

July 21, 2011

France: The Strong Executive?

Not to argue that the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, does not have the powers of a strong executive, but rather that his influence and political capital is being expended rather hastily. Traditionally, as of the formation of the 5th Republic in France, the Executive has considerably more decision-making potential than its prior counterparts. Sarkozy; however, fulfilling the position, is reduced to the painstaking political game of appeasing the French population in an attempt earn a second term.

Among his allied counterparts within the UN Security Council, he decided to take a more direct role with the French Military. As *The Australian* states, “[Sarkozy] gambled [his] political future and France [‘s] geopolitical power in Libya.”

Meanwhile, Strauss – Kahn may have tarnished his name in EU political arenas. That being clear, many political analysts believe that it is possible for him to play a pivotal role during the next French Presidential election (The International Herald Tribune). His actions are seen only by the French constituency as acceptable due to different political institutions, but also have weakened diplomacy between France and the European Union.

A few months prior, Sarkozy advocated for a close in EU borders between EU members due to increased immigration from southern Arab immigration. Italian leader Berlusconi attempted, simultaneously, to arrange the same policy due to similar concerns in his own country (The Guardian (London)). In their ideal situation, they would like to

enact passports, similar to the Pre-Schengen Regime. Currently, the allotted area holds “400 million people in 25 countries” of the European Union (The Guardian (London)).

Prime Minister Fillon is attempting to cut off similar immigration between France and Tunisia. According to (Africa News), “Fillon said last week [as of May 17, 2011] that there was no longer any reason to give political asylum to Tunisians, because their country was ‘on the way to becoming a democracy’.” This appears to be another anti-immigration mindset, which supports the claim to redefining how ‘French’ really thought of and is clearly controversial with the upcoming elections.

And more radically, Marine Le Pen argues that true multiculturalism leads to war. *The Age (Melbourne, Australia)* describes her point: “where true multiculturalism has existed, it ends in war. ‘The only places where real multiculturalism existed . . . the Balkans, Lebanon . . . it ended up in conflict,’ she says.”

France is a State that has allowed anyone to enter when they decide to become ‘French.’ That definition appears to be more abstract, and as a result has lead to the confusion between borders, in immigration, and in fact the definition of French. The current French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, who, in fact, is not pure-blood French, is entrenched even further with the events of the past 6 months in this discussion. His desire to stay as the primary executive of the country is on the line, and he is jeopardizing, not only his own political capital, but the entirety of the French political standing in neighboring regions, which includes the European Union. Is he really the strong executive that he is meant to be? The events of the next few years will be fascinating in discovering the changing dynamics in French society.

Work Cited

French political corps in shock; Left and right scramble to calculate implications of Strauss-Kahn twist - The International Herald Tribune

Front: Call to close EU borders in wake of Arab spring: Italy and France want passport-free travel suspended as people flee north - The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

Multiculturalism is a myth: Le Pen; RISING FORCE 'The United States is not a multicultural nation' - The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

SARKOZY PLAY AS WAR PRESIDENT A BID FOR SURVIVAL – The Australian

Tunisia; PM to Meet Sarkozy in Paris Wednesday - Africa News