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An Analysis of the EU's Military Intervention against Libya

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[Abstract] Contrary to the practice of following the U.S. in military operations, the EU countries, which traditionally championed economic integration and soft power, have played a key and decisive role in the military intervention against Libya. This has brought about universal concern in the international community. The underlying reason for the intervention is a response to mitigate the impact of "Arab Spring" so as to make a radical adjustment in its policy towards North Africa and Western Asia with an aim to promote the democratization process there. But owing to the inadequate military strength and a multiple other factors, France and UK have to join hands to become the main driving force for the military campaign. EU's heavy reliance on the U.S. and NATO, which is indispensable to accomplish their goals together with their clear-cut political objectives in coping with the crisis, has finally made transgressing the UN Security Council mandate an inevitability.

[Key words] Libyan Crisis, joint military action by France and UK, the U.S., NATO, UN Security Council authorization

During the Libyan Crisis, the military intervention headed by the coalition forces of France and UK (aided by United States and other western countries) has undoubtedly exerted a decisive influence upon the development of the situation. On 19 March 2011, a multi-state coalition began a military intervention in Libya to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which was taken in response to events during the Libyan civil war, and military operations began, with NATO taking full control of the command of the operation. While maintaining a high-hand profile in military and giving full support to the rebels, NATO also stepped up its air strike against the government forces, which led to a fundamental turn of the situation in Libya. In late August, following the capture of Tripoli and the downfall of Gaddafi, the rebel has now taken full control of the state and its "National Transitional Council" has also finally obtained its legitimacy in UN in late September.

The EU countries, which is well-known for economic integration and soft power, goes against the set pattern of following the United States in nearly all major military operations and became the main driving force and initiator for the military campaign against Libya. THE fact that EU launched the air strike and persisted with it in an attempt to realize its strategic aims despite its own military inadequacy has sparked

considerable interest and concern of the international community.

As a matter of fact, given the increasing awareness of defense independence after the Cold War, the EU military intervention is a first attempt to reassert its international status and enhance its influence in the neighboring countries by relying on the U.S. and NATO with an aim to realize its long-term interests. Hence, the following analysis is an effort to explore the background and cause for the joint action of France and UK, the choice of their intervention mechanism and roles of the U.S. and NATO in the military operation.

I. Motivation and Cause for the Intervention

The primary motive for the joint action by France and United Kingdom was to speed up the democratization process of the Arab and its adjacent countries so as to realize the European long-term strategic interests and promote its values there. Put it simply, there are three key points underlying the military operation.

First, from the geopolitical, economic and security perspectives, the Mediterranean-rim countries headed by France used to attach their core strategic interests to North Africa, West Asia, therefore the “New Neighborhood Policy” advocated by EU - whilst France is fully committed to setting up “Mediterranean Coalition” - sets out to consider the stability in that region as their overriding objective in order to realize its own and European interests there.

Second, in view of the great impact brought about by the “Arab Spring” since the beginning of the year, many European countries have finally agreed that regional stability was seriously endangered and the development of the situation was of great historic significance especially to Europe and it would have a lasting impact once the democratization process has been started. Hence a directional readjustment has to be made in EU’s policy—a change from an emphasis on maintaining regional stability to the promotion of “in-depth democracy”—so that it would help the EU realize its objective of maintaining long-term stability in the southern part of Mediterranean sea in the future.

Third, in the eyes of the EU, the development of situation in Libya, which stands in contrast to the peaceful transition of power in Tunis and Egypt has posed a serious challenge to the directional adjustment of European strategy. The ruthless crackdown against the disadvantaged rebels by Gaddafi’s government forces would not only destroy the latter and derail the democratization process in Libya but also have demonstrative effect for other countries in the region, and thus spell doom for the “color revolution” in Arabian countries. Therefore it has become EU’s irrevocable and clearly stated political objective to “compel Gaddafi regime to renounce power to make Libya quickly embark on the road toward democratic transition in an ordered way”. And what precisely propelled the EU countries to take military action was Gaddafi’s hard and uncompromising attitude towards the West.

II. Reasons and Effect for Anglo-French Joint Action

Undoubtedly, France and UK have played an irreplaceable role in the Libyan crisis, which means that without their joint intervention in the crisis it is inconceivable to achieve the desired results, hence it is worthy of our attention probe into the reasons and the effect behind the military intervention.

Here are the main reasons for the Anglo-French alliance in the intervention:

First, both countries were of the opinion that military strike against Libya was not only militarily feasible but also in their own strategic interests. Geopolitically, historically and realistically, France has always regarded Africa and North Africa in particular (countries around the Mediterranean Sea) as their traditional sphere of influence, and so France has always been a strong advocate for “New Neighborhood Policy” and “Mediterranean Coalition” (Gaddafi was opposed to the latter). Situated at the strategically important juncture, which France considered pivotal to its interest, Libya’s internal development has always been accorded with due attention by the Sarkozy Administration that has maintained a close relationship with the rebels in Libya. To demonstrate its status as big power and its leadership role in the crisis, France thus became the ardent proponent for military action against Libya. And it is also the case with UK, which stresses “the importance of North Africa to the strategic interest of the EU” and that “the military strike against Libya is in full accordance with its own national interest”. As for their comprehensive national strength and political status, both countries top the rest of EU countries in terms of defense capability, whose defense budget rank third and fourth respectively with their combined defense expenditure half of the Europe. What’s more, both UK and France are the standing members of the UN Security Council with nuclear deterrence capability. Both of them wish to be at the strategic forefront of Europe and regard themselves as “global powers ready to commit their military forces on their own”

Second, with the development of the both internal and external situation, France and the UK has found converging security interests, which have further promoted their efforts in defense cooperation. Both sides share the opinion that “it is inconceivable that the core interest of one side will remain intact if the strategic interests of the other side are seriously jeopardized.” (This actually constitutes the basis of their cooperation.) In recent years, With the resolve of France to return to NATO command structure to develop EU’s own defense diminishing and cost of hi-tech weapons research skyrocketing, both countries have set out to create a framework of cooperation, by which they signed a treaty of Defense Cooperation in November 2011, clearly stating that they would undertake joint nuclear tests, coordinate the operation of aircraft carriers and establish a “joint task force” and carry out other mutually supportive missions. That treaty, so to speak, affords a system arrangement for their eventual joint action the Libyan crisis. At the same time both countries also admit that it is very difficult for each side to accomplish the mission at one stroke, which as one British newspaper aptly put, “Mr. Sarkozy would not go it alone. He always reckons his alliance with Cameron critically important.”

Third, it is very difficult to reach a consensus on the military intervention among European countries. European security and defense cooperation, which belongs to the high-end realm of European integration process, usually involves sensitive issues and complex issues and is therefore hard to come by, as is evidenced in the crisis. As is known

to all, since the Kosovo War, the EU has decided to quicken its pace to put forward their “collective security and defense policy”, but it was mainly confined to peace-keeping and humanitarian missions with no substantial progress made for some reasons or other. And as for the Libyan Crisis though all member states of the EU agreed that Gadhafi regime has lost its legitimacy and should be removed from power, they still could not reach a consensus on military strike initiated by the UK and France. Germany, for instance, were clearly in favor of a political settlement (which cast a vote of abstention on the UN Resolution 1973 and forbade all its ships to enforce the arms embargo against Libya). Italy and some other member states in the Middle and Eastern Europe also had reservations about the military strike. It was under such circumstances that France and the UK had but to rely on their coordination and cooperation efforts to undertake the mission.

Specifically, the primary functions France and the UK performed before and after the intervention are as follows:

(1) In order to secure the legitimacy of their military campaign they have conducted an all-round diplomacy. The key points of European security and strategic orientation after the Cold War involves an emphasis on “effective multilateralism”, the importance of international organizations and regulations, which have been clearly laid out in the relevant documents of the EU, France and the UK. Therefore, while busy preparing for the military operation; France and the UK have conducted a flurry of lobbying activities in order to secure the consent of international community.

To this end, they first emphasized the necessity and urgency of “humanitarian intervention” in Libya. In a joint letter to the chairman of European Council(it is a very important letter in which they made known their attitudes and stance on the crisis), Mr. Sarkozy and Cameron emphasized that Gaddafi’s use of force to crack down on the Libyans has practically constituted a crime against humanity and it was totally unacceptable and should be condemned. They also called for UN concern about the critical humanitarian situation in Libya. (At the same time they also supported the idea of an inspection by the International Criminal Court.) In their joint letter to the UN they expressed willingness to provide any kind of support ranging from “the enforcement of no-fly zone to the air strike so as to put an immediate to Gaddafi’s suppression of its own civilians.” Proceeding on this basis both countries suggested that the key points covered by the UN resolutions should include the necessity of protection of Libyan civilians and urgency of humanitarian intervention.

In order to carry out their mission successfully they have to secure the sanction of the parties involved including the Arab League and the UN. Given the complexity of the situation of North Africa and West Asia, it is very important for them to obtain the consent of Arab countries so as to avoid the unanimous condemnation of other countries as was demonstrated in the case of Iraq War. So time and again both France and the UK has reaffirmed that Arab countries should “take the initiative to ask for” foreign intervention so as to accord due legitimacy for their mission and gain the eventual authorization of the UN. To this end, both countries began to launch a series of diplomatic activities on three levels.

The first level pointed directly to the rebels, which already has an intimate relationship with France. Against this background, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, Chairman of the National Transitional Council made a request to the international community to set up the no-fly zone (which was later regarded as the legal basis for the military campaign by France, the UK and the USA). The second level involves an effort to rally the support of the Arabian countries, whose importance has been repeatedly emphasized by France, and has been subject to its lobbying at the very beginning of the intervention. It was under Sarkozy's strenuous efforts that the Arab League appealed to the UN on 12 March to take measures to protect the Libyan people. (French foreign minister Alain Juppe maintained that the campaign was quite different from the Suez Canal War since the Libyan intervention gained the approval of the Arabian countries.) The last level involves lobbying for approval among the UN security members in order to secure the eventual passage of Resolution 1973 and the setting up of "no-fly" zone. The resolution, which called for the protection of Libyan people and "the use of all means necessary" (which was only limited to air strike without committing ground forces), has been regarded as a "legitimate authorization" of the UN and a diplomatic victory for France and the UK.

(2) Formation of the "coalition of the willing" to ensure the successful carrying out of the strike. It is necessary to form the so-called "coalition of the willing" because the key to the success of their joint operation would closely hinge on the participation of the United States, whose ambiguous attitude towards their military intervention may even backfire. So Cameron, by taking advantage of the special relationship with the U.S., went to great length to persuade the Obama Administration to agree to take part in the campaign. When the headquarters of the rebel forces was in imminent danger, the three countries (France, the UK and the USA) immediately launched the air attack (on 19 March, 2011) against Libya in less than 48 hours shortly after the passage of the UN Resolution 1973. During the strike, France bombed the government forces of Gaddafi forestalling the fall of Benghazi, while the UK and US forces were responsible for the bombing of air defense facilities, and the no-fly zone was set up in less than a week.

(3) A strong politically propelling power and the key force in the military strike. Both the UK and France have managed to assemble all the forces they could to ensure the success of the operation. Even against the background of shrinking budget deficit for both countries, the UK, for example, still managed to dispatch dozens of fighters and one submarine and several escort warships (the maximum number it could ever deploy, according to one senior officer of the UK); as for France it has committed even more troops, including its naval air force and the aircraft carrier de Charles de Gaulle, which, according to the British press, has greatly strained its military might. Among the eight countries that took part in the air strike since NATO took over the command, France was the most resolute one in pushing for the air strike and undertook most of the air operations against Libya. Three months after the air campaign, most the EU countries were bogged down by their own financial resources. (Norway decided to scale down its forces and would pull out on 1 August.) In spite of that, the governments of the UK and France still declared to the world that "Gadhafi must step down" and that the operation that has lasted for several months proved to be effective and would be "intensified" in the days to come and they would not set a deadline for the whole operation. Shortly afterward,

they stepped up their attack both in scale and intensity and even bombarded the ground targets with precision by using attack helicopters. According to related reports by the end of the operation in the first half of September, NATO has made a total of 22,000 bombing sorties, of which one third were undertaken by France and the UK. Of the 5000 destroyed military targets, 40% of which were bombed by the fighters of UK and France.

To this, US ambassador to NATO admitted that the UK and France had played an “unprecedented” role in the air strike against Libya. NATO Secretary-general also pointed out that “apart from the US, Europe can still boast the most advanced and formidable military capability in the world”, which has enabled it to “play a pivotal role in carrying out a complex military operation.” President Sarkozy reaffirmed the historic significance of the joint intervention by France and the UK to Europe. He indicated with triumphant pride that “for the first time in history Europe is fully adequate to decisively intervene in any conflict that may occur in the vicinity. As Libya is adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea, it naturally falls under the sphere of influence of Europe first before it becomes the prey of the U.S.

III. Reliance on the U.S. and NATO

Despite a strong resolve to launch a joint attack against Libya, it is yet very difficult for them realize their goals solely on account of the military strength of the two countries, it is therefore essential for them to garner support from other western allies. The conditions to conduct the military operation depend on an appropriate organizational structure, an effective command and coordinating system, which figure prominently in their decision to launch the attack. With the gradual development of the situation in and outside Europe, there emerges widening difference with regard to the strategic objectives among the EU countries especially between Europe and the U.S.A. Though consensus is hard to come by, agreement was finally reached after heated discussion and coordination efforts among them. As the eventual development of crisis demonstrated, it is inconceivable to use force against Libya without the full support of the U.S. and the U.S. backed NATO.

As for the choice of organizational structure among the EU members, they first opted for the “Coalition of the willing” and then decided to accept the framework of action headed by NATO - a result of repeated negotiations and consultations among the countries with different strategic interests and objectives. In fact, France and the UK also had their own opinions of the military campaign in Libya, with the UK steadfastly holding that the intervention should be carried out under the command of NATO. (The UK was even opposed to the French idea of implementing arms embargo by the naval force under the leadership of the EU, while France held a contradictory attitude for fear of being accused by the Arab countries as the instrument of power politics.) So France maintained it was not suitable for NATO to bear the brunt of the strike but at the same time emphasized the role of the United States in the formation of the so-called “coalition of the willing”, whose presence is fundamental to carry out the air strike against Libya.

However the United States, out of its own interest, was not quite enthusiastic in pursuing a military interventionist approach against Libya nor was it interested in

playing a leading role in the air strike. This can be explained in the following reasons: first of all, after the Cold War the strategic concern of the U.S. have switched from Europe to the Middle East, South Asia and the emerging China to the exclusion of Libya, which should be left to the security affairs of EU; secondly, the U.S., deeply mired in the Afghanistan and Iraq war, has run a soaring defense budget deficit and so tried to avoid getting bogged down in the Libyan crisis. Thirdly, there is a heated debate in the U.S. about the feasibility of military intervention in the crisis, which would greatly curtail its leverage of action. Though the U.S. initially agreed to join the “coalition of the willing” and provide the necessary support of firepower, it later insisted on transferring the “command and control” authority to NATO. At the same time, most of the EU and NATO members like Italy, Luxemburg, Norway all agreed to carry out the operation under the framework of NATO.

The above divisions and divergences that characterize the heated discussion within NATO members has eventually led to “one of most intensive diplomatic confrontations since the outbreak of Iraq War. (French Ambassador even walked out of the meeting of North Atlantic Council to show its protest.) ” But finally France backed down on his plan and acceded to NATO’s full control and command of the forces. According to the agreements reached, NATO made a decision on 24 March to participate in the “coalition of the willing”, whereupon some coordination efforts were made between the two sides. On 27 March, NATO agreed to take part in the military campaign (with a code name “Operation Unified Protector”), reaffirming its commitment to “protect the civilians from attack”. The campaign was organized under the Allied Joint Force Command by Canadian Air Marshal Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard based in Naples. On 31 March NATO took over command of the operation, indicating that the military strike started by the UK and France has now been integrated into the operation system of NATO. Of the 28 EU member states, half of them have provided military logistic support with 8 of them directly involved in the air strike against Libya. (Actually, those who played a role in the operation were encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis.)

As for the choice of intervention mechanism and later development of the situation indicates that U.S. and NATO have played pivotal role in the military campaign, which can be attributed to the following reasons:

First, it is a result of adjustment of NATO. As an organization of collective defense undergoing continuous enlargement in response to the changed situation in the post cold War, NATO has put forward three” Strategic New Concepts”, with regard to the changes and reform in the direction and approaches of its security strategy. The main points related to the intervention include: (1) A transition from a” nuclear deterrence” of former Soviet Union to a reliance on conventional forces to cope with regional and crisis and conflicts; (2) An expansion of military action to the territories of member states and beyond; (3) An emphasis on upholding the shared interests and values of the member states; (4) A “coalition of the willing” can be formed among the member states without being obstructed from the outside if no consensus can be reached within NATO. All of these adjustments together with UK’s traditional practice of following the U.S. in NATO’s operations and the return of France to the command structure of NATO in 2009 have

provided the basic framework for their dependence upon the United States and the NATO in particular.

Second, militarily speaking, U.S. and NATO participation are conducive to the operation at least on three dimensions. First it calls for unified command and control. As an air strike involves a joint operation of multinational air forces, it is therefore necessary to set up a unified control and command system to avoid the omission of targets, repetitive strikes and injuries of friendly fighter planes, wherein lies the shortage of experiences for France and UK. At the initial stage of the formation of the “coalition of the willing”, the U.S. has committed itself to taking charge of the command of the operation, aided by the battleship of Mount Whitney in Mediterranean, which is equipped with such an operating system and commanded by U.S. officers. Later it was transferred to the command of NATO but the U.S. still played a critical role in it. Second, it needs the direct participation of the U.S. in the military campaign. With so many highly sophisticated weapons and equipment it is quite necessary to need the support of the U.S., which in the words of U.S. ambassador to NATO, “the U.S. has provided us with the critically important resources to ensure the success of the air strike.” Of all the air operations carried out in Libya the U.S. has provided 3/4 of the tanker aircrafts, reconnaissance planes and the information on targets for precision attacks by drones. U.S. fighter planes and guided missiles also played a fundamental role in destroying the air-defense system of Libya and the numbers of combat sorties carried out by U.S. planes are much higher than other country. (According to a report by Pentagon on 22 August, the U.S. has altogether undertaken 5316 combat sorties, accounting for 27% of the operations carried out by NATO.)

All in all, France and the UK are the main initiators and participants in the military intervention, there is no denying the fact that NATO headed by the U.S. has always played a pivotal supporting role that can never be substituted in the whole military operations. Apart from voicing his strong grievances against the insufficient military strength of EU that still needs massive input of the U.S., U.S. Secretary of Defense also expressed his serious about the future of NATO.

IV. Political Objective and the Question of Exceeding the Authorization of the UN Security Council

The establishment of No-fly Zone proposed by the UK and France was founded upon the necessity and urgency of humanitarian assistance, which was later confirmed by UN Resolution 1973, authorizing the use of “all necessary means” to “protect the Libyan civilians and their areas from violence”. In this way legitimacy was finally accorded to the joint action by France and the UK, which in their claim that “they were implementing the UN resolution on a military dimension”. In this sense all the actions taken in the military intervention should be strictly limited to the protection of civilians (without exceeding the mandate of the authorization) . Foreign ministers of NATO also made clear in the statement that the intervention stops at a point at which the pro-government forces should stop assaulting its civilians and made them go back to their own camps. But given the well-defined political objective of the intervention, it is inevitable for the campaign to

go beyond the mandate. As is already aforementioned, the short-term objective of the intervention by UK and France was to compel Gadhafi to step down as soon as possible, their medium and long-term objective was the promotion of democratization process in Libya, including the entire Arab World, and the rebel force was regarded as the main political force to achieve this end.

One advantage favorable to the intervention is that the rebel force has already set up a National Transitional Council, which declared publicly that Gadhafi must renounce power and would commit itself to the democratization process after coming into power in the future.

But as the rebel force was in a strategic and military weak position and was almost on the verge of collapse, so the immediate and urgent political objective for the coalition forces was to bolster the rebel forces militarily and turned the strategic situation in their favor so as to overthrow the Gadhafi government and honor their commitment to the democratization process. As such the scale and intensity of the campaign would invariably exceed the authorization of UN Resolution 1973 - it would certainly go beyond the mandate of protecting the civilians and ensuring access to the humanitarian relief, endowing it with an explicit political orientation. Following are the specific areas in which the joint military campaign undertaken by U.K. and France went beyond the stated objectives.

1) The enforcement of no-fly zone. Initially the establishment of no-fly zone means there is a territory or an area over which aircraft are not permitted to fly, or rather it aims to prohibit Libyan military aircraft from operating in the region. In this sense, it does not involve any ground targets. (At a EU foreign ministerial meeting, foreign minister of Germany questioned whether the bombing of ground targets has exceeded the UN mandate, which has sparked heated argument. Turkey also objected to such kind of bombing by NATO. Besides, NATO Military Commission also claimed that North Atlantic Council has never authorized it to conduct ground operations. but considering the imminent collapse of Benghazi, France and UK have not only sought to speed up the passage of UN Resolution 1973 but also launched the air strike within 48 hours, with French air force taking the lead to bombard the advancing government force of tanks and artillery troops, thus preventing the fall of its headquarter in Benghazi. Within a short period of time, the joint campaign has successfully held back the advancing government forces, destroyed the air defense system of Libya and set up a no-fly zone there. Later with the development of the situation, the coalition forces also used advanced weapons such as attack helicopters and air-to-land bombers to roll back the offensive of government forces. So although there was no clear authorization of the use of ground forces, the coalition forces could still achieve its strategic goals through direct attack against the government forces.

2) The use of all means to back up the military action of the rebels. In light of the UN resolution, the intervention should be justified under the pledge of showing support to neither party involved, providing them no weapons, equipment or any kind of training that might tip the balance of power in either side. But as the rebels are strategically and militarily inferior to the government forces - the rebels had once captured several cities but they were soon taken back by the government forces with their headquarter of

Benghazi being subdued and penetrated for several times, it is therefore urgent for the UK and French coalition forces to impose arms embargo and economic sanctions against the government forces and channel the financial resources to the rebels so as to change the battle situation in latter's favor, mainly in the battlefields along the Mediterranean Sea and in the Western hilly mountain areas. Besides the relentless enforcement of arms embargo, economic sanctions and providing the rebels with sufficient funds, the coalition forces have also taken the following measures:

The first is to provide the rebels with a large amount of weapons and equipment. Considering the crude and simple equipment of the rebels, the Western countries had provided the rebels, who were encircled by government forces in the western hilly mountains in early June, with artilleries, rocket-propelled grenades, ammunitions and other military supplies. At the end of June France also airdropped large quantities of weapons and equipment in southern mountain areas of Tripoli.

The second is to act tactically in close coordination with the rebels. A week shortly after the air campaign, Ajdabiya, an important oil-producing town in the East of Libya was recaptured (which was seen as a significant victory for the rebel since the establishment of no-fly zone). According to the report by the rebels, "It is inconceivable that we can make it without the help of coalition forces, as their (government forces) weapons are much more advanced than ours... and we will march upon the capital of Tripoli with help of coalition forces." Another famous battle is rebels' tenacious defense of Misurata, which is of great strategic importance and significance to the whole situation. Without the sustained air strike by the coalition forces it is almost impossible for the rebels to trounce the government forces.

The Third is to dispatch military advisers to help train the rebel forces, provide intelligence and formulate strategies of warfare, and many kinds of consultations.

The fourth is to make full use of such vehicles as broadcasting, leaflets and internet. The coalition forces have allegedly help launch a massive propaganda, psychology and information warfare, which can help take the fight out of the government forces of Gadhafi , subjugate and paralyze their communication ,command and logistical system. So all these measure have definitely helped reverse the battle situation and have created favorable conditions for a counteroffensive in the end.

3) The commitment of force to coordinate the battle in Tripoli in a meticulous and well-organized way. As the capital and economic, political, military center of Libya, Tripoli was subdued and taken by the rebels in late August, which has since become the main battleground and a landmark for the eventual collapse of Gaddafi. Admittedly, NATO has played critical role – a role that is significant and remarkable for the control of Tripoli according a senior officer in the rebels. NATO began to plan and prepare for the campaign as early as May 2012, which included the establishment of various combat groups and sending them to Tripoli. As soon as they received the order they would take the government forces aback by quickly occupying and blocking the roads thus taking the full initiative in their hands. Though the UN resolution explicitly forbids the sending of ground forces to Tripoli UK still managed to dispatch special air-born forces into Tripoli to assist and coordinate the military action of the rebels so as to ensure the final success of the mission.

V. Conclusions

After all, there are various factors that can help explain the Anglo-French alliance in the Libyan crisis, which apparently goes against the set pattern of following the U.S. in military actions and has now risen to become the main driving force and participant in the military intervention in spite of a shrinking defense budget amidst the financial crisis. One of the reasons is the geopolitical considerations of the EU - such as the enhanced consciousness of military independence of the EU in the post-cold war, the relative superiority of military power of France and the U.K., the contractual relationship in defense between Europe and the United States, the involvement of the U.S. and the strategic adjustment of the EU. At the same time there are also many problems that are worthy of our attention - such as the complexities of promoting security integration in the EU, the bilateral relationship among member states and the choice of an appropriate model for their defense cooperation, the accommodation of strategic interests between Europe and U.S. at a new stage, the relationship between EU defense and NATO - all of which will combine to have a far-reaching and lasting influence upon the direction of security and defense integration of Europe in the future.

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