

Sarkozy's new-style French connection

Since the Fifth Republic was formed in 1958, French foreign policy has remained remarkably constant with presidents either of an anti-American Gaullist variety or left-wing anti-capitalist strain. Now Nicolas Sarkozy – who takes over the presidency on May 16 – looks set to break the mould



■ United States:

Pro-America, describing U.S. as world's greatest democracy... ***“but friendship is accepting that one's friends can think differently”***. Readily criticizes failures of U.S. environmental policy

■ Middle East:

Strong relationship with Israel, but vast majority of French people are largely sympathetic towards Palestinians

■ Iraq:

Sarkozy has criticized ***“French arrogance”*** over war in Iraq but has long defended France's decision to stay out of war, citing bitter lessons of France's history in Algeria and Vietnam

■ Iran:

Supports diplomatic rather than military efforts to solve nuclear crisis, but needs to win unity of Russia and China on UN Security Council to apply sanctions against Iranian regime



■ European Union:

Plans to resolve impasse over European constitution with mini treaty. Opposed to Turkey's bid to become EU member, instead offering ***“privileged association”*** with 27-nation bloc. Opposes further eastward expansion – blow to Ukraine's accession

■ Africa:

Tough line on immigration, but will end so-called ***“Francafrique”*** policies of past French leaders who supported corrupt African leaders

■ Russia:

Visceral anti-communist – ideologically very distant from Russian President ***Vladimir Putin***

■ **China:** Human rights to be cornerstone of foreign policy with Beijing

■ **Afghanistan:** Expected to continue France's military commitment in conflict against ***Taliban*** and ***al-Qaeda***