France Position Paper

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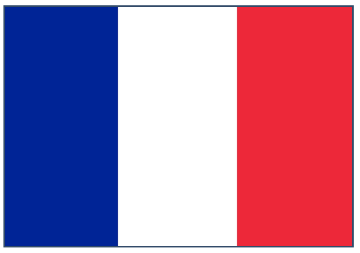

I/ Background Information on France

The French Republic is a European nation bordered by Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Andorra and Spain. With a population of 67.02 million and a gross domestic product (GDP) of 3.06 trillion united states dollars (USD), France is the 21st highest-ranking nation in regard to their projected GDP per capita. France is a semi-presidential republic meaning that it is represented by a president, currently Emmanuel Macron and a prime minister, currently Édouard Philippe.

As a centralized Nation-State, France consists of 22 regions and 101 departments with a total of over 36000 municipalities. As of 2019 the French Republic officially covers a total area of 643.801 km^2. Bordered to the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, France plays a curial role in maritime trade across the globe due to its direct connection with important shipping lines.

Similar to its past, the republic of France plays an influential role in global and European politics. France has been a United Nations member since 1945 and a European Union member since 1958. Furthermore, France is one of the five permanent nations of the United Nations Security Council and is also a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In regard to military strength, with a total of 387,635 active servicemen and women, 1,305 operational aircraft, 118 naval assets including 4 aircraft carriers and a defense budget of 35 billion France has the 5th most powerful military worldwide.

In its colorful past France has impacted the world through global events such as the Age of Enlightenment (1715 – 1789) and the French Revolution (1789 – 1799). With these events, the French Republic introduced the world to new democratic ideals such as equality and nationalism. Additionally, throughout the history of France had been a center for art and architecture. Famous French artists include Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh

As a home to many diverse people and beliefs, France continues to lead by example in both Europe and the globe. Regarding immigration in a study conducted in 2018, there were a total of 8.2 million foreign-born people living in France. Moreover, in 2018 with approximately 90 million visitors, France was the top destination for tourists worldwide.

France is also known for its support of LGBTQ people and their rights. Recent polls have indicated that 77% of the French population supported the idea of homosexuality being accepted by society, one of the highest in the 39 countries polled.

In conclusion, France continues to actively play an influential role in international relations through its involvement in the European Union, the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other international associations.

II/ Past Achievements and Attempts of France on the Issues

A. The Question of the Caucasus:

- France is duly concerned about the unrest involving extremist groups in the region and as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty is actively participating in military operations aimed at limiting the influence of these groups.
- As a member of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) which is an inter governmental organization involved in the Caucasus through its sub-branch, Minsk Group, France has actively been participating in diplomatic intermediation in the South Caucasus region. This intermediation effort mostly involves organizing peace talks among Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.
- Regarding Georgia, France has played an active role in the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union in 2014. The Association agreement is a "legally binding agreement between the EU and third countries" aimed at "fostering close relationships between the EU and countries on a wide range of topics".
- Regarding Azerbaijan, France has been highly involved in the process of mediating a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through France's position in the Minsk Group.
- Regarding Armenia, France has held strong political ties with Armenia partly due to the sizeable Armenian community present in France. In September 2013 Armenia joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). However, in 2013 Armenia pulled out of signing an Association Agreement with the EU. Furthermore, in 2017 Armenia concluded a series of talks with the EU and France aimed at establishing a new agreement.

B. The Question of the Caspian Sea and Surrounding Territories:

- The on-going political dispute regarding the Caspian Sea and surrounding territories is of vital importance to international relations but France is equally interested in the environmental aspect of the issue. The current treatment of the Caspian Sea has brought upon many unwanted environmental impacts such as but not limited to air pollution, land pollution, and overfishing. The republic of France is duly concerned about the environmental impacts the Caspian Sea has caused.
- Even though France is not involved in the current territorial dispute, France is aware of the importance of the oil reserves present in the Caspian Sea to Europe as a whole.

C. The Question of the Shift of Trade Routes in Eurasia: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to advance connectivity between Europe and China. France being a prominent member of the EU openly supports the BRI but also states that its support is not unconditional. In 2015 France's then Minister of European and Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius stated: "We welcome the New Silk Roads Initiative". However, recently in 2018 during a visit to China, President Macron stated that "Silk Road cooperation must work in both directions".

The French Republic, unlike Italy, has refused to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the BRI. This is simply because France prefers to support the BRI by reaching cooperation on a case by case basis.

Being a member of the European Union, France was a part of the signing of and openly supports the EU-Japan infrastructure pact.

III/ Objectives, Aims and Possible Solutions Proposed by France on the Issues

A. The Question of the Caucasus:

- As a member of the European Union, France seeks Eastern Partnership with Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.
- Regarding the Northern Caucasus, France as a founding member of NATO proposes a series of joint anti-terrorism operations alongside Russian Forces. These operations would be aimed at anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts against extremist groups and insurgencies active in the region damaging its stability such as Al Qaeda, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Riyad-us Saliheen Brigade of Martyrs.
- Regarding the Southern Caucasus, France aims to strengthen economic relations with Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. France encourages both Azerbaijan and Armenia to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union and join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in order to further economic stability.
- Regarding the alleged human rights abuses in Azerbaijan, France wishes to launch an investigation into the alleged imprisonment of political activists and other claims.
- France wishes to continue its efforts in achieving a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through its involvement in the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and Minsk Group.

B. The Question of the Caspian Sea and Surrounding Territories:

- France believes that the environmental impact resulting from the exploitation of resources in the Caspian Sea has to be minimized and is willing to propose restrictions in order to limit this impact.

- France wishes to involve non-governmental organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The primary aim behind this proposal is bringing the territorial dispute to a swift, peaceful resolve.
- The Republic of France believes that militarization of the Caspian Sea should be avoided at all costs and therefore is proposing the establishment of an agreement between the 5 littoral states and other parties involved, limiting the extent of deployable military assets into the region.
- France expresses its willingness to work in coordination with the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) in bringing the 5 littoral states together to discuss Iranian perspective of the issue and how to come to a mutual agreement regarding it.

C. The Question of the Shift of Trade Routes in Eurasia:

- France aims to continue its support towards the BRI in order to advance connectivity between China and Europe.
- France is concerned about the risk of being dragged into a "debt trap" and calls upon China to follow 2017, G20 Operational Guidelines for Sustainable Financing.
- France believes that instead of nations individually responding to China's BRI project the whole European Union should cooperatively conclude on its position regarding the matter.
- In regard to the EU-Japan infrastructure pact, France expresses its continued support towards the project.
- France calls upon the United Nations to cooperate with the Chinese Government as well as the European Union in establishing an agreement that would function as a guideline towards the implementation and exploitation of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This agreement would allow the BRI to benefit all nations it effects and not solely the Peoples Republic of China.
- France invites member states of the European Union to gather in an assembly and discuss the EU's collective position regarding the BRI.

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