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# Gaullism, NATO, and Nuclear Independence: A Discourse Analysis

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# Gaullism, NATO, and Nuclear Independence: A Discourse Analysis



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## List of Abbreviations

DPC – Defense Planning Committee

ESDP – European Security and Defense Policy

EU – European Union

L'O.T.A.N. – L'Organisation Transatlantique Nord (see: NATO)

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NPG – Nuclear Planning Group

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

US – United States of America

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WEU – Western European Union

## Introduction

On August 27, 2007, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy surprised French ambassadors in Paris by bringing up reintegration into NATO. He had never mentioned that this was one of his plans during his campaign, but it soon became clear that this was something he wanted to pursue.<sup>1</sup> On March 11, 2009, Sarkozy announced that France would indeed reintegrate into NATO. This was ratified on March 18, of the same year.<sup>2</sup> It was pronounced during the Strasbourg/Kehls Summit on April 4, 2009.<sup>3</sup>

France had left the integrated military command structure of NATO in 1966, after it had already been reducing its military capacity for quite some time. The French president at the time, Charles de Gaulle, had tried to reform the alliance multiple times before the decision to leave the integrated command structure. De Gaulle's foreign policy was based on *grandeur*, to give France more status on the world stage.<sup>4</sup> His goal was to challenge the US leadership in the alliance and to make sure France had an independent security.<sup>5</sup> A way of pursuing this goal was to create a French nuclear force, a *force de frappe*.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, French politics has had the political movement of "Gaullism" even after the end of de Gaulle's term in 1969. The ideology is quite diffused, but it is mostly present in the political right in France. The movements' goal is to pursue the ideas of General de Gaulle, which was to create national unity. But more importantly, the goal is to create an autonomous foreign and defense policy.<sup>7</sup> The reason why Gaullism as a movement survived in French politics is, according to Frank L. Wilson, because his successor, George Pompidou, did not try

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<sup>1</sup> Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, "France's New NATO Policy: Leveraging a Realignment of the Alliance?," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (2009): 99, <https://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/stable/26269170>.

<sup>2</sup> Annick Cizel and Stéfanie von Hlatky, "From Exceptional to Special? A Reassessment of France–NATO Relations since Reintegration," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 355, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2014.962760>.

<sup>3</sup> NATO, "Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl, April 4, 2009," *NATO E-Library, Official Texts*, accessed February 24, 2022, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_52837.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_52837.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Phillip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and Gaullist Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 27, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400820917>.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Nuenlist, "Dealing with the Devil: NATO and Gaullist France, 1958–66," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies (Springer Nature)* 9, no. 3 (September 2011): 220–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2011.593817>.

<sup>6</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, "France and NATO, 1949–1991," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies (Springer Nature)* 9, no. 3 (September 2011): 188, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2011.593799>.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Riches and Jan Palmowski, "Gaullism," in *A Dictionary of Contemporary World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191870903.001.0001/acref-9780191870903-e-891>.

to overshadow de Gaulle's charisma, or his ideas.<sup>8</sup> This created the pathway for the lasting movement of Gaullism in French politics.

France was absent in the integrated military command structure of the alliance for 43 years. However, this does not mean that France had not sought rapprochement before. France was in every NATO committee, except for the DPC (the integrated military structure) and the NPG.<sup>9</sup> The DPC was the former senior body on decision making about the integrated military structure of the alliance. The NPG is the senior body on nuclear matters within the alliance. It discusses the alliance's policies on nuclear force. All the other NATO members are part of the NPG.<sup>10</sup> However, since June 2010, these responsibilities are with the North Atlantic Council.<sup>11</sup>

France had always remained involved with NATO. The country participated in almost every NATO intervention for the past decades.<sup>12</sup> France deployed forces in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> President François Mitterrand, who was president of the Fifth Republic from 1981 until 1995, had affirmed solidarity with the Atlantic area in 1983. There were signs of a closer cooperation between France and NATO, but Mitterrand wanted to change the role of NATO, in favor of the European defense.<sup>14</sup> France saw European defense and an effort for NATO as a zero-sum game.<sup>15</sup> The US did not want to reform, so France did not fully reintegrate during the Mitterrand era.

President Jacques Chirac, who was president of France from 1995 until 2007, also tried to reconcile with NATO. He saw the changing international relations of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and knew that European defense could never compete with NATO.<sup>16</sup> However, during the summit of Saint-Malo with the British prime minister Tony Blair in 1998, they discussed the ESDP. It was a step closer towards a common defense, and the US

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<sup>8</sup> Frank L. Wilson, "Gaullism without de Gaulle," *The Western Political Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1973): 503, <https://doi.org/10.2307/446435>.

<sup>9</sup> Pernille Rieker, "The French Return to NATO: Reintegration in Practice, Not in Principle," *European Security* 22, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 379, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.767238>.

<sup>10</sup> "Nuclear Planning Group (NPG)," NATO, accessed April 24, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50069.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50069.htm).

<sup>11</sup> "Defence Planning Committee (DPC) (Archived)," NATO, accessed April 24, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49201.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49201.htm).

<sup>12</sup> Cizel and von Hlatky, "From Exceptional to Special?," 359.

<sup>13</sup> Rieker, "The French Return to NATO," 379.

<sup>14</sup> Maurice Vaïsse, "La France et l'OTAN : une histoire," *Politique étrangère*, no. 4 (2009): 867, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-etrangere-2009-4-page-861.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Luca Ratti, "Stepping up to Reintegration: French Security Policy between Transatlantic and European Defence during and after the Cold War," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 367, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2014.962784>.

<sup>16</sup> Vaïsse, "La France et l'OTAN," 869.

had no other option than to accept it, if it would not stand in the way of NATO.<sup>17</sup> According to the US, the ESDP and NATO had to be complementary, not mutually exclusive. This view of dropping the zero-sum game is the view that Sarkozy also adopted.

Even though France had decided to fully reintegrate and take its “rightful place” in the alliance as being one of the original founders, the country did have conditions for this reintegration. France would keep control of deployment of French troops during missions. It would also stay in control of French troops during peace time, and the state wanted to maintain its nuclear independence.<sup>18</sup> So, France’s nuclear assets would remain outside of NATO, and the country would thus stay outside of the NPG. This is often referred to as “the French nuclear exception.”<sup>19</sup> France saw the Ottawa Declaration of 1974 and the 1999 Strategic Concept as the only documents in relation to deterrent forces and the NATO doctrine. The Ottawa Declaration states that the nuclear forces of France do have a deterrent role, which contributes to the security of the Atlantic area, but it is not necessary for the weapons to be under NATO command.<sup>20</sup> This is also true for the Strategic Concept of 1999.<sup>21</sup>

According to Annick Cizel and Stéfanie von Hlatky, the reason for the reintegration in 2009, was in the first place to restore French influence in NATO. With the exclusion of France’s nuclear weapons, the state lost an opportunity for influence. The decision to leave them out was thus paradoxical. Namely, if the alliance would ever get rid of the weapons, France will not have a say in it, since it is not part of the NPG. On top of that, by maintaining a Gaullist position around nuclear weapons, France would prioritize its own security, instead of collective security.<sup>22</sup> This paradox leads to the following research question for this thesis: *Why did France insist on remaining a nuclear independent state when reintegrating into NATO in 2009?* The sub question of this thesis will be: *Do the white papers of 1994 and 2008 demonstrate a change in French thinking on nuclear weapons as part of their national security strategy?*

<sup>17</sup> Federiga Bindi and Irina Angelescu, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union* (2012: Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press), 36–37, <https://www.brookings.edu/book/the-foreign-policy-of-the-european-union/>.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Claude Mallet, *Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale* (Paris: O. Jacob la Documentation française, 2008), 110.

<sup>19</sup> Stéfanie von Hlatky, “Revisiting France’s Nuclear Exception after Its ‘Return’ to NATO,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* (Springer Nature) 12, no. 4 (December 2014): 392, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2014.962785>.

<sup>20</sup> NATO, “Declaration on Atlantic Relations Issued by the North Atlantic Council (‘The Ottawa Declaration’), Ottawa June 19, 1974,” *NATO E-Library, Official Texts*, accessed February 17, 2022, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_26901.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26901.htm).

<sup>21</sup> NATO, “The Alliance’s Strategic Concept Approved by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C., April 24, 1999,” *NATO E-Library, Official Texts*, accessed February 24, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_27433.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm).

<sup>22</sup> Cizel and von Hlatky, “From Exceptional to Special?,” 355-356.

This is relevant to research, since it seems incompatible with the “full reintegration” that France had announced, and it seems incompatible with the French aim for more influence. This indicates that France still had more attention for its own independent foreign policy and preferred to keep its own nuclear independence.

As Ann Hironaka argues, nuclear weapons are the ultimate symbol of power.<sup>23</sup> Ever since the Second World War, states have been acquiring them in order to get the Great Power Status. However, their destructive power makes them impossible to use, and in terms of conflict, conventional weapons are used instead.<sup>24</sup> On top of that, Hironaka argues that even though the conventional conception is that nuclear weapons give a state more security it is in fact not doing that. The general idea is that weapons of mass destruction could destroy an adversary and that it gives a state a power status. However, it makes a state vulnerable to the arsenals of other nuclear power states.<sup>25</sup> In this thesis, it will be argued that France’s independent nuclear weapons policy relies on the perception of a Great Power Status.

## Literature Review

A lot of research has been done in relation to France’s NATO policy. In this section, there will be a short overview of the literature that was written on France’s reintegration into NATO in 2009 and the run-up to this decision, also considering the ideologies in French politics.

The French reintegration into the DPC of 2009 seemed like a logical step since France had already been actively involved on a military level with NATO since 1966. This involvement grew after the Cold War. France was present at NATO military operations in Kosovo since 1999, and Afghanistan since 2001.<sup>26</sup> The creeping closer cooperation on a military level created a pathway for reintegration.

However, according to some scholars it marks a more politically deeper transformation of France on the world stage. According to Pernille Rieker, it is seen as the end of French exceptionalism. However, there was a dilemma between keeping French exceptionalism up and being a permanent member of NATO but remaining outside of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ann Hironaka, ed., “The Great Powers and Nuclear Weapons,” in *Tokens of Power: Rethinking War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 187, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316796290.008>.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 190–91.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 187–88.

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Pierre Chevènement and Clémence Sebag, “France’s ‘Return’ to NATO: An Inopportune Decision,” *Politique Etrangere*, no. 5 (2009): 151, <http://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-etrangere-2009-5-page-151.htm>.



DPC. The reintegration was a way for France to pursue more influence in the Atlantic area.<sup>27</sup> Rieker accounts the fact that France never reintegrated with the NPG to the fact that France sees the presence of nuclear weapons as an essential aspect for peace. That is why they are cautious when it comes to their arsenal.<sup>28</sup>

Frédéric Bozo also tried to offer an explanation on why Nicolas Sarkozy decided to reintegrate. Bozo argues that Sarkozy's decision was not a completely new policy. As mentioned earlier, there were similar attempts done by Mitterrand and Chirac. According to Bozo the goal was to normalize France's status in NATO, but also to make France important again in the alliance. Bozo also mentions a different aspect to Sarkozy's decision. Sarkozy wanted to break with the past foreign policies of France.<sup>29</sup> These past foreign policies were focused on a special place for France in the world and the pursuit of French principles, even if this would go against the ideas of the US.<sup>30</sup> Next to the breach with Gaullism, the Sarkozy-era marked a time of better Franco-American relations than before due to Sarkozy's new foreign policy. Sarkozy was focused on the US, which is a breach with the tradition of Gaullism.<sup>31</sup> This is also what essentially gave him the nickname "l'Américain." However, Bozo concludes that the reintegration is not a French change of heart. A military normalization is not the same as a political normalization.<sup>32</sup> What Bozo means by this is, that the French normalization in NATO did not mean that France put away its European strategic objectives.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it was more of a reflection of the closer transatlantic cooperation, than a change of heart of the French.<sup>34</sup> This could mean that Sarkozy did not break with Gaullism as much as is thought.

Thomas Valasek offers another vision. He emphasizes the French vision of EU defense and NATO as a zero-sum game. He mentions that it was against the French vision to reintegrate, since France wanted a larger emphasis on EU defense, but the US was blocking that for a long time.<sup>35</sup> Valasek offers the same explanations for the change in French foreign policy during Sarkozy's presidency. Sarkozy was not after a competition with the US.

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<sup>27</sup> Rieker, "The French Return to NATO," 376-79.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>29</sup> Frédéric Bozo, "Explaining France's NATO 'Normalisation' under Nicolas Sarkozy (2007–2012)," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies (Springer Nature)* 12, no. 4 (December 2014): 382-83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2014.962737>.

<sup>30</sup> Alistair Cole, Jonah Levy, and Patrick Galès, "From Chirac to Sarkozy: A New France?," in *Developments in French Politics 4* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Bozo, "Explaining France's NATO 'Normalisation' under Nicolas Sarkozy (2007–2012)," 383.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 389.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 385–86.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 389.

<sup>35</sup> Tomas Valasek, "The Roadmap to Better EU-NATO Relations," *Centre for European Reform: Briefing Note*, December 2007, 2.

Valasek also mentions that France was unsure about what it wanted for European defense at the time of the reintegration.<sup>36</sup> This could also be an explanation for why the nuclear assets were not under NATO control, even though this would have been an opportunity for France to have more influence.

The zero-sum argument is backed up by the political scholar Luca Ratti. He argues that up until the 1950s, the French saw European defense and NATO as mutually reinforcing. After this, the French government saw these two institutions as a zero-sum game. According to Ratti, this view already started to turn in the late 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Ratti further elaborates on the French nuclear forces. French officers started getting the idea of acquiring a French nuclear arsenal in the 1950s. If France would not have its own arsenal, it would merely become a protectorate of the US within NATO. This is the reason why de Gaulle chose to create the *force de frappe*. De Gaulle wanted to have a say in the nuclear policy of NATO, but when he could not transform the alliance, he left the integrated military structure.<sup>38</sup> As for the reintegration, Ratti explains that the reason why Sarkozy kept the nuclear arsenal outside of the alliance, was to protect the French national security interests. An important remark that Ratti makes here, is that it appears as if Sarkozy broke with the Gaullist tradition, while in fact it was a continuation of Gaullism in foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

However, looking strictly at the nuclear policy that France had over the years, there have been a lot of changes since the Cold War. According to Bruno Tertrais, France has always been very secretive about its nuclear policy. Paris sees nuclear retaliation as self-defense and has this conviction in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter, which states that its members have the right to self-defense.<sup>40</sup> Few public announcements or government documents are available for the public.<sup>41</sup> What is strange however, according to Tertrais, that France never adopted a “no first-use posture.”<sup>42</sup> This seems contradictory to the self-defense argument. General Bernard Norlain and Marc Finaud argue that the reason why Paris does not adapt this posture, is because “[w]hat the French supporters of nuclear deterrence fear the

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<sup>36</sup> Valasek, "The Roadmap to Better EU-NATO Relations," 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ratti, "Stepping up to Reintegration," 367.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations, "United Nations Charter (Full Text)," United Nations (United Nations), accessed March 7, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

<sup>41</sup> Bruno Tertrais, "Nuclear Policy: France Stands Alone," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 60, no. 4 (July 1, 2004): 48-51, <https://doi.org/10.2968/060004012>.

<sup>42</sup> Tertrais, "Nuclear Policy," 51.

most from a no-first use policy is the considerable reduction of the role and value of nuclear weapons that would result from it.”<sup>43</sup>

The self-defense argument is confirmed by Charles Cagon. He explains that de Gaulle left the integrated command structure, but not the alliance itself to prevent that the French nuclear assets would be integrated into NATO. However, Cagon argues that de Gaulle had always wanted that the French nuclear assets were accepted and legitimized by NATO. He also agrees that the *force de frappe* was never created with the intention for use. It was only created with the intention of deterrence and self-defense.<sup>44</sup>

Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet has also written about the French reintegration and argues that it would be wrong to explain this event as just an expression of Sarkozy’s Atlanticism. She also argues that France was after a close allyship with the US. Even a closer allyship than France had with the UK and Germany. She also argues that France only wanted to fully reintegrate if Europe would have more influence and if there would be a remodeling of NATO.<sup>45</sup> Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet does not give any explanations on why France made the decision to leave out the nuclear arsenal, neither did any of the earlier mentioned scholars. This shows a gap in the existing literature. It is peculiar that France seemed to be after more influence, but as Cizel and von Hlatky argue, integrating the nuclear weapons could have meant more influence for France.<sup>46</sup>

Von Hlatky further elaborates on this argument. She argues that the French nuclear exception is outdated and could even be potentially damaging to France’s position in NATO. Integration on a nuclear level would not threaten France’s autonomy, even though France does fear that.<sup>47</sup> The arguments she gives for the outdatedness of the nuclear exception is that if there are American nuclear weapons on European soil, the nuclear posture NATO has will develop and evolve without France having an official input in this.

Moreover, she argues that if these weapons were to be removed from European soil, this would impact the French interests directly. France would become the predominant nuclear power among the EU member states. It is thus strange for France to stay out of this debate. Von Hlatky argues that French participation to the NPG would have no influence on

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<sup>43</sup> Gen. Bernard Norlain and Marc Finaud, “Why France Still Rejects No-First Use,” NoFirstUse Global, Last Modified January 13, 2022, <https://nofirstuse.global/2022/01/13/why-france-still-rejects-no-first-use/>.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Cogan, “Mitterrand, France, and NATO: The European Transition,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies (Springer Nature)* 9, no. 3 (September 2011): 258, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2011.593825>.

<sup>45</sup> Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, “France’s New NATO Policy,” 100-101.

<sup>46</sup> Cizel and von Hlatky, “From Exceptional to Special?,” 359.

<sup>47</sup> von Hlatky, “Revisiting France’s Nuclear Exception after Its ‘Return’ to NATO,” 392-393.

France's nuclear autonomy and nuclear deterrent itself. France could even choose to integrate under autonomy preserving conditions.<sup>48</sup>

Von Hlatky's research gives a lot of arguments on why it would not be disadvantageous for France to integrate in the NPG. Her article is focused on France's capabilities within the alliance, to get more influence and more chances of survival of the state. She thus takes a realist perspective on the matter.<sup>49</sup> For the French, integrating with into NPG clashes with their perspective of autonomy. This thesis aims to build on von Hlatky's arguments. However, it also aims to look beyond her realist view by explaining the importance of the role of Gaullism in French politics.

## Research Design and Methodology

Building on the work of von Hlatky, the aim of this thesis is to research if there is a change of thought in French nuclear policy between 1994 and 2008, the years leading up to France's reintegration into the Atlantic Alliance in 2009.

In the articles about the French reintegration, there is often a reference to the *Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale*, dating from 2008. This white paper is a public document that covers French defense strategy, French national security, but also the threats, risks, and challenges France faces in national defense. Up until today, four white papers have been published. They were published in 1972, 1994, 2008, and 2013.<sup>50</sup> The white papers are thus stable documents, as they cover French security policy over a long term. The white paper of 1994 was written by a special committee of members of the different French ministries.<sup>51</sup> The white paper of 2008 was also written by a special committee of members of the ministries, but also security experts, and members of the parliament.<sup>52</sup>

Even though it is referred to in the existing literature, it is often referred to in a short reference. To analyze France's return for the gain of influence, despite integrating the nuclear assets, discourse analysis will be used. It will be used as a framework to understand France's

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 292-393.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, "Classical Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity (Third Edition)*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 60–62.

<sup>50</sup> "Livres blancs," Ministère des Armées, February 21, 2022, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/dgris/politique-defense/livres-blancs>.

<sup>51</sup> Marceau Long, Edouard Balladeur, and François Léotard, *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, 1994, 161–63, <http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/le-livre-blanc-sur-la-defense-1994.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Mallet, *Défense et sécurité nationale*, 322–23.

choice to reintegrate into NATO under these specific conditions. For this thesis, the main texts that will be analyzed through discourse analysis are *Le livre blanc sur la défense* from 1994 and *Le livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale* from 2008. These two white papers will be analyzed on nuclear policy, independence, and NATO. The reason for the choice of the analysis of the white paper of 1994, is because it was written just after the end of the Cold War. The reason for the choice of the white paper of 2008 is to evaluate if there is any change visible in comparison to the white paper of 1994. These analyses will be useful to explain whether the approach to nuclear weapons has changed leading up to 2009. By doing this, a larger body of policies are covered to find out if there was a change in the ideas in French politics before the reintegration.

A broad definition of what discourse analysis entails is given by Marianne Jørgenson and Louise J. Phillips. They describe discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).”<sup>53</sup> Discourse holds regularities which can predict an action.<sup>54</sup> To make sense of the world around them, people use language, which is also a socially constructed framework. A state, institution, or even an object is socially produced. The representations, or, in other words, the words that are being socially reproduced, become normalized. This makes it useful for analysis. For this thesis it means that by using discourse analysis, regularities in the language of the white papers can be found. There might be patterns in the language about independence, nuclear weapons, and NATO. These patterns can tell us something about Paris’ view about these subjects and how they tried to convey these to the reader. This intention of the message can add to the debate about why France claimed it would lose autonomy when they would integrate, when according to von Hlatky, it would not.

According to Rosalind Gill, discourse analysis has four themes: “a concern with discourse itself; a view of language as constructive and constructed; an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action; and a conviction in the rhetorical organization of discourse.”<sup>55</sup> *A concern with the discourse itself* means that it takes the discourse as topic. This theme focuses on the text “in their own right.” So, the focus is on the content and organization of the

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<sup>53</sup> Marianne Jørgenson and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2002), chap. I The Field of Discourse Analysis, page 2, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871>.

<sup>54</sup> Iver B. Neumann, “Discourse Analysis,” in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, Research Methods Series (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 61–62, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584129\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584129_5).

<sup>55</sup> Rosalind Gill, “Discourse Analysis,” in *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, by Martin Bauer and George Gaskell (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000), 4, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209731.n10>.

text, rather than the text as a road or a means to get to the message.<sup>56</sup> For example, the white papers are organized as books, with several chapters that are written in standard French to inform all the French civilians about the French defense policy.

The notion of *construction* highlights the building of discourse based on earlier sources. For the white papers, this would mean they build forward on the earlier white papers, and on changes in international political context. On top of that, construction emphasizes that there are multiple ways to assemble an idea.<sup>57</sup> There are multiple ways to express the notion of independence for example. In the white papers, the word *indépendance* (independence) could also be expressed as *autonomie*, (autonomy) or, in some ways even as *souveraineté* (sovereignty). *Force Nucléaire* (nuclear force) could also be described as *armes destruction massive* (weapons of mass destruction). Even though weapons of mass destruction also include chemical and biological weapons, the three are always mentioned in the same context when *armes destruction massive* is used in these texts. A synonym for NATO or *L'O.T.A.N.* in French could also be *L'Alliance Atlantique* (Atlantic Alliance). It is thus important to focus on all the words that could be related to the concept and how they are used in the sentences.

The notion of *discourse as a form of action* means that people who convey a discourse analysis see discourse as a social practice. Language is a practice to do things. For example, to inform people, to make apologies, etcetera. As users of language, we are always looking for context, and a discourse to fit this context. Gill emphasizes that it is important for discourse analysts to analyze both the discourse and the context of interpretation.<sup>58</sup> A sentence may sound neutral, but depending on the context, the meaning might change. For example, the following sentence might implicate that France is actively involving its nuclear arsenal in NATO: “*Within the Atlantic Alliance, the British and French nuclear forces contribute to global deterrence, this contribution is being recognized since 1974.*”<sup>59</sup> It appears here as if France put its nuclear arsenal under NATO control for the protection of the North Atlantic area. However, as mentioned in the introduction, the context tells us this is in fact not the case. Its arsenal contributes to the safety of the area but is not under NATO control.

For the last theme, discourse analysis as being *organized rhetorically*, Gill emphasizes that discourse presents one version of the world, while there are other competing discourses.<sup>60</sup> The French government said the following in 2008 about their nuclear arsenal as means for

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<sup>56</sup> Gill, "Discourse Analysis," 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 6

<sup>59</sup> Mallet, *Défense et sécurité nationale*, 70.

<sup>60</sup> Gill, "Discourse Analysis," 6.

deterrence: “It is the ultimate guarantee of national security and independence.”<sup>61</sup> This is the view of the writers of the text.

These four themes together form the basis of a discourse analysis. The combination of these, will show what the meaning of the discourse is on a deeper analytical level. By applying this to both white papers, there will be a clearer vision on what France’s policy is based on.

According to Gill, after the decision of the application of the discourse analysis, the next step is to read the text in a skeptical way, which is done by focusing on the construction and the function of the text. After this, the text will be coded with the help of the software ATLAS.ti. Coding text can be done while reading the text closely. When the reader comes across a quotation or indicator that is useful for their analysis, this piece of text can be highlighted and a code can be created.<sup>62</sup> After the whole body of text is coded, these codes can be put into larger code groups. These code groups represent a certain concept. These concepts then make it easier to explain the texts and gives us an understanding of what is being said.<sup>63</sup>

Figure 1 demonstrates what the coding looks like in ATLAS.ti. It is a coded page of the 1994 white paper. The codes *Transatlantique* and *Alliance Atlantique* are part of the code group “NATO.” The blue highlighted areas indicate interesting quotations, that might be useful for the analysis.

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<sup>61</sup> Mallet, *Défense et sécurité nationale*, 69.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Muhr, “ATLAS/Ti — A Prototype for the Support of Text Interpretation,” *Qualitative Sociology* 14, no. 4 (December 1, 1991): 355, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00989645>.

<sup>63</sup> Muhr, “ATLAS/TI,” 358.

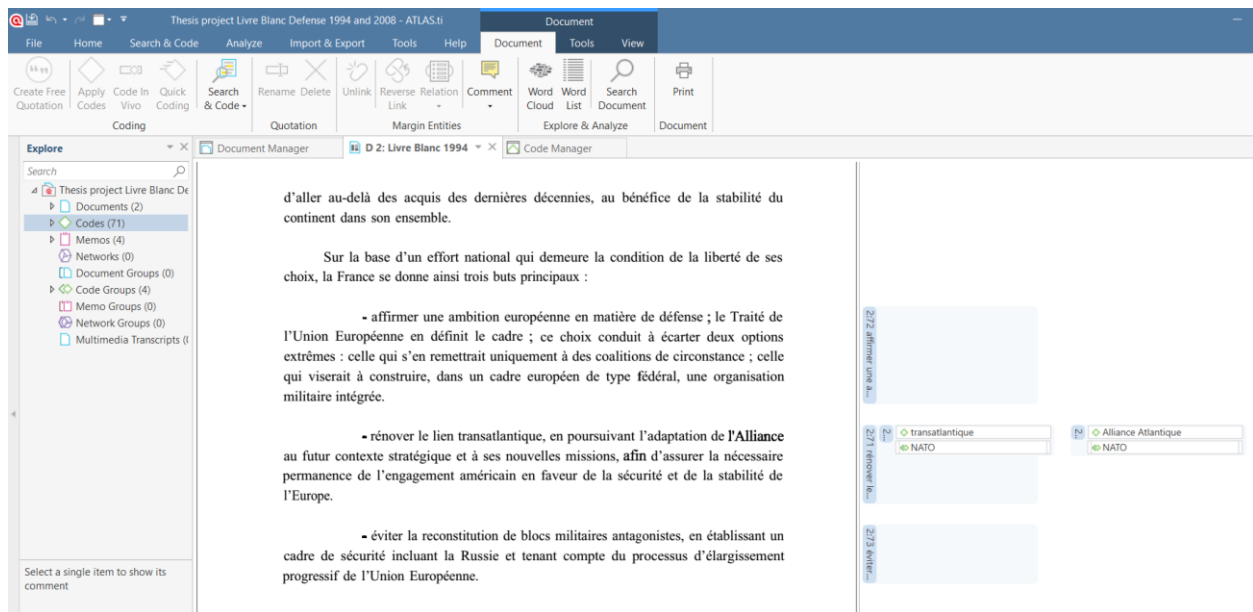


Figure 1 *Livre Blanc (1994) Coded in ATLAS.ti*

When the coding is complete, the analysis begins. The analysis takes place in a search for patterns in the data and the function of parts of the discourse.<sup>64</sup>

In the first chapter of this thesis, the white paper of 1994 will be contextualized. After a political and historical overview of the first white paper, it will be analyzed through discourse analysis. As mentioned earlier, there will be a specific focus on French nuclear policy and how the independence of the French arsenal in relation to NATO is stated in these documents. In the second chapter, the white paper of 2008 will be contextualized and then it will be analyzed according to the same steps as described earlier. After this is completed, there will be a conclusion in the third chapter.

## Chapter 1.1. France, 1994

In this chapter, the historical and political context of the French foreign policy and nuclear program of the white paper of 1994 will be discussed. This will create a background for the discourse analysis of *Le livre blanc sur la défense*. In 1994, François Mitterrand was the president of the Fifth Republic.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Gill, "Discourse Analysis," 7–9.

<sup>65</sup> Cogan, "Mitterrand, France, and NATO," 257.



## The Foreign Policy of Mitterrand

A characteristic of the Fifth Republic is that the president decides upon the foreign policy.<sup>66</sup> The president has freedom to decide on foreign policy matters, without having to follow up a team of policy makers.<sup>67</sup> According to Anand Menon, it was expected that Mitterrand, as being part of the Parti Sociale, would change foreign policy under his presidency. The expectation was that he was going to pay more attention to the conventional forces, and that he would act against the arms sales to other countries. It was also expected that Mitterrand would change the deterrent strategy. However, none of these elements were taken up by the government.<sup>68</sup>

According to Phillip H. Gordon, Mitterrand had been a critic of de Gaulle in the years before his presidency.<sup>69</sup> However, Mitterrand was seen as someone who showed continuation of Gaullism in his foreign policy. The reason for this was the continuation of the French views of a European Defense identity outside of NATO. Mitterrand's foreign policy regarding defense was to stay outside of the integrated military command structure of the organization.<sup>70</sup> The continuation of Gaullism also showed through the believe that France had a special vocation in the world.<sup>71</sup> As for the rest of NATO, Mitterrand was fiercely against the further growth of the alliance. He never saw it as the right decision for NATO to grow outside of its original function and he criticized the alliance's involvement in the Bosnian war.<sup>72</sup> This does not mean that Mitterrand did not support the alliance in critical times. For example, he supported NATO in 1983 during the Euromissile crisis.<sup>73</sup>

Mitterrand was particularly interested in European common defense. Especially at the beginning of his term. He formed a Franco-German brigade together with the German chancellor Helmut Kohl.<sup>74</sup> In 1992, with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, a Common

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<sup>66</sup> Philip G Cerny, "Mitterrand's Foreign Policy; Continuity and Vulnerability," *Politics* 3, no. 2 (October 1, 1983): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.1983.tb00076.x>.

<sup>67</sup> Anand Menon, "Explaining Defence Policy: The Mitterrand Years," *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 3 (July 1995): 279, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117693>.

<sup>68</sup> Menon, "Explaining Defence Policy," 283.

<sup>69</sup> Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France*, 106.

<sup>70</sup> Cogan, "Mitterrand, France, and NATO," 257.

<sup>71</sup> Dominique Moïsi, "Mitterrand's Foreign Policy: The Limits of Continuity," *Foreign Affairs* 60, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 347, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1290280870/citation/FE01E52C26214AA5PQ/1>.

<sup>72</sup> Cogan, "Mitterrand, France, and NATO," 261.

<sup>73</sup> Ronald Tiersky, "The Mitterrand Legacy and the Future of French Security Policy" (National Defense Univ Washington Dc Inst for National Strategic Studies, August 1, 1995), 9, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA421940>.

<sup>74</sup> Bernard E. Brown, "NATO and De Gaulle's Ghost," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 35, no. 5 (October 9, 2013): 291, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10803920.2013.817910>.

Foreign Security Policy was formed. The plan was that this defense policy would be complementary to NATO, not a replacement.<sup>75</sup>

As Ronald Tiersky argues, Mitterrand has been the link of French security policy from before the Cold War and after the Cold War. His first term was from 1981 until 1988, and his second term was from 1988 until 1995.<sup>76</sup> According to Menon, the Cold War had good circumstances for France to exercise its independence.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, after the fall of the Soviet regime, the position of NATO had changed. It was harder for France to influence NATO without being part of the integrated command structure. For example, Paris disagreed with the creation of a NATO Rapid Reaction Force in 1991 but was not able to have a say in it.<sup>78</sup>

After the fall of the Berlin Wall until the end of the Gulf wars in 1991, there was more opportunity for France to seek rapprochement with NATO. France had a more open position towards military relations with the US. It had complete engagement in the Gulf War, and Mitterrand even allowed the French troops to be under American command.<sup>79</sup> The believe was that the situation of Gaullist security had changed since the 1960s and that the US had a more important role in European security. France had a more lenient position towards the US, meaning that they accepted the US' role on the European continent.<sup>80</sup> However, there was not really a rapprochement towards NATO at that time. France held on to its independence. The Soviet threat was the reason of establishment of the alliance in 1949. With the fall of the Soviet regime, the *raison d'être* (purpose) of the military structure was gone, according to Mitterrand.<sup>81</sup> Tiersky argues that after Mitterrand's second term had ended, there was little evidence that France would reintegrate.

## The Nuclear Policy of Mitterrand

Because of a lack of defense budget in France during the Mitterrand era, France would spend relatively more money on nuclear weapons, instead of conventional weapons. The reason for this is that France would get more for their money's worth. The investment in nuclear weapons would give them more international influence than the investment in conventional

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<sup>75</sup> European Union, "Treaty on European Union, Maastricht, July 2, 1992," *European Parliament*, accessed March 28, 2022, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu/sign/nld>.

<sup>76</sup> Tiersky, "The Mitterrand Legacy and the Future of French Security Policy," 8.

<sup>77</sup> Menon, "Explaining Defence Policy," 285.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 285–86.

<sup>79</sup> Tiersky, "The Mitterrand Legacy and the Future of French Security Policy," 9.

<sup>80</sup> Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France*, 165–66.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

weapons.<sup>82</sup> On top of that, there was the belief by the socialist party, Mitterrand's party, that France had to contribute to the security of its partners, in which the deterrent force played an important role.<sup>83</sup> This was remarkable, since the French left, and also Mitterrand, were against nuclear weapons, but by the end of the 1970s, it was embraced. This means that there was a shift in left politics, and they eventually embraced Gaullism.<sup>84</sup> Tiersky even called Mitterrand a:

*[D]eterrence purist, resisting any deviance from a doctrine of absolute deterrence- meaning a modernized nuclear arsenal combined with a total refusal to envisage (at least publicly) what to do if deterrence failed.*<sup>85</sup>

France also wanted to maintain its independence. There was a rejection of flexible response, because it was not considered credible.<sup>86</sup> A flexible response entails a large set of strategies, and the main idea is to move away from excessive reliance on nuclear weapons.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, France did not want to be involved in the Theatre Nuclear Weapons Negotiations at Geneva in November 1981.<sup>88</sup> These were negotiations between the US and the USSR about tactical and theatre arms in Western Europe.<sup>89</sup> Even though the USSR wanted to negotiate the nuclear forces of France, as well as those of the UK, the US had decided that the theatre and strategic negotiations would be separate from each other, as France wanted explicitly not to be involved.<sup>90</sup> This seemed not necessarily to be that way because of France's fear of losing independence. It was more about Mitterrand's belief that the two superpowers should start the negotiations. Mitterrand also approved the Geneva talks and even argued in favor of a rapid discussion. He made clear that he wanted no SS-20s, a Soviet intermediate-

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<sup>82</sup> Cerny, "Mitterrand's Foreign Policy; Continuity and Vulnerability," 5.

<sup>83</sup> Marie-Claude Smouts, "The External Policy of Francois Mitterrand," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 59, no. 2 (1983): 160, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2619932>.

<sup>84</sup> Diana Johnstone, "How the French Left Learned to Love the Bomb," *New Left Review*, no. 1/146 (August 1, 1984): 5–36.

<sup>85</sup> Tiersky, "The Mitterrand Legacy and the Future of French Security Policy," 10.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.; Bruno Tertrais, "A Comparison between US, UK and French Nuclear Policies and Doctrines," *Centre National de La Recherche Scientifique*, 2007, 5.

<sup>87</sup> Francis J. Gavin, *Nuclear Statecraft: History and Strategy in America's Atomic Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 33, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801465765>.

<sup>88</sup> Cerny, "Mitterrand's Foreign Policy; Continuity and Vulnerability," 4.

<sup>89</sup> "News Summary; Monday, November 30, 1981," *The New York Times*, November 30, 1981, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/11/30/nyregion/news-summary-monday-november-30-1981.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Don Oberdorfer, "U.S.-Soviet Nuclear Talks to Begin Nov. 30 in Geneva," *Washington Post*, September 25, 1981, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/09/25/us-soviet-nuclear-talks-to-begin-nov-30-in-geneva/dbdd2123-e1c6-4c35-92f5-61a1e6581a51/>.

range ballistic missile, and Pershing 2s, a US medium range, solid fueled ballistic missile, on the world stage.<sup>91</sup>

As Marie-Claude Smouts points out, in 1982, France was still expanding their nuclear arsenal to remain a certain threshold. In the same year they built their seventh submarine with strategic missile and studied new intercontinental tactical missiles. At that time, France was also capable of building a neutron bomb, which it had decided not to.<sup>92</sup> Paris would refuse to accept anything out of the Geneva negotiations, keeping its cards close to its chest.

In September 1983, Mitterrand gave a speech in which he told the conditions that needed to be satisfied for France before he would consider going into negotiations about the French nuclear weapons. He said that both superpowers needed to reduce their arsenals at a level that was like that of France. On top of that, he demanded limitations on systems that were capable of neutralizing offensive forces. Lastly, he demanded to see progress in the reduction of conventional force imbalances in the European continent. He also pleaded for an elimination of chemical and biological weapons on a global scale.<sup>93</sup>

Until the end of the 1980s, the nuclear policy was maintained. France had to change its nuclear policy by the end of the Cold War.<sup>94</sup> This meant that from the beginning of the 1990s, the nuclear forces were being reduced.<sup>95</sup> According to Tiersky, in the white paper dating from 1994, there are changes in the nuclear doctrine from the 1980s. There was a lack of a designated adversary in the 1990s, so the position of nuclear weapons in French foreign policy was based on European security and peacekeeping.<sup>96</sup> Tiersky argues that this left open the question if the French nuclear force would be maintained at the same levels as earlier.<sup>97</sup> Tiersky does mention the expectation that France would maintain its own deterrent forces, in the case that NATO remained the primary security alliance in Western Europe.<sup>98</sup> This indicates that France still had an aversion towards integration.

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<sup>91</sup> Smouts, "The External Policy of Francois Mitterrand," 158; "RSD-10 Pioneer (SS-20)," Missile Threat, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ss-20-saber-rsd-10/>; "Pershing 2," Missile Threat, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/mgm-31b-pershing-2/>.

<sup>92</sup> Smouts, "The External Policy of Francois Mitterrand," 159.

<sup>93</sup> David S. Yost, "Mitterrand and Defense and Security Policy," *French Politics and Society* 9, no. 3/4 (1991): 141–42, <https://www.jstor.org/ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/2048/stable/42844255>.

<sup>94</sup> Jacques Fontanela and Jean-Paul Hébert, "The End of the 'French Grandeur Policy,'" *Defence and Peace Economics* 8, no. 1 (March 1997): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10430719708404868>.

<sup>95</sup> Pascal Boniface, "French Nuclear Weapons Policy After the Cold War," *The Atlantic Council of the United States: Occasional Paper*, August 1998, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Tiersky, "The Mitterrand Legacy and the Future of French Security Policy," 26.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

## Chapter 1.2. Discourse Analysis on the French White paper of 1994

In the foreword of the white paper of 1994 is stated that the aim of the text is to present the policy of the use of armed forces in France and to ensure the independence, defense, and vital interest of the nation. Already in the introduction it is stated that France has chosen to have a strong nuclear deterrent force that will constantly be adapted to the threats it faces. Even though the author of the introduction, Eduard Balladeur, the prime minister at that time, acknowledges that nuclear force has been a point of discussion for many years, he emphasizes that the effectiveness has been demonstrated, justifying the argument of use for deterrence.<sup>99</sup>

In the second foreword, written by François Léotard, the minister of defense in 1994, it is argued that the French state must be an example for other states. Especially within Europe.<sup>100</sup> Léotard describes the collective defense of Europe, and the world as the main goal of the book. It seems contradictory to the independence that Balladeur was talking about, but Léotard means the defense under French values, which emphasizes the French special vocation in the world. Finally, Léotard closes off by stating that nuclear deterrence remains one of the fundamentals of French independence.<sup>101</sup> This message is conveyed throughout a large part of the white paper.

### Discussion of the Results

In order to answer the sub question, the coding of the 1994 white paper was focused on the mentions of nuclear forces, and every other mention of nuclear weapons in defense, the mention of the Atlantic Alliance, and the mention of independence. These codes formed three larger groups: nuclear, NATO, and independence. The results of the frequency in the 178-page document are displayed in the chart below.

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<sup>99</sup> Balladeur, in *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, chap. Foreword.

<sup>100</sup> Léotard, in *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, chap. Foreword.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

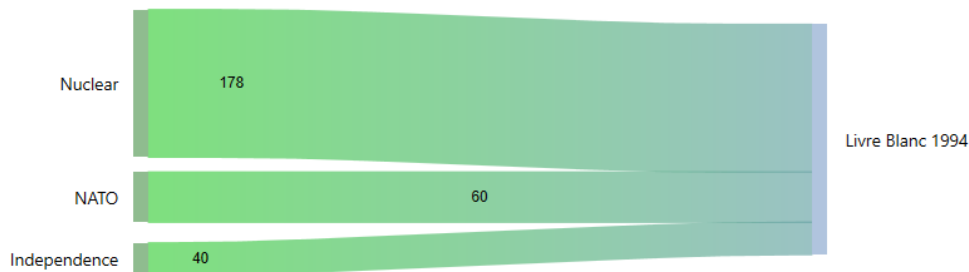


Figure 2 Mentions of Nuclear Policy, NATO, and Independence in the white paper (1994)

As is shown in the chart, nuclear forces are mentioned 178 times, and makes up the largest group of the three code groups. This shows that nuclear forces were of significance in the French defense in 1994. NATO is mentioned 60 times, and independence 40 times.

### The Underlying Meaning

What is of importance for understanding the text of the white papers, is that it is trying to persuade the reader of the importance of autonomy when it comes to nuclear deterrence. In the text it is mentioned that France's first objective is to protect its vital interest through nuclear weapons.<sup>102</sup> By immediately stressing this importance, the reader is being persuaded and convinced to believe that this is true.

This is all being tied together on page 36 and 37. The text discusses the long tradition of independence from NATO, which is essential for the independence of France's (nuclear) forces and territory.<sup>103</sup> The reader is thus again persuaded to think that an independent policy, apart from the alliance, is necessary to maintain sovereignty and freedom of decision. The text further does not give any hard proof or evidence that France will lose its autonomy over its nuclear forces if it were to change its position vis-à-vis NATO. This gives a one-sided view, which is used to convince the reader of this particular perspective.

In the following subheadings, the discourse analysis is further explained. The French state's vision on the concepts of defense regarding NATO, nuclear force, and independence

<sup>102</sup> Long, *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, introduction.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–37.

will be explained with citations from the white paper of 1994. These citations are translated from its original language, French, for the sake of the readability of this thesis.

## **The Concept of NATO**

The white paper of 1994 shows an expression of the difficult relationship that France had in this period with NATO. At first, the white paper talks mainly about NATO's identity in a post-Cold War world. As the Cold War had come to an end, the French ministry of defense did acknowledge the importance of the alliance but expected that the Americans would not be as engaged since the fall of the Warsaw Pact, as it was established as a counterweight to the threats of the USSR.<sup>104</sup> With the fall of the USSR, and thus the lack of communist threat, the text describes what it expects to happen with NATO.

*NATO remains the main defense organization, but the American commitment, if it is reaffirmed with consistency, will take on more flexible and less massive forms than during the confrontation with the Warsaw Pact.*<sup>105</sup>

Despite this, the lack of engagement of the Americans had apparently shown a window of opportunity for the French as they proceeded to mention the following goal:

*[T]o renovate the transatlantic link, by continuing to adapt the Alliance to the future strategic context and its new missions, to ensure the necessary permanence of American commitment to the security and stability of Europe.*<sup>106</sup>

However, this citation also illustrates that the only way France would allow stricter reengagement with NATO in 1994, was if the alliance would be more centered around European security. The reader is again persuaded to think that this is the only way France can allow American presence. Nonetheless, it shows a shift in Gaullist policy, since it does give the Americans an opportunity to be involved with France and Europe. The explicit mention of the necessity of the American commitment is important here, since it is admitted that American presence is needed. It relates to Mitterrand's interest in European common defense.

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<sup>104</sup> O'Connell, "NATO at Sixty: America Between Law and War," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 17, no. 2 (2010): 187, <https://doi.org/10.2979/gls.2010.17.2.187>; Anthony Forster and William Wallace, "What Is NATO For?," *Survival* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 2001): 111, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396330112331343155>.

<sup>105</sup> Long, *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, 30.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

The role the French ministry of defense saw for NATO was that the alliance would shift its interest more towards Europe and the safety of Europe. This is expressed in the following line:

*France will continue to promote a strengthening of the role of WEU complementary to the role of NATO.*<sup>107</sup>

The WEU in this citation is the Western European Union. Not to be confused with the EU. The WEU was established in 1954 as a Western European defense cooperation. Nevertheless, during the Cold War, it was mostly overshadowed by NATO.<sup>108</sup> Apparently, France still saw opportunity for the WEU in 1994.

The chapter continues by stating that NATO should reconsider its role, since the Cold War had come to an end. The text expresses that the Alliance should take on a more European focused identity.<sup>109</sup> In the last paragraph that is specifically about NATO, the independence and nuclear policy regarding the alliance are mentioned.

*These different developments are not likely to modify our particular military situation within the principles laid down in 1966 (non-participation in the integrated military organization, free disposal of our forces and our territory, independence of our nuclear force, freedom of assessment of the conditions of our security in times of crisis, freedom of choice of our means in the event of action) will continue to guide our relations with the integrated military organization.*<sup>110</sup>

This paragraph is particularly interesting, because it emphasizes that despite the earlier ideas for a NATO identity reform, France will not go back on its decision to leave the integrated military structure. It is specifically said here that the state keeps its independence, also specifically mentioning that its nuclear forces will remain under national authority. This attributes to the earlier statement that the reader is persuaded to think there is no other option to maintain France's autonomy.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>108</sup> Garrett W. Brown, Iain McLean, and Alistair McMillan, "Western European Union," in *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199670840.001.0001/acref-9780199670840-e-1464>.

<sup>109</sup> Long, *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*, 35.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 36–37.



## The Concept of Nuclear Force

The white paper expresses the need for nuclear weapons and tries to convince the reader of the necessity of these forces. To justify the nuclear policy, the white paper also gives a short history on why France chose to become a nuclear power in the first place. This was because of the wish to protect its vital interest against great threats from powerful countries, and to protect France's independence and freedom of political action in all possible circumstances.<sup>111</sup> At the beginning of chapter 4, which is about defense strategies, it is directly stated that nuclear deterrence will remain the basis of national defense.<sup>112</sup> The fact that this is immediately mentioned shows the importance of the nuclear deterrent for France.

It is further explained that these reasons have changed to the new context in world politics. Of course, the threat of the USSR had gone away. The justification of nuclear weapons is that it can always defend France's interest on world stage. The following is stated in the white paper:

*Nuclear forces cannot be affected by such provisions because, protecting our vital interests, they must constantly be able to adapt to changing threats.*<sup>113</sup>

Explained here is that the nuclear forces still protect the vital interest of France. They will not be changed or affected, considering the possible threats for France in the future. This argument is repeated several times.<sup>114</sup> How this can be adapted is not mentioned. This means that not only the importance of nuclear weapons for France is stressed, but also the importance of the independence of nuclear weapons. They contribute to the maintenance of the sovereign territory and can be an effective tool for deterrence.<sup>115</sup> The language is used to convince the reader of the need of nuclear forces to protect the French territory and counter threats. This is done by creating a sense of fear of a possible upcoming threat, even though it was stated before that France had no explicit adversary in 1994.

However, the above arguments are nuanced further on. Nuclear weapons are means of compensation. It is a way to avoid a possible conventional arms race. Something France admits it cannot afford.<sup>116</sup> It is not explicitly mentioned in the white paper, but it relates to the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 57.

argument Cerny makes, that nuclear weapons gave more for their money's worth than conventional weapons.

## **The Concept of Independence**

Independence is mainly mentioned in the context of strategic independence to maintain territorial autonomy, and in the context of nuclear forces, like here:

*This deterrent capability must come under total autonomy of national action. It presupposes having secure command means and transmissional means, using particularly reliable circulation and data processing methods.<sup>117</sup>*

The readers of the text are being convinced here of the necessity of autonomy of nuclear weapons. In the underlying context it does not seem to be about influence on the world stage here. It is about the deterrent force as last resort to secure autonomy for France. Meaning that the nuclear force is important for national interest and not for collective defense since the quotation speaks of a total autonomy of national action. This argument is once more repeated in different words on page 117.

*In the nuclear field, our country must master the design, manufacture, and implementation of systems. These technological sectors and these strategic choices are indeed closely involved in national sovereignty and are essential to the implementation objectives that have priority that are assigned to Defense.<sup>118</sup>*

Explained here is that the strategic choices in the nuclear area are indispensable for the national sovereignty. The importance is stressed through the underlining of these two words. Nuclear weapons thus create independence for France, according to the text. Furthermore, the presence of nuclear weapons for deterrence is justified by the argument of independence. Removing nuclear weapons would lead the French government to lose a part of its autonomy. The fear of losing autonomy makes up a great deal of the argument of keeping the nuclear arsenal. An example of this argument is found on page 50.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 117.

*In fact, this strategy would gradually erase nuclear deterrence from the concept of defense and would lead towards relying solely on the guarantees of the Atlantic Alliance for our defense, creating dependencies, contrary to the principle of our strategic autonomy.*<sup>119</sup>

Giving up the nuclear arsenal would mean being dependent on the Atlantic Alliance, which was something France was trying to avoid. There was a continuation of Gaullism in French foreign policy in 1994. This role of French independence is further emphasized on the same page. It is taken a step further, by stating that it is France's international vocation to ensure the defense interests of France, and to reinforce the European defense interest at the same time.<sup>120</sup>

## Chapter 2.1. France 2008

In this chapter, the historical political context of the French foreign policy and nuclear program of the white paper of 2008 will be discussed. On May 16, 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy became the president of the Fifth Republic. At first, his foreign policy with a focus towards Atlanticism will be discussed, followed by the specific ideas he had for nuclear policy.

### The Foreign Policy of Sarkozy

Sarkozy expressed he wanted a “rupture” with former foreign policies when he entered presidency in 2007. This was also the reason why he appointed a foreign minister from the left, Bernard Kouchner. He wanted to avoid ministers on the right, to facilitate this rupture.<sup>121</sup> On top of the NATO return, he also emphasized the return of France in Europe, to make up for the 2005 EU referendum, about the European constitution, in which France voted against.<sup>122</sup>

Even though Sarkozy was the leader of the Gaullist party, he did not always show continuation of Gaullism during his presidency, especially around transatlantic relations.<sup>123</sup> Of course, the reintegration with NATO broke with the French mantra “*ami, allié' non-aligné*”

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Brinton Rowdybush and Patrick Chamorel, “Aspirations and Reality: French Foreign Policy and the 2012 Elections,” *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (February 2012): 164, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2012.642792>.

<sup>122</sup> Rowdybush and Chamorel, “Aspirations and Reality,” 164–65; “Referendum over EU-grondwet in Frankrijk,” Europa Nu, accessed March 29, 2022, [https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vgoesgsgczg/referendum\\_over\\_eu\\_grondwet\\_in\\_frankrijk](https://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vgoesgsgczg/referendum_over_eu_grondwet_in_frankrijk).

<sup>123</sup> Marcel H Van Herpen, “The Foreign Policy of Nicolas Sarkozy: Not Principled, Opportunistic and Amateurish,” *Cicero Foundation Great Debate Paper* 10, No. 1 (February 2010): 1–2.

(friends, allied, not aligned).<sup>124</sup> This could be nuanced, according to Justin Vaisse. It is tempting to describe Sarkozy as an Atlanticist president, instead of a Gaullist president.<sup>125</sup> Atlanticism is a term that is used to describe “a specific type of security policy identity and orientation.”<sup>126</sup> This orientation is focused on historical and geographical ties between the US and Europe. NATO is an example of Atlanticism.<sup>127</sup> Sarkozy even described himself as an Atlanticist. When he presented the new white paper in June 2008, he mentioned that the restoration with the Atlantic area would be a rupture of Gaullism.<sup>128</sup>

However, Vaisse argues that it is often overlooked that even Sarkozy still held onto the Gaullist idea of French exceptionalism. On top of that, the Atlanticist framing was mostly done by Sarkozy himself.<sup>129</sup> He indeed saw it as a rational decision to reintegrate in the military structure of NATO. He also sought rapprochement towards President Barack Obama of the US, but this relationship was strained, due to the lack of chemistry between the two men.<sup>130</sup>

Sarkozy showed a continuation in Gaullism and former French foreign policy regarding European policy. He felt that if Europe and European defense were strengthened, Europe could become a major actor on the world stage.<sup>131</sup> This is in line with Sarkozy’s view of a Europeanization of the Atlantic Alliance, as Bozo argues.<sup>132</sup> Nonetheless, Sarkozy was the most Atlanticist president of the Fifth Republic, compared to his predecessors.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Jolyon Howorth, “Sarkozy and the ‘American Mirage’ or Why Gaullist Continuity Will Overshadow Transcendence,” *European Political Science* 9, no. 2 (June 2010): 206, <https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2010.3>.

<sup>125</sup> Justin Vaisse, “A Gaullist by Any Other Name,” *Survival* 50, no. 3 (July 6, 2008): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396330802173040>.

<sup>126</sup> Nina Græger and Kristin M. Haugevik, *The Revival of Atlanticism in NATO?* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2009), 11, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep08064.5>.

<sup>127</sup> Græger and Haugevik, *The Revival of Atlanticism in Nato?*, 11.

<sup>128</sup> J. F. V. Keiger, “The ‘Novelty’ of Sarkozy’s Foreign Policy Towards NATO and the US: The Long View,” *European Political Science* 9, no. 2 (June 2010): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2010.7>.

<sup>129</sup> Vaisse, “A Gaullist by Any Other Name,” 7.

<sup>130</sup> Herpen, “The Foreign Policy of Nicolas Sarkozy,” 3.

<sup>131</sup> Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, “Sarkozy’s Foreign Policy: Substance or Style?,” *The International Spectator* 43, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 7–8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720801959792>.

<sup>132</sup> Frédéric Bozo, “France and NATO under Sarkozy: End of a French Exception?,” *Conference Papers -- Paper Presented at American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Boston* (August 28-31, 2008): 8, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=asn&AN=36952583&lang=nl&site=e-host-live&custid=s3628809>.

<sup>133</sup> Rowdybush and Chamorel, “Aspirations and Reality,” 165.

## The Nuclear Policy of Sarkozy

On March 21, 2008, Nicolas Sarkozy gave a speech in Cherbourg about the French nuclear policy during his presidency.<sup>134</sup> The reason for this speech was the latest addition to the French strategic fleet, a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. Sarkozy saw the addition as an essential part for the nuclear capability. During the speech he argued that the new millennium had brought new threats and rivalries to France, and that the world had changed since the Cold War and the first Gulf War. The world he described in 2008 was more complex, more unstable, and had more vulnerabilities. He also mentioned that the world had changed too much since the last white paper of 1994, so he announced the new white paper in this speech.

What is remarkable, is that Sarkozy expressed the need for French defense, even without an explicit adversary. He even mentioned that France had no direct security risks, but he felt threatened by the growing nuclear stockpiles around the world. He especially saw the growing stockpiles of Iran as a threat for Europe as a whole. This explains why he viewed the new submarine as essential.<sup>135</sup> Nonetheless, the expansion of the arsenal was merely for deterrence. All this together shows how France looked at the importance of nuclear weapons as a deterrent. He further said the following: “Choices will be made so that our defense policy will be the most useful, efficient, and relevant, serving the great ambitions for France and Europe.”<sup>136</sup>

This shows a clear continuation of the importance of a European defense for France. He also mentioned NATO, but he only mentioned it by saying that NATO is also reliant on nuclear weapons. So, this justifies his decision to make French security reliant on these weapons. Lastly, he talked about disarmament. By 2008, France had reduced its nuclear arsenal by half since the Cold War, however, further concrete plans for disarmament were not mentioned.<sup>137</sup>

Bruno Tertrais wrote an analysis about this speech. Tertrais starts this analysis with referring to the speech as something particularly French. Neither the leaders of the US, nor the UK would ever devote an entire speech to nuclear deterrence.<sup>138</sup> This is a sign of Gaullism

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<sup>134</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, “Speech by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of The French Republic: Presentation Of « Le Terrible » Submarine,” Cherbourg, March 21, 2008 (Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires Étrangères), [https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/img/pdf/speech\\_by\\_nicolas\\_sarkozy\\_\\_presentation\\_of\\_le\\_terrible\\_submarine.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/img/pdf/speech_by_nicolas_sarkozy__presentation_of_le_terrible_submarine.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, “Speech by Nicolas Sarkozy,” 1-3.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>138</sup> Bruno Tertrais, “France and Nuclear Disarmament: The Meaning of the Sarkozy Speech,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 30, 2008, accessed March 22, 2022,

and grandeur, that is still displayed by Sarkozy. According to Tertrais, there were two things noteworthy about the speech. As mentioned earlier, Sarkozy broke with foreign policies of the past, by talking about dismantling testing sites.<sup>139</sup> However, he chose to continue the nuclear policy. The second thing that was remarkable, according to Tertrais, was the attention for disarmament. This was probably due to international pressure to be more outspoken in the debate. Despite this, he avoided the mention of complete abolition, while the UK had already talked about this before.<sup>140</sup>

On top of that, even though France had remained vague and independent about their nuclear weapons, the state did decide to extent the 1998 Saint-Malo treaty in 2010. This was a treaty between France and the UK, in which it was decided that Europe should be able to have full military capacity.<sup>141</sup> The extension of this treaty, the Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, was based on the common interest and responsibilities in defense for both countries. The belief was that both France and the UK would get more value for their money if they were to cooperate more closely. Apart from cooperation in armed forces, there was also a closer cooperation on the nuclear level.<sup>142</sup> The two countries intended to produce nuclear submarines together. In addition, the plan was to create a joint expedition force by 2016.<sup>143</sup> The summit declaration did declare that NATO was still the fundamental guarantee of the safety of Western-Europe. The belief was that the nuclear arsenals of both countries would contribute to the defense of Europe, but France's deterrent force still would not be placed under NATO.<sup>144</sup> Sarkozy thus remained restrained in nuclear cooperation with NATO but was interested in an expansion of bilateral cooperation with the UK. Presumably this agreement was not considered a threat to French autonomy.

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<https://carnegieendowment.org/2008/04/30/france-and-nuclear-disarmament-meaning-of-sarkozy-speech-pub-20090>.

<sup>139</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, "Speech by Nicolas Sarkozy," 6.

<sup>140</sup> Tertrais, "France and Nuclear Disarmament."

<sup>141</sup> Angelescu, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, 36.

<sup>142</sup> GOV.UK, "UK–France Summit 2010 Declaration on Defence and Security Co-Operation," *Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street*, Published November 2, 2010, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-france-summit-2010-declaration-on-defence-and-security-co-operation>.

<sup>143</sup> Brown, "NATO and De Gaulle's Ghost," 292.

<sup>144</sup> GOV.UK, "UK–France Summit 2010 Declaration on Defence and Security Co-Operation."

## Chapter 2.2. Discourse Analysis on the French White Paper of 2008

In the preface, written by Sarkozy himself, the goal of the white paper is mentioned. Sarkozy writes that his goal is that France remains a large diplomatic and military power. This white paper was focused on the creation of a security policy related to economic, domestic, and foreign policy, more than the white paper of 1994.<sup>145</sup>

Even though Sarkozy speaks of a modernization and strengthening of the army, he also speaks of the consequences this will have for the French people. The French people would have to spend more money on his big plans for the national defense. The fact that he already mentions it in the preface, means that the security plans in the white paper will probably be on a great scale. Sarkozy justifies the bigger expenses in the preface by arguing it is beneficial for both France's independence and France's autonomy of decision.<sup>146</sup>

In the introduction, decisions made in 1996 about French defense are mentioned to illustrate the course of French defense in the years since the last white paper. These decisions entail that the French state had decided to professionalize the military forces, and to start dismantling its nuclear forces on the ground.<sup>147</sup> Even though this strategy was adopted in the time between the last white paper and this white paper, this strategy is obsolete according to the introduction, because of the radical changes in the world.

*[A] world that has not necessarily become more dangerous, but certainly more unpredictable, more unstable, more contradictory than the one that was taking shape in 1994 (...). The French ambition is not to put up with the effects of uncertainty, but to be able to anticipate, react and influence international developments. This ambition leads to the definition of a new national security strategy.*<sup>148</sup>

These lines illustrate the need for changes in French security, they are written in italics in the text to emphasize the message. According to the text, the world has become more unpredictable. By this is meant, the rising threat of terrorism, the rise of Asia, and nuclear

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<sup>145</sup> Nicolas Sarkozy, « Préface du Président de la République, » in *Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale*, ed. Jean-Claude Mallet (Paris : Jacob O., 2008).

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

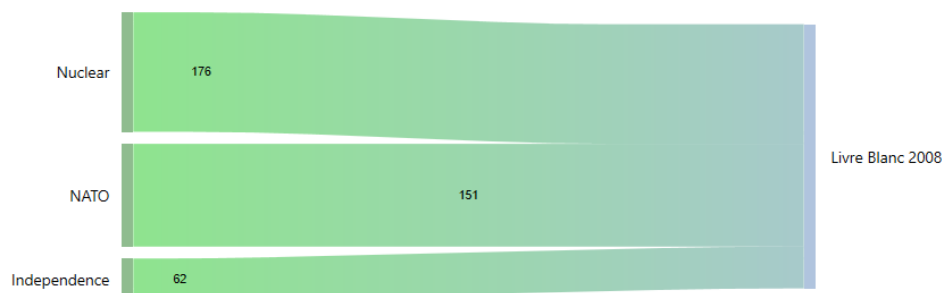
<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Mallet, *Défense et Sécurité Nationale*, 14.

proliferation.<sup>149</sup> France needs to be able to react to these new vulnerabilities, as it is called.<sup>150</sup> This message by the president in the preface, and the introduction creates a sense of fear and unpredictability, that is being built on throughout the document. The fact that the preface comes from the president, an authoritative figure, makes it convincing to the reader. The fear justifies the foreign policy.

## Discussion of the Results

The coding of the 2008 white paper was conducted in the same way as the 1994 white paper. The results of the frequency in the 402-page document are displayed in the chart below.



*Figure 3 Mentions of Nuclear Policy, NATO, and Independence in the white paper (2008)*

As can be seen in figure 2, nuclear force is referred to 176 times in the white paper. NATO is referred to 151 times, and independence is referred to 62 times. What is remarkable, is that the Atlantic Alliance is referred to more often than in the 1994 white paper. Even though the 2008 white paper is much more extensive with 402 pages, opposed to 178 in 1994, the context remains decisive. It is already clear that NATO got a bigger role in French defense in 2008. This is not surprising, considering the context.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., Introduction.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 14.



## Underlying Meaning

The underlying meaning of this white paper is also to persuade the reader. Not only of the importance of independence of nuclear weapons, but also that reintegration into NATO is a good idea, and does not harm France's autonomy, even though this is what was proclaimed in the white paper of 1994. The text acknowledges that it must trade in French values for security but holds on to the last bit of independence it has. The text justifies this change of heart by stating that the world has changed due to globalization. However, to reassure the reader of the French values despite the announcement of the reintegration, the text does hold on to the conviction that France can have the autonomy it wants. This autonomy is facilitated by nuclear weapons. This happens most clearly on page 110, where it is announced that the independent nuclear arsenal of France will remain outside of the alliance.<sup>151</sup>

Again, in the following subheadings, France's stance towards defense, regarding the three concepts will be explained with citations from the white paper dating from 2008. At the same time, there will be a comparison to the white paper of 1994, to see if there is any change of thought.

## The Concept of NATO

The concept of NATO has changed a lot in comparison to the white paper of 1994. Apart from the argument of strategic independence, it is now argued in the white paper that the alliance is essential for French security.<sup>152</sup> Even though in 1994, European collective defense was more important, and NATO was not described as essential.<sup>153</sup> The stance towards NATO has changed, as is expressed in the following lines:

*It is difficult to continue to proclaim the need for a difference in nature in our position vis-à-vis NATO, even though together with our European partners we recognize the Alliance as a key to our common security, and that we want to share our idea of a united and effective European Union in matters of security and defense.*<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 110.

Moreover, a whole chapter is dedicated to the “*Rénovation Transatlantique*” (Transatlantic Renovation).<sup>155</sup> Of importance here is that the word renovation indicates that something is being restored, in this case the relationship with the transatlantic area.<sup>156</sup> There is no building on something new with restoring, which makes sense if you take into account the fact that France restored the relationship with the integrated military structure, but did not build a new one with the NPG.

Furthermore, in the context of contribution, France admits that it has contributed to NATO operations more closely since 1994. The admittance of involvement, facilitated the step to reintegrate.<sup>157</sup> This is expressed in the following lines:

*France's position has evolved since 1994 in the direction of an increased presence in all the allied structures, and a strong contribution to the operations decided upon within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.*<sup>158</sup>

The admittance to a changed relationship can be seen as an argument for reintegration. It says in an indirect way: We have been so involved in the past years? Why trick ourselves and everyone else any longer by pretending we are not involved? Furthermore, discourse about NATO has changed in the period from 1994-2008, as reintegration was first off the table, but engagement was allowed. This vision took a complete turn.

## The Concept of Nuclear Force

After the introduction, it is expressed that the world has changed a lot since 1994. These changes are expressed in different types of language, *des développements positifs depuis 1994* (positive developments since 1994), and *des tendances inquiétantes* (worrying tendencies).<sup>159</sup> While the positive developments are expressed as literally that, “positive,” the negative developments are expressed with a euphemism, instead of “negative.” It does tell the reader that there is something to worry about. The new nuclear states like Pakistan and North Korea are mentioned as worrying tendencies, but it is also mentioned that there are private and

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., chap. 5.

<sup>156</sup> Marianne Chalmers and Martine Pierquin, eds., “Rénovation,” in *Oxford Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191739491.001.0001/b-fr-en-00008-0006605>.

<sup>157</sup> Von Hlatky, “Revisiting France’s Nuclear Exception after Its ‘Return’ to NATO,” 394.

<sup>158</sup> Mallet, *Défense et sécurité nationale*, 107.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., chap. 1.

clandestine parties involved.<sup>160</sup> In this first chapter, the strategy to counter these threats is not mentioned. But a sense of fear, and impracticality is being created. With this threatening proliferation in mind, the reader is persuaded to believe that globalization causes new nuclear threats that need to be countered. The creator of the text can create a justification of the maintenance of the nuclear deterrent.

Therefore, it is later expressed that nuclear deterrence remains one of France's most important defense strategies.<sup>161</sup> This means there is continuity in the policy of deterrence. What is interesting, is that the white paper tries to legitimize the continuation of the policy by creating a sense of fear about new nuclear powers in the following lines:

*Breaking the nuclear taboo itself is no longer improbable. Circumstances have changed since the deterrent balance reached in the 1960s. New nuclear powers have emerged, whose doctrines, when they exist, are poorly understood. Nuclear weapons are present in several sensitive regions where territorial disputes persist. Furthermore, it has been established that certain terrorist groups seek to gain access to radiological or nuclear materials or devices.*<sup>162</sup>

It is even speculated that the nuclear taboo could be broken, since the new nuclear powers do not have an open policy. The unpredictability of these states is used to justify the policy. By creating this sense of fear about new nuclear powers multiple times in the white paper, it becomes more and more logical for the reader why France must keep its nuclear arsenal.<sup>163</sup>

On top of that, it is described that the nuclear deterrent is strictly defensive. Only one purpose is given for the nuclear deterrent, which is to prevent state aggression against France's vital interests. However, only the head of state is allowed to determine what vital threats are. The fear of global changes is also expressed here, stating that there will be many attempts to circumvent the means of French defense and security.<sup>164</sup> By keeping the vital interests ambiguous, it is unclear to what extent the function of the nuclear deterrent goes.

## **The Concept of Independence**

As for the concept of independence, at first glance, the opinion on nuclear forces and independence does not seem to have changed since 1994. Yet again the reader is being

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 72–75.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 69–70.

convinced of the need for autonomy on nuclear weapons to stay independent. Here we see how the reader is persuaded to believe that deterrence is the ultimate strategy for security, it builds on the element of fear that was created in the first chapter, where new unpredictable nuclear threats were described.

*Nuclear deterrence remains an essential foundation of France's strategy. It is the ultimate guarantee of national security and independence. It is one of the conditions of our strategic autonomy, as well as the freedom of assessment, decision, and the action of the Head of State.*<sup>165</sup>

Furthermore, the white paper speaks of independence, and NATO. As mentioned earlier, France left out nuclear weapons in the reintegration on account of independence. This is stressed in the following lines:

*Participation in the nuclear planning group poses a problem of a different nature given the complete independence of our nuclear means.*<sup>166</sup>

This is how the reader is persuaded to believe that there will be a conflict, or a problem of a different nature, if France joins the NPG. What this different nature entails, is not specified. Apparently it would mean that France would lose autonomy. However, scholars like von Hlatky have argued that this is untrue. As the reasoning behind it is not further explained, the argument for leaving the nuclear force outside of the NPG seems more based on the perception of the Great Power Status, and thus the continuation of Gaullism. The only explanation offered relates to the 1999 Strategic concept and the 1994 Ottawa Declaration, expressing that the presence of the nuclear force is enough to contribute to peace.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 3. Conclusion

This thesis was focused on the following question: *Why did France insist on remaining a nuclear independent state when reintegrating with NATO in 2009?* This question was answered through the following sub question: *Do the white papers of 1994 and 2008 demonstrate a change in French thinking on nuclear weapons as part of their national security strategy?* To answer these questions, the foreign and nuclear policy of France in 1994 was contextualized, after which there was a discourse analysis on the *Le Livre Blanc Sur La Défense*. The same was done for the *Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale* of 2008. The discourse analyses were focused on how the concept of NATO, nuclear policy, and independence were described in the white papers.

The context of 1994 has shown that President Mitterrand was not keen on reintegrating into the integrated military command structure at the time. He was more interested in European defense, since it was believed that the *raison d'être* of NATO was gone after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, during the Mitterrand years, more money was spent on nuclear weapons. The goal of the text of the white paper in 1994 was to persuade the reader to believe that French autonomy over its nuclear weapons is necessary to maintain national sovereignty. The reader was also convinced that reintegrating with the Atlantic Alliance was not necessary, by looking back at the history between the two. The text offers a one-sided view to establish this persuasion.

The concept of NATO in the 1994 white paper was expressed by the idea that the role of NATO had changed because of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. The relationship between France and NATO was still difficult. Paris made clear that it still emphasized the importance of a common European defense. Furthermore, there was a continuation with the status quo of France's role in NATO. It would still cooperate with the integrated military structure, but not reintegrate.

This brings us to the concept of nuclear weapons in 1994. In the white paper, the need for nuclear weapons was expressed to the reader. It was expressed that the focus on the nuclear arsenal would prevent a possible arms race. It thus serves as a justification. Moreover, the nuclear arsenal would help the state maintain its national sovereignty. This also relates to the concept of independence.

The concept of independence in the 1994 white paper was mainly focused on strategic independence, especially in relation to nuclear weapons. The nuclear deterrent gave France

that independence, and there was no way that France would give that up to the Atlantic Alliance. That would mean that France had to become strategically dependent, which was something it was trying to avoid.

The context of 2008 has illustrated that President Sarkozy wanted a rupture with former foreign policies. This meant a break from Gaullist politics, and a move towards Atlanticist politics. However, there was still continuation of Gaullism, due to the focus on Europe's role on the world stage. Moreover, Sarkozy tried to justify newly developed nuclear weapons by saying that NATO was also dependent on it. Nuclear weapons for deterrence were thus still of importance. The white paper dating from 2008 again tried to persuade the reader, but in a different way than the former. It wanted to convince the reader that reintegration into the alliance would be a good idea. This shows a difference with 1994, because in this white paper it was expressed it would harm the autonomy. However, to convince the reader of the continuation of autonomy, the nuclear independence was still pursued. This answers the sub question, in 2008 there was a realization that alliances were needed in the ever-globalizing world, whereas there was still an attempt to hold on to a sense of French independence through the nuclear deterrent.

Also, the discourse analysis has shown that the concept of NATO in 2008 had changed in relation to the concept of NATO in 1994. There was an admittance that it was difficult to maintain the distanced stance towards the alliance. Since 1994, France had been more closely cooperating with NATO, and had an increased presence in missions. For the sake of more influence, it was a strategic step.

The concept of nuclear weapons in 2008 was mostly unchanged. There was a continuity in the presence of nuclear weapons for deterrence. The continuation of this policy was legitimized, because of new nuclear threats, and the fear of the potential breaking of the nuclear taboo by these new nuclear states. However, the policy remained strictly defensive.

The concept of independence in 2008 was also comparable to the concept of independence in 1994. Even though France did reintegrate into NATO, the state still wanted to pursue as much autonomy as possible. The nuclear deterrent was still important for this, it would give the guarantee of strategic autonomy in the event of a crisis. France feared that by integrating into the NPG, the nature of their independent means would change. On top of that, France had never been involved on a nuclear level in the alliance.

Von Hlatky has argued that there was no strategic reason for France to not integrate its nuclear arsenal, since it would mean no harm to France's autonomy. It would only have benefits, according to her. To answer the main question, this thesis has argued that France's

reasons for leaving their nuclear arsenal outside of NATO during the 2009 reintegration was because of the perception of a Great Power Status, and to demonstrate that France would not give up national sovereignty. Not only to the rest of the world, but also to its own citizens, as is demonstrated by the analyses of the white papers. This goes beyond von Hlatky's realist perspective, and it considers the importance of Gaullism in French politics. In that sense, even though Sarkozy was thought to be more involved with the Atlantic area and to have ruptured with Gaullism, in fact, Gaullism was still pursued. This continuation means that France did not change their perception in international politics with the entry of Sarkozy.

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