

FRANCE

Party Portrait

France is a stable presidential democracy, influential EU member, UN Security Council permanent member, and NATO member. France retains an activist foreign policy independently and within international organizations. Policy often includes the high levels of military spending. The population is very diverse, with the largest European Muslim and Jewish communities. France has struggled to manage internal tensions. Historically supported established regimes, but was a main actor in the bombing campaign against the Libyan government in 2011 and is one of the most outspoken critics of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria. Directly involved in attempts to fight ISIS. Consequently, has been the target of ISIS-led and inspired terrorist attacks, which has fueled anti-immigration rhetoric in the country and has contributed to the rise of the populist far-right National Front party.

Key Interests

- Ensure its own stability and the stability of its neighbors and the EU by eliminating the threat of Islamist terrorism, limiting the influx of refugees, and stabilizing the EU's neighborhood
- Retain role as one of Europe's most important powers
- End Syrian civil war, maintain Turkish stability, and defeat ISIS and AQAP
- Support its large corporations through trade deals with the region: export French-made armaments to the Gulf monarchies and make use of the opportunities arising out of the Iran deal

Sources of Leverage

Convening Power - UN Security Council Permanent Member, so France can sponsor or veto resolutions. EU and NATO membership increase its ability to shape activity of large parts of the Western world
Military - As one of Europe's main military powers with a capacity for force projection, France can participate directly in armed conflict in the region, but will be difficult to increase its levels of participation
Soft Power - France wields soft power through existing close ties and cooperation with many governments in the region, especially given its colonial history in the region

Regional Strategy

France recognizes the impossibility of replacing Assad regime in Syria by military force and prefers to concentrate military efforts on fight against ISIS. France wants to enlist further support from European allies, particularly Germany, to mitigate the responsibilities undertaken by France. Wants to continue cooperation with governments in Northern Africa in fight against Islamist groups and to stem influx of migrants to Europe, by redirecting EU funding towards stability in the region. Continues to sell armaments to the Gulf states and has increased its trade ties with Iran.

Powerful Individuals

President François Hollande (Socialist party); Prime minister Bernard Cazeneuve; Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault; Permanent Representative to the UN Francois Delattre

Potential Negotiation Moves

International Influence - Due to its military overstretch and ongoing economic crisis, France's main source of leverage remains its influence in international organizations and alliances
EU Military Assistance - France could rely on its EU partners to take over some security and military commitments to liberate some of its assets to increase its military involvement in the region
Alter Sanctions - France could focus on lobbying other EU member states to alter the organization's sanctions regime and to change the disbursement of existing EU funding

Internal Conflicts

French society is extremely divided and the country remains in a state of emergency after a series of Islamist terrorist attacks. This has contributed to a hardening of the country's rhetoric towards Muslims and refugees from the Middle East. Combined with the country's protracted economic crisis, its political system has been severely destabilized by the rise of the populist far-right National Front party.

Memberships

EU, IAEA, NATO, OECD, OSCE, UN (Security Council)

Allies

GERMANY, HOLY SEE, LIBYA Government of National Accord, LIBYA House of Representatives, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES, HUMANITARIAN ACTORS, TUNISIA

Partners

ALGERIA, INDIA, IRAN, ISRAEL, LEBANON Government, MOROCCO Government, PALESTINE Fatah, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Rivals

RUSSIA

Adversaries

SYRIA Government, SOMALIA al-Shabaab

Active Armed Opponents

AQAP, ISIS

Proxy

SYRIA Other Opposition Groups

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

MOROCCO Government, EGYPT Government, JORDAN, TUNISIA

Aid Donor

UNITED NATIONS