

Beat: Politics

## **FORMER PRES HOLLANDE SAYS " WE MUST APPLY MORE SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA"**

**INVITED BY PRES. MACRON AT ELYSEE**

Paris, Washington DC, 26.02.2022, 02:41 Time

**USPA NEWS** - As the assaults continue in Ukraine, where the escalating tensions arising out of Russia's attack on its neighbor country, which has led to unknown number of human losses, so far and certainly hundred thousands of civilians, to flee to border countries such as Poland and Romania (members of the European Union), under panic and the fear of being killed by the bombing, France has and is still deploying efforts to stop this war, whose battlefield is close to the gates of Europe.

In the light of this efforts, President Macron received today the two former Presidents preceding his mandate, Francois Hollande (Left Wing, Socialist Party, in Office 2012-2017) and Nicolas Sarkozy (Right Wing, Republicans, in Office 2007-2012 for consultation at the Elysee Palace. The two former Presidents spoke for 1 hour each with the current Head of State. During their very short debriefings to the press (in the courtyard of Elysee Palace, and not in a televised press room), while their Renault armored vehicles were already waiting, ready to leave up... Former Presidents Francois Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy have delivered a totally opposite vision as to the path to be taken by France.

### **PRESIDENT MACRON CONSULTED FORMER PRESIDENT FRANCOIS HOLLANDE AMID UKRAINE/RUSSIA/S CONFLICT**

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Former President Francois Hollande, as he answered the few journalists, standing up in the courtyard of Elysee Palace, and answered few questions. He did not dare answering our correspondent's question with regard to « Format Normandie », yet, said during his preliminary remarks, he advised President Macron to "raise the level of sanctions" against Russia, which "are insufficient".

He relies on his own experience of diplomatic exchanges, with his counterpart Vladimir Putin, within the framework of « Format Normandie » from 2014 till 2017, the end of his presidential term, alongside the other leading mediator, who is Chancellor Angela Merkel, and has also left the office last December 2021. « I spent days, even nights with Vladimir Putin, in the presence of Mrs. (Angela) Merkel, sometimes alone, he said. "Putin felt "strength reports ».

Francois Hollande, happened to be the trigger of "Normandy Format", which he initiated alongside Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2014. He added that since without doubt for several months in a position to go much further", vis a vis recents evoking the recent moves towards Belarus and Kazakhstan.

On the other hand, Former President Nicolas Sarkozy, in a completely opposite approach to his counterpart Francois Hollande, said "the only possible way is diplomacy, because the alternative to diplomacy is total war", and "The way of dialogue, of diplomacy is difficult, often disappointing, but there is no al alternative. We must therefore continue on this path. And if France doesn't do it, no one will."

**"NORMANDY FORMAT » WAS AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMATE AND THE MINSK AGREEMENTS PREVAILED" MACRON DECLARED**

President Macron, very confidently answered a journalist from France TV, at Elysee Press conference, over the hopeless faith of « Format Normandie's, nearly a month (11 January), before the Russian attack in Ukraine f 24th February, in response to a reporter's question, questioning him "Do you feel betrayed by his counterpart Putin, because he hasn't kept his promises, and 'if he is still in favor of a dialogue?" President Macron replied: "We have, as I said, done everything so that the diplomatic route can prevail and I recall that on the Ukrainian question the Minsk agreements prevailed, were the framework agreed by all the parties, and the Normandy format, the one that was authoritative and legitimate. Until a few hours before the launch of the operations, the recognition of two illegitimate republics and then the military operations, we were still discussing with President Putin the details of the implementation of the Minsk agreements. So yes, there was duplicity, yes there was a deliberate, conscious choice by President Putin to launch the war when we could still negotiate peace. In this context, the situation is the one we know, it first calls for unconditional support for the Ukrainian people, their authorities, their president, this is the support we are providing, it is that of solidarity between European countries and Ukraine.

FORMER PRESIDENT HOLLANDE INITIATED THE « FORMAT NORMANDIE » IN CHATEAU DE BENOUVILLE ON D-DAY ANNIVERSARY 6 JUNE 2014

FORMAT NORMANDIE THE ORIGIN OF THE EXPRESSION-----

The Normandy Format is the four-country diplomatic setup adopted during the Donbass War. It brings together Russia and Ukraine (the belligerents), as well as Germany and France. The term Format Normandie takes its name from a semi-official meeting on June 6, 2014 during the celebration of the Normandy landings, at the Château de Bénouville, between Caen and Ouistreham. Rahma Sophia Rachdi, an American journalist, was the first to use the term "Normandy Format" to describe the quadripartite meeting between France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine during these celebrations. This meeting is the starting point for a strong and meaningful diplomatic negotiation to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine.

Until this famous question at the European Council by journalist Rahma Sophia Rachdi to the President of the French Republic François Hollande, the term Normandy Format has not yet been used to designate an unprecedented and new meeting. A question was put to President François Hollande asking him if the "Normandy Model" was still relevant, and that given "diplomacy trying to find a solution to the conflict in Ukraine, [whether he would discuss] with Barack Obama in accordance with the conditions established by the European Union? ".

This question formalized the meeting and gives it a new formulation. This term designating Model Normandy in English, is then taken up and translated into French by "Format Normandy".

Eight meetings in "Normandy" format have taken place so far, and a ninth was scheduled for March. It was during the third, in 2015, that the Minsk 2 agreements were signed. In recent months, President Emmanuel Macron has affirmed that the "Normandy Format" was the only one capable of offering a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis President Putin also mentioned this unprecedented diplomatic mode, on February 7, 2022, in the Kremlin, which failed to enforce the Minsk Agreements, during the joint press conference with his French counterpart...President Putin, had regretted "that Ukraine refused to implement the Minsk Agreements" It was two weeks before the start of the first military attack in Ukraine, on February 24 following the proclamation of the independence of the Donbass territories, by Vladimir Putin, February 21.

MINSK AGREEMENTS NEVER BEEN IMPLEMENTED

The Minsk Protocol, a stillborn draft resolution. The Minsk Protocol is an agreement signed in September 2014 by Ukraine, Russia and the two pro-Russian people's republics of eastern Ukraine, following the diplomatic action of the "Normandy Format". He was supposed to end the war in the region, but failed to preserve the ceasefire. Then, a second agreement, the "Minsk 2", was signed on February 12, 2015 for the same purpose, but without success. Russia's official recognition of the sovereignty of the two rebel territories of Donbass on February 21 is the latest sign of the death of an agreement that had never really been respected. The following day, Vladimir Poutine affirms that the protocol is null and void and announces in the crowd the independence of the separatist territories ProRusses of the area of ??Donbass (Lughansk, Dontesk).

VLADIMIR PUTIN ONLY UNDERSTANDS THE RELATIONS OF FORCE, TOLD FORMER PRES. HOLLANDE WHO SPENT DAYS AND NIGHTS NEGOTIATING WITH HIM"I consider that it is necessary to further strengthen the sanctions, in particular financial, so that Russia - not its people but at least its economy - can be heavily hit by this response", specified the former head of the French State, Francois Hollande. He questions ensuring the dependence of Russian gas, with regard to Germany, while suggesting to operate sanctions against Russia, as a leverage, without intervening from a military point of view on the territory of Ukraine "How can

we justify continuing to buy Russian gas, especially in Germany?" Asks Francois Hollande. According to him, "the Russian economy must be hit hard". He then explains that "Europe must raise the level of sanctions" against Russia, which "are insufficient", and insists that "gas imports should be stopped" from Russia. "Yes, it will be more expensive, and especially for our German friends, to no longer supply Russian gas. But how can we justify continuing to buy Russian gas when Russia intervenes militarily in an independent country?", he emphasized. On the other hand, Former President, Nicolas Sarkozy said "the only possible way is diplomacy, because the alternative to diplomacy is total war", and "The way of dialogue, of diplomacy is difficult, often disappointing, but there is no alternative. We must therefore continue on this path. And if France doesn't do it, no one will."

"I consider that the sanctions must be further reinforced, and in particular the financial sanctions, also (on) the system of monetary transactions, so that Russia, its economy and its leaders can be heavily hit", he declared. The former President Hollande, justifies the advice he gave to his counterpart Emmanuel Macron, at the end of an hour-long interview at the Elysee Palace, by the need to maintain a relationship of permanent force with President Putin, whom he "visited for whole days and nights," alongside the German chancellor Angela Merkel, as part of the Normandy Format", during his five-year term (2012 - 2017) "Vladimir Putin does not understand that the balance of power and There is no diplomacy without a balance of power", insisted the former president received at the Elysée, "Europe must be respected". "Europe must understand that its security is in question," added the former head of the socialist state, arguing that one day perhaps there will not be the same president of the United States. United: the security of Europeans must therefore be ensured by Europeans" Francois Hollande acknowledged, drawing a parallel with the USA and the proximity of their next elections in 2024. "Putin knows it perfectly well. And if we don't want to defend ourselves, well he will move forward," he still assured.

Vladimir Putin only understands the balance of power, according to former French President Francois Hollande, because he experienced the long negotiations with the Russian President, within the framework of the "Normandy format" "I spent days, even nights with Vladimir Putin, in the presence of Mrs. (Angela) Merkel, sometimes alone, he said. "Putin has undoubtedly felt for several months in a position to go much further," he added, referring to the situation in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Syria and Africa.

#### **PRESIDENT MACRON INVITES HIS FELLOWS FRANCOIS HOLLANDE AND NICOLAS SARKOZY IN PERIOD OF CRISIS**

President Macron invited and Francois Hollande (Left Socialist), then Nicolas Sarkozy (Roget wing, The Republicans), for an interview of one hour each at the Elysee Palace. This is their third head-to-head since 2017 – the first at the time of the first confinement, the second at the time of lockdown easing. François Hollande explained that it was normal to consult each other in a critical period of crisis, in a spirit of political unity and republican approach "There are times when the nation must find itself through those who have led it, in this case the Presidents of the Republic », Francois Hollande admitted.

**FORMER PRESIDENT HOLLANDE PLEADS FOR A EUROPE OF DEFENSE** Ukraine is not a member of an alliance network: there will be no external military intervention," said the former president. "As for Vladimir Putin, Francois Hollande shares his opinion on the character of the Russian President, based in his own experience of negotiating with « He has advanced everywhere and, faced with this pretension, there must be stops". "Europe could be considered naive," he added, calling on the EU to strengthen its defence. "Europeans must convince themselves that their security is first and foremost their business. France must convince its European friends that they must make a much greater effort for their defence," he recommends. "Faced with this threat, Europe, France and NATO must be up to it", pleads the man who received Vladimir Poutine at the Élysée Palace in October 2015. Before concluding: there is "no no diplomacy without balance of power". "Faced with this threat, Europe, France, the Atlantic alliance, must be up to it," he continued, calling for "raising the level of sanctions - that's what I told President Macron."

**FRANCE AS A MEMBER OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND A NUCLEAR MILITARY FORCE MUST BE RESPECTED" SAID EX. CLOSE. HOLLAND** According to Former President Hollande, "Europe must be respected." and France must take its share of responsibility in this work, as a member of the UN Security Council and as a military and nuclear force, and that this crisis shows the importance of developing "the Europe of defence », he explained.

As for Ukraine, the former French president François Hollande, thinks « I know the goals that the Russian leaders, and in particular Vladimir Putin, have set themselves: to ensure that Ukraine can be dismantled and that it can be neutralized, at the cost of a disaster for the civilian population and a conflict that will remain open for many years" .

#### **Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20054/former-pres-hollande-says-we-must-apply-more-sanctions-against-russia.html>

**Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster, Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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