



# ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

LONDON | WASHINGTON | NEW YORK

## FALL NEWSLETTER PREVIEW 2007



[www.atlanticpartnership.org](http://www.atlanticpartnership.org)

## ABOUT ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

Atlantic Partnership has the mission to raise awareness of the continuing political, economic and strategic importance of the transatlantic relationship among decision makers and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic and from across the political spectrum. Through our events, our extensive network of decision takers and opinion formers, and their contributions in the form of discussions, speeches and articles, we seek to build on existing links and commitments with the goal of enhancing the transatlantic alliance for future generations. More information is available at [www.atlanticpartnership.org](http://www.atlanticpartnership.org).



## EVENTS 2007

### NEW YORK

- ❖ **Senator Chuck Hagel**, United States Senator for Nebraska
- ❖ **H.E. Ambassador Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad**, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations
- ❖ **Mr. Adam Putnam**, US Congressman for the 12th Congressional District of Florida
- ❖ **Mr. Robert Rubin**, The 70th US Secretary of the Treasury
- ❖ **Ambassador Alex Wolff**, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

### LONDON

- ❖ **The Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell**, Leader of the UK Liberal Democrats
- ❖ **The Hon. Alexander Downer**, MP, Australia Foreign Minister
- ❖ **Ambassador Eric S. Edelman**, Under Secretary of Defence for Policy
- ❖ **Rt. Hon Lord Hurd** of Westwell
- ❖ **Sir Martin Sorrell**, Chief Executive of WPP
- ❖ **UK Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup**, Chief of the UK Defence Staff
- ❖ **Elite Defence Group Discussions**

### WASHINGTON

- ❖ Roundtable with **US Senator Robert Casey** on “Implications of the Proposed Missile Defense System”
- ❖ **General James L. Jones**, former Supreme Allied Commander, NATO
- ❖ **High-level French Election Roundtable**

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **Ambassador Pierre Vimont**, Ambassador of France to the US November 2007
- ❖ **Rt Hon David Miliband MP**, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs January 2008
- ❖ **Jack Straw**, Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice January 2008
- ❖ **Luis Cuesta Civis**, Spanish deputy Defence Minister February 2008

Further events will be announced as they are confirmed. For more information, contact [events@atlanticpartnership.org](mailto:events@atlanticpartnership.org).

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## ABOUT THIS SPECIAL EDITION

Our bi-annual newsletter informs our supporters of Atlantic Partnership's recent activities, as well as highlighting the work of our distinguished panelists, chairmen and patrons over the last few months. We are running a preview of the *Atlantic Partnership Fall Newsletter 2007* in light of what could be an exciting step forward in transatlantic relations.

On November 6, French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives in Washington for his first visit to the capital as president. He will meet with US President George Bush, seeking to reaffirm deep historical bonds and discuss shared foreign policy goals. The following day, Sarkozy will address the US Congress.

To foster informed debate in the upcoming week surrounding the visit, this preview features an op-ed titled "France and NATO: Getting to 'Oui'" by our newest panelist Leo Michel. Mr. Michel is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies, part of the National Defense University in Washington, DC.

If you wish to consult more articles, Atlantic Partnership's website [www.atlanticpartnership.org](http://www.atlanticpartnership.org) contains links to articles written by our panelists, chairmen, patrons and supporters. It also contains copies of past newsletters, as well as relevant articles and speeches on the subject of transatlantic relations.



**DISCLAIMER:** Atlantic Partnership (AP) is a non-partisan project that exists to alert people to the changes facing the partnership between Europe and North America, and the need to work to sustain it. For the benefit of our supports, we circulate relevant articles on topics related to the transatlantic relationship. The author's views do not necessarily represent the official policy of the Atlantic Partnership, the Department of Defense or any other U.S. Government agency. They are included for the benefit of maintaining an informed debate.

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## FRANCE AND NATO: GETTING TO “OUI”

BY LEO MICHEL\*

In February 1996—soon after France ended its 30-year absence from Allied defense ministers meetings and NATO’s Military Committee—President Chirac told Congress that France was ready to “take its full share” in “NATO’s adaptation, including its military side, as long as the European identity can assert itself fully.” By year’s end, however, intra-Alliance negotiations foundered after Chirac insisted that NATO’s southern command pass from American to European leadership. Talks on an expanded French role collapsed in 1997, and the imbroglio helped to ignite a decade of transatlantic and intra-European wrangling over NATO and EU responsibilities in defense issues spanning capabilities development to the planning and conduct of operations.



Now fast forward to September 2007. France can “discuss the advisability of reintegration” into NATO’s military structures, President Sarkozy told the *New York Times*, subject to two preconditions: an “advance on European defense”; and space for French representatives “at the highest levels” of NATO decision-making. Brushing aside questions on details and timing, Sarkozy nevertheless sent mixed signals. He acknowledged the significant French contributions to NATO. But he also set an ambitious goal for European defense: “However important NATO might be, Europe must defend itself in an effective and independent manner.” For some Allies, his formulation seemed to suggest an eventual (and contentious) collective defense role for the Union.

As Sarkozy prepares to address Congress on November 7, one wonders if France and its Allies will avoid repeating the disappointments and recriminations that followed the 1996-97 experience.

The protagonists might benefit by reading *Getting to Yes*, a classic study on negotiation methods.<sup>1</sup> The authors describe the pitfalls of “positional bargaining,” where each side essentially tells the other what it wants and then haggles to reach an acceptable compromise. The risks: egos—of individuals and governments—become tied to defending positions rather than meeting the parties’ underlying concerns; arguments eventually damage ongoing relationships; and the situation worsens when multiple parties become involved. Better, advise the authors, to: emphasize serious communication, not “playing to the gallery”; focus on interests, not just positions; and create “options for mutual gain.”

How to apply such an approach?

The French government must address a deficit of public understanding of France’s involvement in NATO. In the past, French officials were reluctant to do so, fearing domestic political pressure to limit such arrangements. Hence, a paradox: measured in forces engaged in operations, military representation and financial contributions, French investments in NATO far exceed its analogous efforts within the EU, although the latter enjoys pride of place in French political discourse.

There are signs of change since Sarkozy’s election. For example, last July a report by three French Senators described, in unaccustomed detail, France’s role in NATO and advanced, albeit tentatively, arguments

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<sup>1</sup>*Getting to Yes*. Fisher, Roger and Ury, William. Houghton Mifflin Company (New York), 1981.

for enhanced participation. Recently, a top French general, echoing comments by the defense minister, told *Le Figaro* that “normalization” of relations with NATO, where “France is always suspected of having a hidden agenda,” will facilitate progress with European defense. And the government’s “white paper” on defense, due next March, affords another opportunity to correct NATO’s “bogymen” image in parts of the French political establishment.

A better informed French public is more likely to accept the logic of increasing participation and influence in NATO and rejecting the “zero sum game” approach of some EU-philes. This will not be easy, however. One commentator already has warned that “reintegration” would equate to France’s “trip to Canossa”—the Italian castle where, in 1077, an excommunicated German ruler did penance and was reconciled with the Pope!

To avoid the traps of “positional bargaining,” Paris should avoid at least two temptations.

First, simply tabling a list of desired posts—command positions here, staff responsibilities there—developed as a result of internal French calculations is more likely to offend Allies than convince them. Over-reaching, particularly for key “flag” posts coveted by other Allies, is not the only problem. Many of France’s European partners as well as the United States will want to understand the “big picture,” that is, how increased French participation will contribute to NATO’s overall strategy, reforms, capabilities, and operational effectiveness, not to mention facilitating its still difficult relations with the EU. (In a recent positive move, Paris reportedly advanced practical suggestions to improve NATO-EU cooperation.)

Second, Paris would be wise not to base its “reintegration” on explicit concessions by or trade-offs with Washington. True, the United States often plays a pre-eminent role in NATO, but the arguments for in-

creased French participation have as much to do with improving France’s interoperability and credibility with fellow Europeans as it does with parrying what some French officials claim—a bit self-servingly—is “American domination” of the Alliance.

The United States, Canada and the other European Allies can help this process in many ways. They, too, must steer clear of public posturing or misplaced triumphalism. Tone is important, and Washington could help by emphasizing its “partnership” with Allies rather than its “leadership” of NATO. Moreover, “positional bargaining” is not a uniquely French temptation and needs to be avoided on all sides. Fortunately, there is more than one option for updating NATO structures in ways that improve efficiency and equitably redistribute the responsibilities and burdens within the Alliance.

Some American ideas for streamlining NATO commands are not so different from the French. And while France needs to be realistic in its vision for European defense, its Allies, who increas-

ingly appreciate the potential as well as limitations of the EU’s instruments, are anxious to help shape a “win-win” outcome for both NATO and the EU. The United States, of course, cannot build European capabilities; that is their responsibility. But it can help, for example, by removing outdated impediments to transatlantic defense industrial cooperation that concern many Allies, not just the French.

At stake in this hoped-for “rapprochement” is making the Alliance work better in the face of huge and constantly evolving challenges—from Afghanistan and Kosovo to terrorism and proliferation—not settling historic grudges.

Mission impossible? To (slightly) paraphrase Descartes: “It is not enough to have the correct thoughts; the main thing is to apply them well.”

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### **HOW TO CONTACT ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

If you wish to know more about the work of Atlantic Partnership please feel free to contact our Executive Director, by email at [aganten@atlanticpartnership.org](mailto:aganten@atlanticpartnership.org) or on (202) 974-2423.

Or you can visit our website: [www.atlanticpartnership.org](http://www.atlanticpartnership.org)

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