

**THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE:
A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

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WELCOME/MODERATOR:

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SPEAKER:

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[00:06:28]

DOUGLAS PAAL: Well, good morning, everyone. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us today here at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. My name is Doug Paal. I'm the vice president for studies here. And it's my privilege – even though I'm a specialist on Asia, my colleagues are traveling, and it's my privilege, then, to host us – our guest.

We've had – here at Carnegie, been extremely fortunate to host a distinguished group of speakers on the future of trans-Atlantic relations, from Prime Minister Francois Fillon and Finance Minister Christine Lagarde to NATO General Secretary Anders Fogh Rasmussen. We look forward to continuing that conversation today.

Indeed, we are privileged to have with us one of France's most thoughtful and articulate leaders, Minister Alain Juppé. After graduating from several of France's grandes écoles, he served as an advisor to then-Prime Minister and Mayor Jacques Chirac. In the years since, he has gone on to hold numerous senior posts, including stints as foreign minister, prime minister, and today as minister of defense and veteran affairs.

The BBC has described him as “a political force,” and the European Voice has called him “brilliant.” Today we have a chance to see whether those are accurate descriptions. Mr. Juppé's visit comes at a critical time for relations between the United States and France.

Both our countries have deep ties to North Africa and a profound interest in seeing the unrest there resolve peacefully. We're also working side by side in Afghanistan and working to quell piracy off the coast of Somalia. All that is to say nothing of the shared economic challenges your colleague Madame Lagarde described so eloquently from the stage just a few months ago.

In addition to our bilateral ties, our two countries also face a range of institutional questions: What role should NATO play during the years ahead? How is the alliance impacted by austerity and falling defense budgets? What about cooperation on missile defense?

Through our centers at Carnegie, both in Washington and overseas in Brussels, Moscow, Carnegie scholars are deeply engaged on many of these questions. We've also recently launched an – Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative, EASI, to help lay the intellectual foundation for an inclusive Euro-Atlantic security community for the new country.

Here to share his thoughts on the future of relations between the United States and France, it gives me great pleasure to introduce one of Europe's most distinguished and experienced statesmen. Mr. Minister, please.

[00:09:11]

ALAIN JUPPÉ: Thank you very much, and I hope to be as brilliant as my reputation said. It will be difficult for me.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, let me first say that – what a pleasure it is for me to be your guest today, in your prestigious institution, to discuss with you a major stake in our foreign and defense policy: the French–American partnership.

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This partnership is the result of a long and shared history, a common destiny that was born at the same time as the American nation. This relationship, made of friendship and solidarity, has never faltered during the major ordeals we were confronted to together, from your Revolutionary War to September 11. Naturally, at times, there were doubts or misunderstandings, but they were always overcome.

Today, the French–American partnership is more than ever essential. Indeed, our two nations share the same vision of the world, the same assessment of the challenges facing us and the tools required to succeed. Two decades after the end of the Cold War, we realize that the famous new order – new world order announced by some has not materialized yet.

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On the contrary, the world we know is an increasingly unpredictable world, with new conflicts, as well as renewed identity and religious claims, in what is happening in Egypt or Tunisia, so that we are effectively in an unpredictable world.

It is also a globalized world, with the economic and financial crisis that we were unable to anticipate and the repercussions of which are still being felt by our countries, thus making us aware of our interdependence and weaknesses; at last, a world where new great powers like China, India and Brazil and some others are emerging and whose military and economic center of gravity is shifting towards the Pacific-Asia region.

To that effect, I know that, for the United States, it is today natural – not to say indispensable – to turn even further towards the Pacific Rim countries.

In this context, all of us Westerners wonder about the nature, the meaning and the scope of our power. We wonder how to influence the evolutions of a dangerous and unstable, although promising world, on which we have, undeniable, less of a hold, whether it is France or the first world power, the United States of America.

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Indeed, our two countries today know that no nation, no matter how powerful is it, can hope to settle problems on its own. They share the conviction that the institutional system and its – the international system, excuse me, and its institution(s) must adapt to the realities of the 21st century, to the shifting of the balance of powers, to the interdependence and volatility that have increased in an unprecedented manner and are affecting all areas – the currency markets, the food and energy raw-materials markets, the financial and banking crises. This conviction is guiding France, which this year, as you know, is presiding over both the G-8 and the G-20.

This conviction is all the stronger since, in an era of relative powers, our states are all confronted with similar threats which are now borderless: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyberattacks, even attacks against satellites, but also piracy, energy insecurity, large-scale organized crime and drug trafficking.

And let's not forget the challenge facing us in terms of access to energy, water and raw materials. Let's not forget the consequences of our damaged environment and uncontrolled migrations. We know that the scope of these challenges dictates a much broader concept of our security.

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Above all, we know that today, nothing could be worse than (sic) giving in to the temptation of withdrawal, nationalism, territorial expansion and arms race. Nothing could be worse, in short, than to reproduce the old forms of power, those of the 19th century, for example. Because security, beyond powerful and – powerful armed forces, also means prosperous economies, technological progress, populations united by democratic and universal values – the ones that our two countries have been promoting since the 18th century.

Supported by this common conviction, France and the United States must strengthen their cooperation to work together towards a more regulated, more just and more future-oriented world. Of course, our assets and capabilities differ in size, but we can benefit from our complementarities. And this is the purpose of my visit: to make our strategic partnership more dynamic and productive in all of the defense areas.

The first one is the space area. This morning, I signed a declaration regarding space situational awareness with Secretary Gates, which is testifying to the level of trust in our bilateral relation. Our objective is to strengthen our long-standing cooperation in the space area to tailor it to an environment that has evolved substantially and to promote together the adoption of international standards to ensure the long-term security and safety of space activities.

In the industrial area, which offers promising prospects, we have identified numerous paths of cooperation for our security. I am referring especially to missile defense, to the fight against biological threat, or to cyberdefense. If the aircraft offered by EADS was to be retained, the renewal of the U.S. Air Force tankers fleet could also be the symbol of a common, fair and transparent cooperation. It would be a strong signal to all Europeans.

To reinforce our bilateral ties is today all the more necessary, since the French–American partnership is a major pillar of the trans-Atlantic link. We want this relationship to be stronger and stronger, not against the rest of the world but with it. This implies first that we succeed together in modernizing NATO, which is currently the only credible military alliance in the world. You know that France decided a few months ago to reintegrate the military structures of NATO. To that effect, the last summit in Lisbon constitutes a real common success. Indeed, it resulted in three major steps forward.

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The first one is that we now have a new Strategic Concept adapted to the reality of today's world, which enable us to respond to future threats. The fundamental pact which has been binding us since the Treaty of Washington is unchanged: The alliance is a military alliance, the core of which remains collective security and Article 5 of the treaty.

To that effect, I wish to emphasize an important point. The new strategic concept of NATO clearly mentions the irreplaceable role of nuclear deterrence for the collective defense of our allies. It is a fundamental point underpinning the credibility of Article 5, and on which the state of the world surrounding us prevents us from compromising.

Nuclear disarmament is indeed a desirable objective. And we all dream of a world without nuclear weapons. Signing and ratifying the new START treaty between the United States and Russia is therefore good news, we have welcomed as such.

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But it is not an end in itself, disconnected from the real world of proliferation. Indeed, nuclear and ballistic proliferation is a real threat. It is the reason why the alliance has committed itself to acquiring new means of protection by deciding on the deployment of an anti-missile defense system to protect territories and populations.

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France supports it, of course, insofar as this system is designed to be an additional tool to ensure our security. But it would be a mistake to think that the anti-missile system could be something other than a complement to nuclear deterrence. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the alliance will remain nuclear. And this is written in the Strategic Concept adapted in Lisbon.

The second step accomplished at the Lisbon summit is that we have given a new impulse to our partnership with Russia, in order to work together on the threats confronting us all, such as terrorism and proliferation. Among other things, we have made a major political decision to cooperate on missile defense and, more broadly, on a renewed strategic partnership with that country for the benefit of the vast European security area decided on at the OSCE Astana summit on European security.

It is a fundamental political choice for France, for Europe, for America, I think, too, even though its implementation will not be easy. We must find the right balance between the needs of the alliance and Russia's marked will to participate in common security by giving up completely the old ways of thinking. We are determined, on our part, just like the American administration, to engage in that discussion with an open mind.

The third step forward resulting from the Lisbon summit was the vote on a decision to carry out structural reforms within the alliance, which must be more efficient, more reactive and more functional. These ongoing reforms to streamline NATO staff and agencies and to modernize its financial governance should now be completed. It is our priority over the next few months. I know it will not be very easy, especially when we have to change the different installation of NATO among the member states.

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A reinforced trans-Atlantic relation means a renovated alliance but also, a stronger Europe. And this is another point. I wish to strongly emphasize it here: Europe and the alliance are not rivals, but complement each other. France's return to NATO has shown that this debate belonged to the past. Indeed, if a European defense is in the interest of the Europeans, it is also in the interest of the United States, which must be able to rely on strong allies. President Obama said so himself repeatedly. The fact that the French–American partnership is not an exclusive one should not be a reason for France to be concerned. Quite the contrary!

It is true that Europe has had its failures. I am thinking of the conflicts in the western Balkans, at the core of our continent, which revealed the inability of Europeans to take charge of their defense without relying on the unfailing engagement of our American ally. We have learnt lessons from that.

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But over the last decade, the European defense has had its successes. In 1998, while the French and the British agreed on the need for an independent European defense, few among us would have thought that this European defense would be able to launch some 20 operations and missions throughout the world – for example, in Congo or in Chad.

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And indeed, there was the engagement of the European Union in Georgia, which stopped the crisis. There is EU's engagement against piracy in the Horn of Africa, where the first major naval operation in its history was deployed. All this is testimony of a silent revolution – a silent revolution, indeed, still poorly understood, and nonetheless very real, if one wants to look at the path trodden over the last 20 years by European defense, which has currently a unique global capability to respond to crises.

Today, we must forge further ahead, beyond the problem of relatively weak military capabilities we are confronted to. The challenge is ambitious: As you know, the economic crisis, our national debts, which should be referred to as a strategic threat, have made the situation worse. It is therefore up to the Europeans to take charge of themselves to avoid their strategic and technological downfall, what Robert Gates justifiably calls Europe's “demilitarization.”

France does not resign to that prospect. We are convinced that, on the contrary, the European Union must remain ambitious about being a responsible political power capable of making our voice heard. But a political power does not truly exist unless it is supported by a security and defense capability. And we are convinced that the 27 member states of the European Union have the capabilities to sustain this ambition.

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This is the reason why my country has undertaken an unprecedented (ph) – streamlining of its defense assets, the dividends of which are then reused to improve the equipment of our combat forces, as well as our intelligence assets.

It is also the reason for the French–British Lancaster House Treaty signed on November the 2nd, 2010, which established the foundation of a historical cooperation between our two countries, in order to bring our – to bring our defense assets closer together over the long term. By seeking to share and pool our resources, our skills and our capabilities, we will increase our productivity and economies of scale. Thus, together, France and Great Britain we will be able to safeguard the assets of our armed forces and increase our action capability.

Finally, it is the ambition of the recent proposal of the – what we call the Weimar Triangle, which include France, Germany and Poland, to aim at reinforcing the capability, institutional and operational aspects of European Defense.

These are the first sign of a European burst that we wish to generalize. Indeed, our conviction is that for a common security and defense policy to be meaningful, it – high time for our countries to unite their efforts to confront budget constraints, at a time when we know that our defense budgets will not increase in the foreseeable future and that we need to do better with less and increase the efficiency of our defense expenditures.

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CSDP, common security and defense policy in Europe, must be an instrument of response to the budget crisis, while allowing "pooling and sharing" of our capabilities at a European scale. And this will benefit to the European Union as well as to NATO.

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This reinforced trans-Atlantic partnership is essential to enable us to take up the challenges awaiting us over the upcoming years. The first of them is to maintain the credibility of the Western world, which is being challenged in Afghanistan. I want to salute the memory of all those military personnel who fell in Afghanistan while defending our values and our security, especially American and French ones.

France has been engaged in that theater since the start of the operation. And, as reminded by the French president, France is engaged over the long term, as long as necessary, alongside with the Americans and with her allies. You know our strategy. It was agreed upon in Lisbon. In – it consists in transferring the responsibility of their security to the Afghans by 2014, as soon as it is possible in the districts. All our efforts focus on that transitional objective in terms of securitization, but also in terms of training Afghan security forces.

This military objective goes hand in hand with a development aid strategy, which requests our full attention. For France, this global approach is not a meaningless word, and our country is setting an example. The military and economic successes which are taking shape in the districts under our command show the full relevance of our approach. And we are preparing to transfer the responsibility of securitization of one of our sectors, Surobi, to the Afghan police and the Afghan army during this year.

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I wish to emphasize an important point. President Obama announced that the downsizing of U.S. forces deployed as part of the surge – that means 30,000 troops – could start as early as this summer, should the situation allow it, and under the condition that will be laid out by General Petraeus.

Just like the start of transferring the district to the Afghans – and I talked about that, the French example – this phase is not the signal for our forces to pull out. It is only the beginning of a transitional process. It is perfectly clear for France, and we expect from our allies that they show the same strategic patience.

Beyond 2014, we have committed ourselves to supporting the Afghan government in the long term, especially through the training of Afghan forces. It is the meaning of the long-term partnership concluded with President Karzai at the Lisbon summit.

Indeed, if notable military progress has been achieved over the last few months, we are convinced that the solution is first political. We will succeed in Afghanistan only by working closely with the Afghan government, which must commit itself even further to developing more suitable national governance. On this point, the objective is far from being reached.

Therefore, we must support the dialogue and the reconciliation with those who are ready to renounce violence, to break away from the terrorists who are taking the Afghan people hostage. But it is the responsibility of the Afghan officials to conduct this dialogue with the help of the international community. To that effect, we have expressed our expectation to President Karzai.

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We have also sent strong messages repeatedly to Pakistan, which is a victim of terrorism on its own soil and must behave as a responsible and engaged ally. There will be no peace in Afghanistan without stability in Pakistan, without the conviction of a long-term Western engagement in support of the region. The Pakistani government knows that this stability depends on the eradication of terrorism on each side of the border.

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Our second challenge is to resolve the proliferation crises. I am thinking of the Iranian crisis first. The Europeans have been working on – since 2003, along with the Americans since 2005 and with China and Russia since 2006. Today, the international community cannot accept Iran's refusal to comply with IAEA demands, and even less so with U.N. Security Council's requirements.

Faced with the division attempts orchestrated by the Iranian regime, which is seeking desperately to get away from disastrous consequences of its own policy, a strategy of toughness is the only one that can be productive.

It is in this sense that the vote of the Security Council Resolution 1929 and the unilateral sanctions imposed by the international community have changed the equation. It is also the reason for the meetings in Geneva, December, 2010, and in Istanbul, 21st and 22nd January, which have shown the determination of P-five plus one to act together.

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From now on, we must carry on treading this path and increase the economic and political pressure on Iran, in particular in the energy and access to financing domains. This pressure, for which France and the United States are cooperating in an exemplary manner, will reach its full peak in 2011 with the effect of sanctions. We remain convinced that these sanctions can get Tehran to come to terms with the ending of its uranium-enrichment program, since time is running out for the Iranian regime, contrary to its own belief.

Today, the question of a new phase in the sanctions process is rising. But should Iran seriously consider the general proposal it received in terms of a civilian nuclear program, France, as it has always said, would be ready to return to the negotiating table.

The other major concern which requires that France and United States must establish a close cooperation is the ballistic and nuclear dissemination started by Pyongyang. North Korea has now a uranium-enrichment program. The revelation of the centrifuging program, which has only confirmed our doubts, sheds light on the threat that the Pyongyang regime is hanging over international stability and security. Faced with North Korean provocation, the Republic of Korea paid a heavy tribute in 2010. I would like to grab this opportunity to voice our support to the government of President Lee Myung-bak.

In the short term, the confirmation of existing uranium enriching capabilities makes us fear new disseminations, especially for the benefit of Pyongyang's traditional allies. In this current environment, priority must be given to restarting the six-party talks.

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Finally, our third challenge is to guarantee peace and stability in Africa. I am thinking first of the Sahel region, where increased terrorism, directed more particularly at French citizens, is becoming a threat for all countries. If France has made counterterrorism a priority, it is obvious that our country will not be able to carry this burden on its own. We are cooperating very closely with the United States, who are heavily engaged in that region, with the Trans-Saharan (ph) Terrorism Initiative (sic).

But we can bring that cooperation even further. We are also encouraging the European Union to be more active by adopting a global strategy for the Sahel region linking security and development.

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Beside the Sahel region, stabilizing the Horn of Africa in a strategic position of the – on the axis of crisis linking Kandahar and Dakar is also the purpose of a close cooperation. Of course, there is also counter-piracy at sea, with Operation Atalanta, the NATO operation and the American operation, coordinated as part of SHADE, based in Bahrain.

But we must now focus our efforts on land. To that effect, the security forces training mission of the Somali Transitional Federal Government is a model of cooperation between the European Union, the United States and Uganda. For other support conditions to the TFG and the stabilization of Somalia, we must carry on with our exchanges with our British and American friends. It is all the more necessary, since a difficult period is expected with the radicalization of Puntland and the end of the transition scheduled for August 2011.

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Finally, it is difficult not to mention the upheaval sweeping through North Africa and its aspiration for freedom and democracy echoing throughout the Arab world. Indeed, as it often happens on the occasion of great historical turning points, we were taken by surprise – France as well as other European countries, and even the United States.

Indeed, the uncertainties brought about by these movements can be a source of concern: concern about the risk of chaos resulting from void or destabilization of power; concern over the risk of increasing radical Islamism; concern over the risk of shifting geostrategic and security balances, which are so precarious in that part of the world.

But let these fears not interfere with our dates with history. Let's take the only risk compatible with our principle and our values: the one that makes us trust democratic movements, accompany them and bet on their success while remaining vigilant about their evolution. This must be a winning bet.

Lady and – ladies and gentlemen, a final word in conclusion before engaging in a dialogue with you. In an increasingly interdependent world, where political, economic, cultural, environmental challenges are more and more common, in the great ongoing shift of the global balances, the partnership between the Europeans and the Americans seems to me both unique and irreplaceable.

The period ushered in by the election of President Obama, who places his foreign policy under the sign of "linked destinies" and "mutual interests" offers us a tremendous opportunity. Let's grab it to make that partnership ever more profound, trusting and productive. France will spare no effort in that regard. Thank you for your attention. (Applause.)

MR. PAAL: Well, thank you, Minister Juppé. This speech, I think, is in its sweep, its policy outline and specific programs – really does speak to a partnership and to an end of estrangement in our relationship in the defense arena. I think you lived up to your billing from BBC and the European Voice with a speech that is realistic, practical and visionary.

We're going to have a question-and-answer period, which I'm very grateful for, but I'd like to take the prerogative of the chair just to ask the first question. One of the areas of growing concern, responsibility, tough management will be the rise of Chinese military power, and I wonder if you could offer your perspective on that and on the European arms embargo, which still lingers now, 20-some years after first being imposed after Tiananmen.

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MR. JUPPÉ: I know that the vice president (Paal ?) specializing in Asia, in China, in Southeast Asia, and so I will be very prudent in my answer. Of course, China is spending more and more money for its defense budget. We don't know, really, the exact figures, but we know that it's increasing very fast, even if the global Chinese defense budget is a small part of the American one. So we have to keep in mind those balances.

What to do towards the situation? In Europe, we have chosen to develop a partnership, a strategic partnership with China. We think that we must find ways to cooperate with this new, emerging power, which is at the moment the second commercial power in the world and will be in a few years maybe the second economic power in the world.

So cooperation – cooperation and vigilance, because we must be – we must not be naïve, of course. And that's why we have to develop with China a frank dialogue and to say what you have to say as far as human rights are concerned but also on the military equilibrium and relation, especially in the region – with Korea, with the Chinese Sea, with Japan. So we have to find this balance between cooperation and vigilance.

MR. PAAL: Thank you for that thoughtful answer. We have a question on the – halfway back in the aisle.

[00:44:29]

Q: Thank you. My name is Andre (ph) – (inaudible) with ITAR-TASS Agency of Russia. Thank you, Mr. Minister, thank you for your presentation and remarks. My question is on missile defense. Do you think that it's still possible to get Russia on board in building European missile shield and do you believe that Russia should be given a say in the building and using of such a system? And did you discuss this subject with Secretary Gates? Thank you.

MR. JUPPÉ: Yes, we discussed this point, and I found that according to Secretary Gates, things are going all right. And these are – at this moment of conversation between the United States, between NATO and Russia. I would actually remember that in Lisbon, we have adopted a kind of a strategic partnership with Russia.

I remember the words of President Obama towards President Medvedev in that room where gathered countries like Baltic countries, Poland and so on, and also the president of Russia. And President Obama said, Russia is not only the partner for us, it's also a friend. And so when we are friends, we must be confident with them.

I think it's especially true in Europe, because we are in the close neighborhood with Russia, and there is no question we must develop with Russia a confident relation in many fields, for example, in the energy domain, where we are obviously interdependent with Russia.

And that's why I think it's a good idea to propose to Russia to participate into the anti-missile defense, on which basis, according which conditions, we are allowed to do. You know that President Medvedev proposed a kind of sectorized (ph) system – Russia sectorizing some part of the European field, especially Baltic countries. I'm not sure it's a very good idea, and we are working in a different way.

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But I think that it will be possible to find an agreement. I don't know exactly the condition today. I remember that in Astana, two weeks ago, in the framework of OSCE, L'Organisation sécurité de coopération en

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Europe (ph), we have decided to create a unique stability space in Europe with Russia. So you have to choose, and I think finally, be friends. We must be confident – maybe also a bit vigilant.

MR. PAAL: Thank you. In the fourth row, here.

Q: Sir, thank you very much for your comments. I'm Colonel John Angevine, senior Army fellow at Brookings Institution. First, a paid political announcement is that we really appreciate all your support in Afghanistan. Your folks are doing a great job out there with us, and it's good to watch them work. And they're making a great contribution.

Sir, my question is that in light of the recent START treaty that the United States and Russia has implemented, where do you think we can go from here in terms of nuclear proliferation and arms control? Do you think that Europe and the United States can partner to bring Russia's tactical nukes under some type of proliferation umbrella? And then how do we reach out to China to get them to bring their influence and also bring them in within a nuclear proliferation – a non-nuclear proliferation type of agreement? Thank you, sir.

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MR. JUPPÉ: I gave my opinion on the cooperation about missile defense, but your question deals with disarmament? France is attached to a disarmament process, of course, and we made a lot during the last years, for example, in reducing the format of our dissuasion, of our deterrence to adapt it to the new condition of the world. So there is no question, the goal is a world with a lower level of military devices and capabilities.

And we think, in that mind, that should be ratification of the new START treaty between Russia and the United States is very good news. How to go further? And that's a difficult question for France. We have said in Lisbon that for us, the missile defense, it's not a substitute to deterrence for the moment.

Until the world will be so dangerous and predictable, until the proliferation process will not be under control, we think that the security of NATO and the security of France and the security of Great Britain laid for a large part on deterrence, on the capability to dissuade enemies.

And so we are careful with this process of disarmament. We are ready to do so, provided that the gap between the great nuclear powers and other ones is reduced. I remember that according to the START treaty, the United States and Russia committed themselves to reduce their nuclear weapons to 1,500, (1,)550. The French capability is around 300.

So there is a large amount of maneuver, hmm? And the other condition to go further in the disarmament process is obviously the control of proliferation – Iran, North Korea and other problems. This is our approach to the problem.

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MR. PAAL: Fourth row, the lady on the aisle.

Q: Hello, thank you. Chris Lindborg with the British-American Security Information Council. Thank you again for your comments. You mentioned NATO's nuclear – NATO's Strategic Posture Review and the new

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Strategic Concept, but NATO has embarked upon a comprehensive strategic deterrence and defense review now that could last about six to 18 months.

But I'm wondering whether there are any new details on this process, and I'd also like to hear a little bit about what France would like to get out of this more detailed review. Apparently missile defense, nuclear deterrence will be part of it, but it's supposed to be comprehensive, and I'd just be interested in hearing a little bit more about what France would like to have unfold with this process within NATO. Thank you.

[00:52:01]

MR. JUPPÉ: Yes, we are talking about the American review of deterrence and of capabilities –

MR. PAAL: NATO – (inaudible, cross talk) –

MR. JUPPÉ: NATO. Yes, in Lisbon we agreed to say that the alliance will remain a nuclear alliance until there were nuclear weapons in the world. We have accepted that, and we have also accepted the fact that the missile defense is not a substitute – let's say that – but a complement to deterrence.

And we are very, very determined in France to preserve our sovereignty on our deterrence, our national deterrence. It's not a question of negotiation or bargaining on this point. And so now we are engaging the posture review.

I said two things about that to Secretary Gates: First of all, we suggest that this posture review examine all the threats we have to face in the future – for example, cyberattacks, terrorism, other ones with a comprehensive vision of the world upcoming. And the second point is that this posture review will not compromise what we have agreed in Lisbon – that's the autonomy of the national deterrence of France and also Great Britain. Given that, we are very open to any examination of the posture review of the alliance.

MR. PAAL: We have a question on the aisle over here.

Q: Thank you. This is – (inaudible) – with – (inaudible). I'd like to do a follow-up on the missile defense. In Lisbon, there was no agreement as to where different points of this new system be built. Is there any progress on it, and how confident are you that Turkey is going to be hosting a part of this system as we go ahead? Thank you.

MR. JUPPÉ: I don't want to comment any more on the missile defense issue, because we are just working on this very difficult question. I told you that according to what Secretary Gates told me this morning, things are going ahead, negotiations between the allies in NATO, and we have to discuss many issues. The system of control-and-command is the first point. Then, who will pay the new system in phase 2, 3, and 4?

How the burden will be shared between the Americans and other countries? I'm not sure, but there are many, many countries in Europe which are ready to participate in this new adventure. We have also to discuss the chain of command of this new capability and the way to integrate or to associate or to have the participation of Russia. So many, many questions are on the table today, and I'm not sure I'm able to answer to your question more than I did until now.

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MR. PAAL: Question on the fifth row with the red tie.

Q: Thank you. My name is Andrew Pierre. I'm at the U.S. Institute of Peace. I'm going to give you a chance to discuss something other than missile defense, although that interests me. (Laughter.) In this town, most of the questions, as you could well guess, in the past two weeks have been about Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria.

And of course, France has had a very special relationship with Tunisia and Algeria, and it has been reported – I'm not sure accurately or not – that the French government discouraged Mr. Habib (sic) from going to France. Instead, he went to Saudi Arabia.

[00:56:18]

My question is, have there been senior, high-level consultations between Paris and Washington on this evolving situation? And are there different perspectives in Paris compared to the perspective here, although the policy perspective here changes almost day to day? And how, in Paris, the evolution of this region is now seen, particular in the next few weeks but also, perhaps, in the longer term. Thank you.

MR. JUPPÉ: Obviously, there are consultation between France, the United States and our European allies – permanent consultation between our President – President Sarkozy called several times President Obama – between our foreign ministers, today between defense ministers or (brigades ?) and myself. And our views are very convergent.

I would like to emphasize one point before answering to your question: Which country, which government, has anticipated the events in Tunisia and in Egypt? Nobody. I sometimes read some statements of our former ambassadors in Tunisia saying that we have said that before. I would like to read again telegrams to see the – how careful they have been in the past, because the situation in Tunisia, for example, or even in Egypt was comfortable for all of us.

Those countries seem to be stable, with political regime steady. In Tunisia, the economy was developing. The status of women was one of the best in Arab countries. The progress in education was very important, and it's a part of the problem, because they produce what we said in France "bac plus 3" graduates – people without jobs after the university.

And so we are rather indulgent towards those countries. We knew that there was no political freedom, political freedom of the press, of demonstration and so on, but well, we have accepted that. And suddenly, the people have no more accepted the situation. And it has been a surprise for all of us.

[00:58:58]

So now I think we have no choice. We must – because it's coherent with our principles and our values – we must support the move towards democracy, as well in Tunisia as in Egypt. We have not to substitute our choice to the choice of the people, but we must say that the regime must go to free elections because it's a mark of democracy, as well as in Tunisia as in Egypt.

In which timetable? That is a problem today in Egypt. Immediately or after a period of transition, allowing democratic forces to organize themselves and to offer an alternative to what is a kind of threat, in those countries – and you understand that I have in mind Islamist movements. That is a great challenge we have to face.

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We must support the democratic movement, we must say to the regime that you must go towards elections. At the same time, we must be vigilant to avoid that the democratic process will not be confiscated by a movement that benefit from free election, and after that, cancel democracy. We have the example in Iran. We have a counterexample in Turkey, where there is an Islamic party which respects the rules of democracy.

[01:00:40]

So we have to bet, and it's a very strategic bet. I think we must be confident in democracy, in the wisdom of people, in the refusal of violence, in the good conduct of the army, as in Egypt, and to support this march to democracy. I wrote on my blog a little text one week ago, the title of which was "Et Si les Peuples Arabes Reussissent?" – and if Arabic people will be successful in the future? We must sustain this evolution, I think, without any hesitation.

MR. PAAL: In the third row, here.

Q: Yes, Mark Botsford from Botsford Global. I wanted to talk to you about Haiti, ask you if during your visit here in Washington Haiti has come up in the conversations, and what is France's position, and if you've been asked to partner with the United States at all, and if France is worried, also, about Haiti from a strategic security standpoint. Thank you.

MR. JUPPÉ: You know the links between Haiti and France on the history, and of course, we are very upset by the situation of this country. But we are not leaders on the ground today. The Americans are very present, the Canadians, the Brazilians. And so we support the efforts to organize a second round of the elections to have in this country, too, a democratic process. And then we have to put money, but also expertise and training and different sorts of aid to help the Haitian people to face the tremendous – (inaudible) – they have to face in two decades or three decades. So we are ready to help, of course.

MR. PAAL: Way in the back, by the light – by the camera, rather.

Q: Thank you. Andrea Shalal-Esa with Reuters –

MR. PAAL: Louder, please.

[01:03:03]

Q: Andrea Shalal-Esa with Reuters. I had a couple of questions for you. One, just to quickly follow up on the issue with Egypt, France and Germany have suspended arms sales to Egypt. The United States has not. Did this come up in your conversation with Secretary Gates, and what do you think about the wisdom of doing that in terms of applying some leverage?

And then on the other subject of the tanker contract, you said that this would send a positive signal to Europe if EADS were able to retain the contract, or were given the contract again. Can I ask you to explore the flipside? If it doesn't go to EADS, will this be seen in Europe as a sign that the U.S. is not open to European products? And do you see – are you concerned about the process?

MR. JUPPÉ: I am afraid I have not understood the question. (Chuckles.) You are far from me.

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MR. : (In French.)

MR. JUPPÉ: (In French.) Well, we missed the first question. (Chuckles.) Well, on the second question, I hope that the new competition for the purchase of tankers by the Pentagon will be free and fair, and we have been reassured by our counterparts here in America. If the decision is positive for EADS, it will be a good signal for the cooperation between Europe and the United States. If it is not, it will not be the signal of – how do you say – a conflict – (chuckles) – or misunderstanding. We are confident in the rules of the competition.

On the first point, I don't think that France is selling weapons to Egypt, if it is a question, no?

[01:05:20]

MR. PAAL: Did you discuss it with Mr. Gates? Because we are continuing to sell arms and France and Germany are not.

MR. JUPPÉ: No, we don't discuss this point with Mr. Gates. (Laughter.)

MR. PAAL: One last question at the very back of the room.

Q: Thank you. My name is Gopal Ratnam, I'm a reporter with Bloomberg News. Thanks for taking my question. One of the areas that you highlighted for cooperation with the United States was cybersecurity. I wanted to ask you if you would talk a little bit about what kind of cooperation does France extend to the United States on cybersecurity.

MR. JUPPÉ: Well, as you know, in Lisbon summit, we have discussed this point, and we have agreed to cooperate. And the cooperation is especially narrow between France and the United States on many fields: on the technological one, on the – how to say – operational one, and we are developing in France many initiatives, both on the defensive approach of the problem and also on the offensive one. And so all those questions are on the table with the Americans, and we are improving our cooperation.

MR. PAAL: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Minister. We very much appreciate your time and your willingness to take questions across a range of issues and the important presentation you made to us at the outset. Thank you, and please join me in thanking him.

MR. JUPPÉ: Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)