C3%A9ration%20anti%20Djihadiste%20Barkhane.](https://rmc.bfmtv.com/actualites/international/la-france-retrocede-sa-derniere-base-armee-au-tchad-et-au-sahel-et-tourne-une-page-historique_AV-202501310623.html#:~:text=Personnels%20et%20mat%C3%A9riels%20de%20combat,'op%C3%A9ration%20anti%20Djihadiste%20Barkhane.)
- Bertrand, E., Chafer, T., & Stoddard, E. (2024). (Dis)utilities of Force in a Postcolonial Context: Explaining the Strategic Failure of the French-Led Intervention in Mali. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 18(3), 286-305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2023.2278268>
- Chauveau, A. (2024). *Niger : soutien total de Paris à la Cédéao sur l'option militaire*. Europe 1. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.europe1.fr/international/niger-soutien-total-de-paris-a-la-cedeao-sur-loption-militaire-4198202>

- Courrier International. (2025). *Tournant. La France rétrocède sa base militaire en Côte d'Ivoire, la dernière en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Courrier International. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/tournant-la-france-retrocede-sa-base-militaire-en-cote-d-ivoire-la-derniere-en-afrique-de-l-ouest\\_228015](https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/tournant-la-france-retrocede-sa-base-militaire-en-cote-d-ivoire-la-derniere-en-afrique-de-l-ouest_228015)
- Daoura, L. S., & Salia, R. L. (2026). *Will the AES Unified Force succeed where the G5 Sahel failed?* ISS Africa. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/will-the-aes-unified-force-succeed-where-the-g5-sahel-failed>
- De Jong, P. (2025). L'Afrique, espace d'influence pour les Sociétés militaires privées (SMP) internationales. *Revue de défense nationale*(882), 63-69. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0063>
- Dideburg, R. (2025). *West Africa needs regional solutions to combat the escalating Sahel security crisis*. Chatham House. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/12/west-africa-needs-regional-solutions-combat-escalating-sahel-security-crisis>
- Dramé, P. P. (2007). *L'impérialisme colonial français en Afrique : enjeux et impacts de la défense de l'AOF (1918-1940)*. L'Harmattan.
- Dumoulin, A. (1997). *La France militaire en Afrique*. GRIP.
- Dzirutwe, M., Corey-Boulet, R., & Adjoha, P. (December 9, 2025). *Nigerian airstrikes foil coup attempt, Benin says*. Reuters. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-dispatches-jets-troops-quash-benin-coup-bid-2025-12-08/>
- France 24. (January 30, 2025). *L'armée française quitte le Tchad et rétrocède sa dernière base militaire au Sahel*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20250130-arm%C3%A9e-fran%C3%A7aise-quitte-tchad-r%C3%A9troc%C3%A8de-derni%C3%A8re-base-militaire-sahel>
- France backs Benin after foiled coup as ECOWAS warns of rising instability*. (December 9, 2025). RFI. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20251209-france-backs-benin-after-foiled-coup-as-ecowas-warns-of-rising-instability>
- Gazanne, H. (April 21, 2026). *Guerre en Ukraine : faut-il avoir peur du nouveau missile Sarmat testé par la Russie ?* Les Echos. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/enjeux-internationaux/faut-il-avoir-peur-du-nouveau-missile-sarmat-teste-par-la-russie-1402053>
- Griffin, C. (2016). Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram: French Counterterrorism and Military Cooperation in the Sahel. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(5), 896-913. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208283>
- Groizeleau, V. (May 30, 2024). *La Marine nationale rapatrie les moyens portuaires qui étaient stationnés au Sénégal*. Mer et Marine. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.meretmarine.com/fr/defense/la-marine-nationale-rapatrie-les-moyens-portuaires-qui-etaient-stationnes-au-senegal>



- Guichoua, Y. (2020). The bitter harvest of French interventionism in the Sahel. *International Affairs*, 96(4), 895-911. <https://doi.org/10.193/ia/iaa094>
- Hochet-Bodin, N., & Eliott, B. (April 14, 2024). *Comment les Emirats arabes unis renforcent leur influence dans la Corne de l'Afrique*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/04/14/comment-les-emirats-arabes-unis-renforcent-leur-influence-dans-la-corne-de-l-afrique\\_6227674\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/04/14/comment-les-emirats-arabes-unis-renforcent-leur-influence-dans-la-corne-de-l-afrique_6227674_3212.html)
- Ianni, P. (2025). S'adapter aux réalités d'aujourd'hui et entretenir nos partenariats de demain : une nécessaire transformation du modèle d'engagement militaire français en Afrique centrale et de l'Ouest. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 7(882), 78-84. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0078>
- Jennings, G. (October 1, 2024). *Risks remain' for A400M as further development and retrofits progress, says Airbus*. Janes Insights. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/defence/risks-remain-for-a400m-as-further-development-and-retrofits-progress-says-airbus>
- Lagneau, L. (November 7, 2023). *Le nombre d'avions A400M destinés à l'armée de l'Air dépendra du « futur cargo médian tactique » européen*. Zone Militaire/OPEX 360. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.opex360.com/2023/11/07/le-nombre-davions-a400m-destines-a-larmee-de-lair-dependra-du-futur-cargo-median-tactique-europeen/>
- Laloupo, F. (2024). *Fin des accords militaires entre la France et le Tchad : facteurs et enjeux de la rupture*. IRIS. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.iris-france.org/fin-des-accords-militaires-entre-la-france-et-le-tchad-facteurs-et-enjeux-dune-rupture/>
- Le Hunsec, M. (2011). *La Marine nationale en Afrique depuis des indépendances : 50 ans de diplomatie navale dans le golfe de Guinée*. Service historique de la Défense.
- Le Monde. (December 31, 2024a). *La base sera rétrocédée à la Côte d'Ivoire en janvier, annonce Alassane Ouattara*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/la-base-de-l-armee-francaise-sera-retrocedee-a-la-cote-d-ivoire-en-janvier-annonce-alassane-ouattara\\_6476127\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/la-base-de-l-armee-francaise-sera-retrocedee-a-la-cote-d-ivoire-en-janvier-annonce-alassane-ouattara_6476127_3212.html)
- Le Monde. (December 31, 2024b). *Le président sénégalais appelle à la « fin de toutes présences militaires étrangères dès 2025 » dans le pays*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/le-president-senegalais-appelle-a-la-fin-de-toutes-presences-militaires-etrangeres-des-2025-dans-le-pays\\_6476126\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/le-president-senegalais-appelle-a-la-fin-de-toutes-presences-militaires-etrangeres-des-2025-dans-le-pays_6476126_3212.html)
- Légifrance. (2023). *LOI n°2023-703 du 1er août 2023 relative à la programmation militaire pour les années 2024 à 2030 et portant diverses dispositions intéressant la défense*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000047914986>

- Lepiouff, C. (November 26, 2011). *Mort de treize militaires au Mali : Pierre Bockel, fils de Jean-Marie Bockel, figure parmi les victimes*. Franceinfo. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://france3-regions.franceinfo.fr/grand-est/alsace/mort-treize-militaires-au-mali-pierre-bockel-fils-jean-marie-bockel-figure-parmi-victimes-1754757.html>
- Macron, E. (March 5, 2025). *Adresse aux Français*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2025/03/05/adresse-aux-francais-6>
- Macron, E. (October 12, 2023). *Adresse aux Français*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2023/10/12/adresse-aux-francais-3>
- Macron, E. (September 4, 2025). *Réunion de la coalition des volontaires. Press Conference*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2025/09/04/reunion-de-la-coalition-des-volontaires>
- Maitre, E. (2018). *Le Sarmat : vitrine du renouvellement des forces russes*. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Bulletin n°58. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://frstrategie.org/programmes/observatoire-de-la-dissuasion/sarmat-vitrine-renouvellement-forces-nucleaires-russes-2018>
- Marine Nationale. (January 21, 2024). *Proche-Orient : comment les armées françaises oeuvrent à la désescalade*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/proche-orient-comment-armees-francaises-oeuvrent-desescalade>
- Marine Nationale. (November 19, 2024). *Golfe de Guinée – Grand Africain NEMO, engagement multinational d’ampleur pour la sécurité maritime*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/actualites/golfe-guinee-grand-african-nemo-engagement-multinational-dampleur-securite-maritime>
- Masson, A. (June 26, 2025). *Guerre Iran-Israël : des drones iraniens interceptés par l’armée française avant le cessez-le-feu*. Ouest France. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.ouest-france.fr/monde/iran/guerre-iran-israel-des-drones-iraniens-interceptes-par-larmee-francaise-avant-le-cessez-le-feu-8fc78300-528b-11f0-9d8f-210ccc004fd7>
- Maurice, G. (August 13, 2025). *A disaster. 'Russia's Africa Corps suffers its first defeat in Mali*. France 24. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20250813-mali-russia-africa-corps-defeat>
- Ministère de l’Economie des Finances et de la Souveraineté Industrielle et Numérique. (2024). *A la Une d’Objectif Afrique : Sommet FOCAC 2024 : Un levier économique stratégique pour la coopération sino-africaine*. Direction générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2024/11/18/a-la-une-d-objectif-afrique-sommet-focac-2024-un-levier-economique-strategique-pour-la-cooperation-sino-africaine>



- Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté Industrielle et Numérique. (2025). *France-Émirats : un partenariat en pleine expansion*. Direction Générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2025/02/28/france-emirats-un-partenariat-strategique-en-pleine-expansion>
- Direction Générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2025/02/28/france-emirats-un-partenariat-strategique-en-pleine-expansion>
- Ministère de la Défense nationale. (1994). *Livre blanc de la défense nationale 1994*. Union générale d'éditions. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/files/rapport/pdf/944048700.pdf>
- Ministère de la Défense nationale. (2008). *Défense et sécurité nationale : le livre blanc*. Odile Jacob / La Documentation Française. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/0000.pdf>
- Ministère de la Défense nationale. (2013). *Livre blanc : défense et sécurité nationale 2013*. Direction d'information légale et administrative. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/files/rapport/pdf/134000257.pdf>
- Ministère de la Défense nationale. (1972). *Politique de défense française. Livre blanc sur la défense nationale. Tome I*. S.n. <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/defense/lb1972.htm>
- Ministère des Armées. (2025a). *Détachement de liaison interarmées au Gabon (DLIA-G)*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/detachements-liaison-interarmees/detachement-liaison-interarmees-au-gabon-dlia-g>
- Ministère des Armées. (2025b). *Détachement de liaison interarmées en République de Côte d'Ivoire (DLIA-I)*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/detachements-liaison-interarmees/detachement-liaison-interarmees-republique-cote-divoire-dlia-i>
- Ministère des Armées. (2025c). *Quels enseignements pour l'armée de Terre après trois ans de guerre en Ukraine?* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/quels-enseignements-larmee-terre-trois-ans-guerre-ukraine>
- Ministère des Armées. (June 6, 2024). *Soutien de la France à l'Ukraine : plus de 1 milliard d'euros supplémentaire en 2024*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/soutien-france-lukraine-plus-1-milliard-deuros-supplementaire-2024>
- Ministère des Armées. (June 12, 2024). *Arrêté portant création du commandement pour l'Afrique*. Bulletin Officiel des Armées. Édition Chronologique n° 31 du 12 avril 2024. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/bulletin-officiel/Arrêté%20du%2010%20avril%202024%20portant%20création%20d%20un%20commandement%20pour%20l%27Afrique%20modifié.pdf>

- Mirkovic, P. (2025). *La France est la cible d'un traitement spécifique dans le propagande djihadiste*. Institut français des relations internationales. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.europe1.fr/international/israel-hamas-larmee-francaise-tire-des-enseignements-des-combats-4219738>
- Molinié, W. (2013). *Israël-Hamas : l'armée française tire des enseignements des combats*. *Europe 1*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.europe1.fr/international/israel-hamas-larmee-francaise-tire-des-enseignements-des-combats-4219738>
- Molinié, W. (2024). *Coup d'Etat au Gabon : pourquoi les armées françaises ne sont pas ciblées par les putschistes*. *Europe 1*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.europe1.fr/international/coup-detat-au-gabon-pourquoi-les-armees-francaises-ne-sont-pas-ciblees-par-les-putschistes-4201032>
- Montclos, M.-A. (2025). Lessons not learned: Ten years of French military intervention in the Sahel. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 63(1), 51-62. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X25100906>
- Nsaibia, H. (2025). *New frontlines: Jihadist expansion is reshaping the Benin, Niger and Nigeria borderlands*. ACLED. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://acleddata.com/report/new-frontlines-jihadist-expansion-reshaping-benin-niger-and-nigeria-borderlands>
- Obadare, E. (2025). *The Dynamics Behind Trump's Decision to Bomb ISIS in Nigeria*. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.cfr.org/articles/dynamics-behind-trumps-decision-bomb-isis-nigeria>
- Omar, S. (2024). *La France 'renseigne, forme, finance et arme les groupes terroristes au Sahel,' accuse le Niger*. Anadolu Ajansi. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/la-france-renseigne-forme-finance-et-arme-des-groupes-terroristes-au-sahel-accuse-le-niger-/3346901>
- Premier Ministre. (2022). *Revue Nationale Stratégique*. Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/publications/revue-nationale-strategique-2022>
- Premier Ministre. (2025). *Revue Nationale Stratégique*. Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/publications/revue-nationale-strategique-2025>
- Quideller, T. (2025). La sous-traitance de la guerre au Sahel : le cas du Burkina Faso et du Mali. *Revue de défense nationale*(882), 36-42. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0036>
- Rogel, B. (2025). *Un marin à l'Elysée : des sous-marins nucléaires au bureau du Président*. Tallandier.
- Sakozy, M. N. (2009). *Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, devant le Parlement de la République du Congo, sur les relations franco-africaines et franco-congolaises, à Brazzaville, le 26 mars 2009*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.elysee.fr/nicolas-sarkozy/2009/03/26/declaration-de-m-nicolas-sarkozy-president-de-la-republique-devant-le-parlement-de-la->



republique-du-congo-sur-les-relations-franco-africaines-et-franco-congolaises-a-brazzaville-le-26-mars-2009

- Sénat. (2025). *Voir l'Afrique dans tous ses Etats : D. Une réduction mal négociée du format des bases françaises en Afrique de l'Ouest. Rapport d'information n°288 (2024-2025)*. La Galaxie Sénat. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r24-288/r24-2887.html>
- Sylla, N. S. (2024). The crisis of French imperialism: debating military coups in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 51, 181. <https://doi.org/10.62191/ROAPE-2022-0033>
- Sylvestre-Trainer, & Vincent, E. (2025). *Le commerce, pas d'aide : en Côte d'Ivoire, les Etats-Unis de Trump mettent en œuvre leur nouvelle doctrine*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/05/26/le-commerce-pas-l-aide-en-cote-d-ivoire-les-etats-unis-de-trump-mettent-en-uvre-leur-nouvelle-doctrine\\_6608652\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/05/26/le-commerce-pas-l-aide-en-cote-d-ivoire-les-etats-unis-de-trump-mettent-en-uvre-leur-nouvelle-doctrine_6608652_3212.html)
- Tull, D. M. (2024). *Côte d'Ivoire's Containment of Jihadist Threats: A Provisional Success? Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/mta-spotlight40-cote-divoires-containment-of-jihadist-threats>
- United States Embassy Côte d'Ivoire. (2024). *AFRICOM Strengthens Partnerships with Côte d'Ivoire*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from <https://ci.usembassy.gov/africom-strengthens-partnerships-with-cote-divoire/>