

The Position Of France In NATO

In The Context Of Euro-Atlantic Security



La position de la France au sein de l'OTAN
Dans le contexte de l'euro
Sécurité Atlantique

Table of Contents | Table des Matières

1.0	Assessment of the Strategic Environment	
	Évaluation de l'environnement stratégique	2
1.1	The Shift From Competition to Confrontation	
	Le passage de la compétition à la confrontation	2
1.2	Main Spheres of Antagonism	
	Principales sphères d'antagonisme	4
1.3	The Threat of Nuclear Escalation	
	La menace d'une escalade nucléaire	6
2.0	Strategic Objectives Objectifs stratégiques	7
2.1	Enhancing Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Autonomy Renforcer la	
	dissuasion nucléaire et l'autonomie stratégique	7
2.2	Fostering EU Defense Initiatives Favoriser les initiatives de défense de l'UE ..	8
2.3	Promoting Regional Stability and Cooperation Promouvoir la stabilité et la	
	coopération régionales.....	9
2.4	Countering Hybrid Threats and Cybersecurity Contrer les menaces hybrides	
	et la cybersécurité	9
2.5	Enhancing Crisis Management and Resilience Améliorer la gestion des crises	
	et la résilience	10
2.6	Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Spread	
	of conventional weapons Prévenir la prolifération des armes de destruction	
	massive et la prolifération des armes conventionnelles	11
2.7	Addressing Emerging Security Challenges Relever les défis de sécurité	
	émergents	11
2.8	Securing Supply Chains Sécuriser les Chaînes d'Approvisionnement	12
3.0	Cyber Security Cybersécurité	13
3.1	History of Cyber Security Policy In France	
	Histoire de la Politique de Cybersécurité en France	13
3.2	Organisations of Importance Organisations importantes	15
3.3	Position of France On Cybersecurity and Defence	
	Position de la France sur la Cybersécurité et la Défense	16
4.0	Position of France On Generative AI Position de la France sur l'IA générative	18

Assessment of the Strategic Environment | Évaluation de l'environnement stratégique

As declared by Robert Shuman at the signing ceremony of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, "The exclusive concern of France is to make impossible any invasion of her own territory or the territory of peace-loving nations."¹

Keeping in mind Shuman's original intentions, France is committed to protecting its own sovereignty and the sovereignty of like-minded states.² In the modern context of pervasive instability and strategic competition, France recognizes that the means of achieving these goals have shifted but the goals themselves remain.

1.1 The Shift From Competition to Confrontation | Le passage de la compétition à la confrontation

The international realm of relations that emerged after the Cold War is deteriorating into a multipolar environment that is susceptible to abrupt changes. Instability and unpredictable manoeuvres have become dominant features.³

Based on key indicators, France firmly believes that these abrupt interactions are increasingly physical rather than economic:

- Widespread possession of modern conventional tools and technological advancements have provided an increased number of actors with access to military resources.⁴

¹NATO, "France and NATO - 1949," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, accessed November 17, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_160672.htm.

²"We Remain Committed to an International Rules-Based Order," *Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York*, October, 2017, <https://onu.delegfrance.org/We-remain-committed-to-an-international-rules-based-order>.

³DICoD, "Strategic Review of Defence and National Security 2017 Key Points," *Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères*, October, 2017, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/strategic_review_of_defense_and_national_security_2017_-_key_points_cle0d61fa.pdf.

⁴Ibid

- These possessions challenge the Western forces' operational and technological superiority in all realms, including land, sea, air, and cyberspace.
- In response, major actors are endlessly seeking higher forms of technology systems, which increases the risk that European capabilities, including France's, fall behind.
- Expanding Jihadist and more general terrorism which is thriving amongst chaos, civil war, and some unstable states.⁵
- The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.⁶
- Increased tensions and display of prowess in the South China Sea by competing interests Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, and others which is indicative of more widespread conflicting interests.⁷
- The Israel - Palestine recent conflict that began October 2023.⁸
- Increased trade barriers and withdrawal from multilateral agreements shows a trend of isolationism or identity-based decisions. These decisions are synonymous with deteriorating communication.
 - The United States increases tariffs on Chinese goods in May 2024.
 - The United States withdraws from the World Health Organization in July 2020.⁹

In response to these numerous signals, France believes that consolidation is the solution. By building on existing efforts while accelerating, adapting, and strengthening its strategic readiness, France aims to stay ahead of rapidly evolving threats that are increasingly dynamic in speed, nature, and location. Without undermining traditional efforts to counter confrontations, France also recognizes the imperative need to address hybrid strategies that blend cyber, digital, space, and denial-of-access hostilities. These attempts imperil global interests by exploiting vulnerabilities in infrastructure, in the air/sea, and in logistics chains.

⁵Gilles Kepel, *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁶The Visual Journalism Team, "Ukraine in Maps: Tracking the War with Russia," *BBC News*, accessed November 17, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>.

⁷Center for Preventative Action, "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea | Global Conflict Tracker," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed November 17, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea>.

⁸Center for Preventative Action, "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict | Global Conflict Tracker," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed November 17, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

⁹Lawrence O. Gostin et al., "US Withdrawal from WHO Is Unlawful and Threatens Global and US Health and Security," *The Lancet* 396, no. 10247 (August 2020): 293–95, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736\(20\)31527-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(20)31527-0).

1.2 Main Spheres of Antagonism | Principales sphères d'antagonisme

Russia | Russie

It is clear that Russia is pursuing efforts to undermine European security and the wider international rules based order. The brutal manifestation of these actions have culminated into a war against Ukraine.

The response to Russia's assault of the "collective west"¹⁰ must be calculated and consistent in order to mitigate risk and uphold global integrity.

The Russian government's increasingly overt imperial ambitions, rooted in its view of the global balance of power, are becoming a significant challenge for Euro-Atlantic security.

In the longer term, as Russia's conventional forces weaken, it may shift towards more asymmetric tactics, emphasising non-conventional weapons and indirect forms of confrontation. This shift highlights the need for the Euro-Atlantic alliance to anticipate a prolonged period of competition, dispute, and confrontation with Russia, which will unfold over multiple regions, including Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.¹¹

Russia's hybrid warfare tactics which combine diplomacy, anti-Western propaganda, and the use of mercenaries are already evident in regions like Africa, and its strategic focus is shifting towards areas such as the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Baltic, the Balkans, and the North Atlantic.¹²

¹⁰Artem Efimov, Vitaly Valischenko and Ilya Lyapin, "The Collective West: What is Putin really talking about when he rails against the West?" Translated by Emily Laskin, *Meduza*, February 20, 2024, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2024/02/20/the-collective-west>

¹¹Frank Hoffman and Andrew Orner, "The Return of Great-Power Proxy Wars," *War on the Rocks*, September 2, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/the-return-of-great-power-proxy-wars/>.

¹²James McBride, "Russia's Influence in the Balkans," *Council on Foreign Relations*, last updated November 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/russias-influence-balkans>; William Rampe, "What Is Russia's Wagner Group Doing in Africa?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, last updated May 23, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-russias-wagner-group-doing-africa>; Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Paul Stronski, "Russia in the Arctic-A Critical Examination," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/03/russia-in-the-arctica-critical-examination?lang=en>;

For France and its Euro-Atlantic partners, this means preparing for a complex and sustained geopolitical struggle, marked by evolving warfare, rising tensions, and the risk of localised conflicts escalating. The strategic responses outlined in NATO's Madrid Summit and the EU's Strategic Compass are a good starting point. They emphasise the need to counter these threats through a coordinated, multifaceted approach, balancing military readiness with diplomatic and informational strategies to address Russia's growing global challenge.¹³

China | Chine

China, led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), aims to surpass the United States as the world's leading power.¹⁴ France believes the CCP views the decline of Western influence as an opportunity to reshape global leadership, with a particular focus on creating a divide between "the West and the rest."¹⁵ In the context of the war in Ukraine, China has sought to exploit the neutrality or distance of many non-Western countries, framing the conflict as part of a broader ideological struggle between Western powers and emerging global forces.

A key component of China's strategy is the ongoing modernization of its military, which bolsters its ability to project power, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, where tensions over Taiwan remain a focal point.¹⁶

Furthermore, China's growing diplomatic and military influence in regions like Africa, coupled with its increasingly sophisticated hybrid warfare capabilities, allows China to challenge Western interests through a blend of military, economic, technological, and

¹³European External Action Service, "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence," *European Union External Action*, accessed November 20, 2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en; NATO, "Madrid Summit Declaration," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, last updated July 22, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm; Première Ministre and Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale *National strategic review: 2022*, (France: République Française, 2022), <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>.

¹⁴Rush Doshi, "The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order," *Brookings*, August 2, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-long-game-chinas-grand-strategy-to-displace-american-order/>.

¹⁵Première Ministre and Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale, *National strategic review: 2022*, (France: République Française, 2022), <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>.

¹⁶Jim Garamone, "DOD Report Details Chinese Efforts to Build Military Power," *U.S. Department of Defense*, accessed November 20, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3562442/dod-report-details-chinese-efforts-to-build-military-power/>.

informational tools.¹⁷ The integration of China's military and civilian sectors enhances its capacity for hybrid warfare, extending beyond traditional military action into areas like economic coercion and information manipulation.

The coupling of Chinese and Russian interests must not be taken lightly. Both countries have common interests in challenging Western influence, and their cooperation, particularly in diplomacy and information warfare, could destabilise Euro-Atlantic security. The alignment between Beijing and Moscow is particularly evident in their shared opposition to Western objectives regarding the war in Ukraine. The growing imbalance in the Sino-Russian relationship, with China emerging as the dominant partner, is likely to have profound implications for global governance and security frameworks.¹⁸

For France and Euro-Atlantic security, this changing situation emphasises the need for unity within the Western alliance. The growing China-Russia partnership and their use of hybrid warfare requires a more coordinated response from NATO. Given these challenges, France and its allies must stay alert, adjust to the shifting global order, and protect the values and structures that support Euro-Atlantic security.

1.3 The Threat of Nuclear Escalation | La menace d'une escalade nucléaire

France has and will continue to hedge its position on the world stage by maintenance of a robust and credible nuclear deterrent.¹⁹ Our nuclear arsenal is a crucial asset for strategic dialogue and ensures ultimate assertion of vital interests of sovereignty and solidarity.²⁰

¹⁷Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, "China-Africa Relations," accessed November 20, 2024, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zy/wjls/3604_665547/202405/t20240531_11367591.html#:~:text=China%20has%20provided%20African%20countries,by%20African%20countries%20and%20people.

¹⁸Rebekka Åsnes Sagild and Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, "Chinese Re-Examinations of Russia? The Strategic Partnership in the Wake of Russia's War Against Ukraine," *Journal of Contemporary China* (June 2024): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2024.2358876>.

¹⁹Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, "France's Nuclear Inventory," *armscontrolcenter.org*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/France.pdf>

²⁰Première Ministre and Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale, "National Strategic Review: 2022."

With this in mind, France is committed to a model which prioritises the morale of the French people, of a united and resilient France. Employing a policy of strict sufficiency, France maintains its arsenal at the lowest possible level congruent with strategic context.²¹ This model is an example to the rest of the world - responsible control of nuclear arms is possible and required.

Despite this international norm, the war in Ukraine has taught us all that other powers are taking a more casual approach by threatening nuclear annihilation. France recognizes that other factors such as the collapse of arms control infrastructure and diminishing proliferation efforts are conducive to this new era of nuclear intimidation.

Russia's nuclear rhetoric of offensive use, instead of defensive use, requires unimpeachable consolidation across multiple actors. Employing multi-environment and multi-field manoeuvres; joint action on a large scale is the only option to ensure euro-atlantic security. In the face of mutually assured destruction, allies must signal mutual determination.²²

Strategic Objectives | Objectifs stratégiques

2.1 Enhancing Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Autonomy | Renforcer la dissuasion nucléaire et l'autonomie stratégique

Nuclear deterrence is fundamental to France's national policy. France hopes to dissuade aggression and ensure the security of its territory and that of its European allies by keeping a credible and formidable nuclear arsenal as a last resort.²³ The necessity of an autonomous and well-balanced defence posture in the Euro-Atlantic area is highlighted by this strategic approach.

²¹Claire Mills, "Research Briefing: The French Nuclear Deterrent," *UK Parliament House of Commons Library*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04079/>

²²J.E. Luebering and the Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "mutual assured destruction," *Britannica*, last modified November 15, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mutual-assured-destruction>

²³ Astrid Chevreuil, "France's Nuclear Offer to Europe," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/frances-nuclear-offer-europe>

In response to rising tensions, France supports congruent investment in advancing its nuclear weapons in order to stay technologically sophisticated and equipped to handle new threats. In addition to enhancing France's defence posture, this strategy advances the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic region as a whole.

- **Objective:** Strengthen France's nuclear deterrence capabilities to ensure the security of both France and its European allies. This involves maintaining and modernising the nuclear arsenal, while promoting strategic autonomy to reduce reliance on external powers.
- **Objective:** Maintain a credible, effective, and independent nuclear deterrence that is operational until the year 2030 and beyond.
- **Objective:** Bolster strategic culture and deterrence domestically and within France's alliances by promoting public awareness of deterrence dilemmas.

2.2 Fostering EU Defense Initiatives | Favoriser les initiatives de défense de l'UE

The European Defense Fund (EDF) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) are two EU defence programs that France is a major supporter of. To enhance Europe's defence capabilities, these programs assure effective financial allocation, facilitate collaboration among EU member states, and encourage the cooperative development of defence projects.²⁴

Through its active participation and leadership in these initiatives and others alike, France is contributing to the development of a more resilient and independent European defence infrastructure. This strengthens the Euro-Atlantic region's collective security and establishes Europe as a more potent and autonomous global security player (NATO, 2024).

- **Objective:** Support and maintain existing EU defence initiatives such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD), and the Hub for European Defense Innovation (HEDI)
- **Objective:** Support a short-term agreement for joint acquisition of European hardware that is pertinent to the defence industry.²⁵

²⁴ European External Action Service, "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence," *European Union External Action*, accessed November 20, 2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

²⁵ Première Ministre and Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale, "National Strategic Review: 2022." Accessed November 20, 2024 <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>

- **Objective:** Support the development of alternative defence investment programmes for mutual production of critical military technology
- **Objective:** Ensure that the crucial role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) is unanimous.

2.3 Promoting Regional Stability and Cooperation | Promouvoir la stabilité et la coopération régionales

France's Euro-Atlantic security strategy prioritises regional stability and cooperation. To address shared security concerns, France actively engages in strategic dialogues with European partners and NATO allies. This collaborative approach includes joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated responses to potential threats. By cultivating close cooperation with its allies, France aims to enhance regional stability and ultimately prevent conflict.²⁶

Despite ongoing tensions, France's emphasis on dialogue with countries like Russia reflects its commitment to building a framework for trust and stability across Europe and the globe.

- **Objective:** Engage in strategic dialogues with European partners and NATO allies to address shared security concerns.
- **Objective:** Advance a strategy of inclusion with regionally connected long-standing partners and like-minded states,
 - United Kingdom - employ diplomatic discourse to further bilateral treaties (post-Brexit).
 - Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia - stand united by continuing to contribute to their stability, providing economic aid and supporting structural reforms.
 - Greece, Croatia, and Belgium - consolidate existing agreements and strategic/capabilities partnerships.
 - Italy and Spain - expand communication on topics of mutual concern (the Mediterranean, Sahel, and Middle East).
 - Italy - confirm links by the Quirinal Treaty.
 - Spain - confirm links by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.

2.4 Countering Hybrid Threats and Cybersecurity | Contrer les menaces hybrides et la cybersécurité

²⁶ NATO, "NATO Secretary General and President Macron Discuss Defence Production and Ukraine," NATO, November 12, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_230360.htm.

In today's complex security landscape, hybrid threats and cybersecurity challenges have become paramount concerns for France. To address these issues, France is developing comprehensive strategies to counter hybrid threats, which involve a combination of conventional and unconventional tactics, and enhance its overall cybersecurity measures.

The key objectives include safeguarding critical infrastructure, improving cyber defences, and increasing international cooperation to combat cyber-attacks and misinformation campaigns. By strengthening its cyber resilience and promoting global collaboration, France aims to mitigate the risks associated with evolving cyber threats and ensure the resilience of its national infrastructure.²⁷

- **Objective:** Enhance comprehensive strategies to counter or deter hybrid threats and enhance cybersecurity measures. This involves defending critical infrastructure in public and private sectors, expanding efforts by the Relance Recovery Plan to include cyber attack recuperation , and increasing cooperation among nations to combat cyber-attacks and misinformation campaigns.²⁸

2.5 Enhancing Crisis Management and Resilience | Améliorer la gestion des crises et la résilience

France's security strategy is dependent on effective crisis management and resilience. To bolster its preparedness, France is strengthening its crisis response capabilities, including establishing rapid-response teams, conducting regular emergency drills, and developing crisis coordination frameworks.²⁹

These efforts will enable France to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies, mitigating the impact of crises and ensuring the continuity of critical functions. Also, by

²⁷ Première Ministre and Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale, "National Strategic Review: 2022." <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>; France stands ready to continue to work to improve the understanding of cyber challenges. France ONU. (2024, November). <https://onu.delegfrance.org/france-stands-ready-to-continue-to-work-to-improve-the-understanding-of-cyber>

²⁸ "Evaluation of the national recovery plan France Relance - Summary of the final report," *République Française*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/english-articles/evaluation-national-recovery-plan-france-relance-summary-final-report#:~:text=With%20a%20budget%20of%20%E2%82%AC,the%20long%2Dterm%20challenges%20ahead.>

²⁹ "The Crisis and Support Centre: Emergency diplomacy," French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, accessed November 20, 2024, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/br-cdcs-gb-09-09-2015_cle42b42c.pdf

enhancing its crisis management, France aims to build a more resilient society and safeguard the security and well-being of its citizens.³⁰

- **Objective:** Increase investment in crisis management capabilities to effectively respond to emergencies and improve resilience against disruptions.
- **Objective:** Fortifying rapid response teams by conducting regular emergency drills and creating frameworks for crisis coordination.
- **Objective:** Promoting the maintenance of a population with a strong defence-oriented mindset and officials skilled in planning and crisis management will help enhance resilience in areas such as security, the economy, employment, and social cohesion.

2.6 Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Spread of conventional weapons | Prévenir la prolifération des armes de destruction massive et la prolifération des armes conventionnelles

Recognizing that proliferation undermines the global security apparatus, France is committed to upholding the central role and credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.³¹ Furthermore, France is also concerned with the continued effectiveness of the four export control regimes that dissuade the spread of ballistic, chemical, biological, conventional, and nuclear weapons.

- **Objective:** Renounce the proliferation of weapons that enable increased antagonism, while continuing to invest in intelligence needed to hinder illicit traffic of weapons.
- **Objective:** Ensure that nuclear deterrence remains a focal point of French and like-minded states' sovereignty, while encouraging other nuclear powers to adopt similar defensive strategies.

2.7 Addressing Emerging Security Challenges | Relever les défis de sécurité émergents

The evolving security landscape presents new and emerging challenges that require innovative solutions. France's strategic objectives include adapting to emerging threats

³⁰ SGDSN, National Response Plan: Major Nuclear or Radiological Accidents. Accessed on November 20, 2024, https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/Nos_missions/plan-national-nucleaire-fevrier2014-anglais.pdf

³¹ "Working paper: France's Action Against Proliferation," 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, accessed November 20, 2024, https://onu.delegfrance.org/IMG/pdf_B95FC20A.pdf

such as climate change, terrorism, and technological advancements.³² Climate change, for instance, poses significant risks to national and global security, necessitating comprehensive strategies to mitigate its impact.

To address these evolving threats, France aims to conduct research, develop innovative solutions, and collaborate with international organisations. Staying ahead of potential dangers and adapting to new realities, France seeks to ensure the security and stability of its citizens and the Euro-Atlantic region.

- **Objective:** More general investment in research, developing innovative solutions, and collaborating with international organisations to address evolving threats effectively.
- **Objective:** Mitigate the effects of climate change by supporting groups such as the World Food Program, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- **Objective:** Follow up on previous calls for the strengthening of the United Nations Climate and Security Mechanisms to promote a united approach that affects local levels.
- **Objective:** Emphasise the importance of water issues by co-organizing the One Water Summit with Kazakhstan to be held December 3, 2024³³
- **Objective:** Revitalise partnerships and security agreements aimed at coping with great power disengagement and the increase of rivalry in order to hinder the spread of destabilising activities including terrorism.

2.8 Securing Supply Chains | Sécuriser les Chaînes d'Approvisionnement

France believes the value of supply chains cannot be understated, they provide the world with heat for our homes, food for our tables, and all the other resources necessary for survival and prosperity.

In the increasingly digital world, special attention must be paid to the role that cyber threats play on the security of supply chains. With this in mind France's intervention

³² "The Fight against Climate Change Is a Peace and Security Issue." France ONU. Accessed November 21, 2024. <https://onu.delegfrance.org/the-fight-against-climate-change-is-a-peace-and-security-issue>.

³³ "One Water Summit," One Planet Summit, accessed November 21, 2024, <https://oneplanetsummit.fr/en/events-16/one-water-summit-287>.

function is integral to the protection and deterrence of threats with regards to our supply chains.

Additionally, in the event of other forms of conflict, a diversification of supplies in conjunction with the relocation of sensitive production lines is absolutely necessary.

Objective: Preparing for the worst, France will fortify stocks of finished equipment, raw materials, and critical components.

- **Objective:** Ensure efficient location of vital supply lines, while also securing new agreements for alternative routes and supplies.
- **Objective:** Develop recycling chains that would contribute to annular production, reduction of supply needs, and sustainability.
- **Objective:** Advance diplomatic ties to ensure the ability of France to request pivotal assets on the international market, no matter the circumstance.

Cyber Security | Cybersécurité

France is wholly committed to NATO's statement concerning malicious cyber activities:

"We all stand to benefit from a rules-based, predictable, open, free, and secure cyberspace. NATO reiterates that international law applies in cyberspace and must be respected. All states have an important role to play in promoting and upholding voluntary norms of responsible state behaviour and in countering destabilising and malicious cyber activities"³⁴

3.1 History of Cyber Security Policy In France | Histoire de la Politique de Cybersécurité en France

2009

ANSSI created

³⁴"Statement by the North Atlantic Council concerning malicious cyber activities (3 June 2020)," *France in Nato*, accessed November 20, 2024, <https://otan.delegfrance.org/Statement-by-the-North-Atlantic-Council-concerning-malicious-cyber-activities-3>

France, under the leadership of Sarkozy, rejoins the integrated military organisation in NATO.³⁵

2015

France adopts a national cyber security strategy focusing on: guaranteeing national sovereignty, providing a strong response to acts of Cyber Crime, informing the public, making digital security a competitive advantage for French businesses, and enhancing France's voice on the international stage³⁶

2016

Warsaw Summit: Recognized cyberspace as a field of operations and now commits NATO to defend itself in cyberspace as it would in land, air, and maritime space. Commitment made by France to strengthen national cyber defence capabilities.

2017

France ratifies its international digital strategy. Compiles all of France's goals in the digital field around governance, the economy and security.³⁷ Stands for the promotion of a European internet based on a balance of civil liberties, growth and security. Promotes the establishment of an agency for disruptive innovation at the European level involving enhanced Franco-German cooperation. Emphasises the leveraging of Europe's scientific excellence to position itself among the leaders of the next digital revolution.³⁸

2018

France hosts the first ever cyber defence pledge conference.

Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace: recalls fundamental principles for cyber

³⁵Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, "France and NATO," *France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*, accessed November 18, 2024, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/our-alliances-and-cooperations/france-and-nato/>.

³⁶ Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, "France and Cyber Security," *France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*, accessed November 18, 2024, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/digital-diplomacy/france-and-cyber-security/#:~:text=Wit hin%20NATO%2C%20France%20instigated%20the,land%2C%20air%20and%20maritime%20fields.>

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. *Stratégie internationale de la France pour le numérique*. Paris: Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2017. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-numerique/la-strategie-internationale-de-la-france-pour-le-numerique/>

space. This includes the applicability of international law and human rights to cyber space and mentions a number of principles such as responsible behaviour of states. Highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to drawing up standards and best practices in order to reliably and securely enjoy the opportunities offered by the digital revolution.

2019

France puts forward its contributions to the United Nations presenting the key points of France's position on global cyberspace issues. Highlighted policy of transparency regarding both international and national strategy, importance of building cooperation between nations in cyberspace, methods and measures to bolster international security in cyberspace

G7 foreign ministers met in France and launched a Cyber Norm initiative with the purpose of sharing best practices and lessons learned.

2021

Brussels Summit: Allies agreed on the need to adapt to new security challenges. Endorsement by Heads of State and Government for a new comprehensive Cyber defence policy.³⁹ Concluded that in certain cases the cumulative effects of cyber acts warrant the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

2024

Washington Summit: Allies agreed to establish the NATO integrated Cyber Defence Centre. This was developed with the purpose of improving network protection, situational awareness and the integration of cyberspace as an operational environment⁴⁰

3.2 Organisations of Importance | Organisations importantes

French Network and Information Security Agency (ANSSI)

Created in 2009 for the purposes of national cyber security. This organisation serves as the first responder for France for issues related to cyberspace.⁴¹

³⁹ Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, "France and NATO."

⁴⁰ "Cyber Defence," NATO, accessed November 18, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natohq/topics_78170.htm?selectedLocale=en.

⁴¹ Ibid

The French Ministry for the Armed Forces

Ensures the protection of the networks which are paramount to French military operation as well as the integration of digital warfare as a means of operation.⁴²

COMCYBER

A cyber defence operational chain of command created in 2017 to consolidate the work of the ministry for the Armed Forces.⁴³

France's Ministry of the Interior

Combats all forms of cyber crime against national institutions and interests, economic stakeholders, government authorities and individuals. Responsible for investigations aimed at identifying and prosecuting cyber criminals.⁴⁴

Directorate General of Armaments

Responsible for the technical expertise of the Ministry of the Armed Forces.

Defence Artificial intelligence Coordination Unit (CCIAD)

Formed in 2019 with the purpose of ensuring the coherence between the development of AI and the Ministry of Armed Forces. Responsible for ensuring that the development of AI therefore must be moderated in relation with issues of defence.

Defence Innovation Agency (AID)

General Directorate of International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS)

Oversees the bilateral diplomatic defence network. Contributes to the defining of objectives for the french military.

3.3 Position of France On Cybersecurity and Defence | Position de la France sur la Cybersécurité et la Défense

Government of France | Gouvernement de la France

France is dedicated to the increase of trust at the global level through cooperative dialogue with both private and public actors. This is a necessary factor for the development of a collective cybersecurity framework which France is committed to

⁴² Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, "France and NATO."

⁴³ Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, "France and NATO."

⁴⁴ Ibid

advancing. For the continuance of cybersecurity between states, nations must commit to: transparency in their standing on cybersecurity, strengthening their own cybersecurity, manage vulnerabilities, cooperate with countries that are victims of attacks, not to sabotage or damage the cyber infrastructure of another, and insurance of the fundamental rights of citizens.

As cyber threats go beyond borders, international cooperation is a necessity. President Macron has clearly stated the goal of working alongside the United States among other leading partners towards the mutual purpose of improving cybersecurity and upholding international law within cyber spaces.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russia has intensified its cyber threats, targeting NATO members and partners. China has also engaged in malicious hybrid and cyber operations with the purpose of undermining the security of NATO members and collective Euro-Atlantic security. France is actively working to counter substantial, ongoing and increasing cyber threats, including those targeting fundamental democratic systems.

Ministry of the Armed Forces | Ministère des Armées

The Ministry of the Armed Forces stance on Cyber security is that the cyber threat is permanent and constantly evolving.⁴⁵ Cyberspace has quickly become a major problem in matters of defense.⁴⁶ The field of Cybernetic combat is a mode of action in and of its own, separate from the previous fields of land, air and sea. The goal of the 2024-2030 LPM is the development of a first rate cyber defence. This involves the development of a coherent multifaceted tool, enabling all operational resources to carry out their missions. All of these efforts are intended to support the ANSSI during a national cyber security crisis.

As the informational battlefield becomes more relevant the importance of cybersecurity cannot be understated. This is why the control of hostile actions is a fully fledged component of the cyber field which France is committed to addressing.

⁴⁵ Ministère des Armées, "La cyberdéfense au ministère des Armées," *Ministère des Armées*, accessed November 18, 2024, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/nos-expertises/cyberdefense-au-ministere-armees>.

⁴⁶ Ministère des Armées, "Le recrutement dans la cyberdéfense à la DGA," *Ministère des Armées*, accessed November 18, 2024, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/dga/recrutement/recrutement-cyberdefense-dga>.

Position of France On Generative AI | Position de la France sur l'IA générative

Government of France | Gouvernement de la France

The growth of generative AI poses several threats and opportunities for France. Generative AI opens new issues of cyber security and defence that were previously not present. The Ministry of the Armed Forces and other relevant organisations must keep up with other countries that pose existential threats such as China and Russia. France sees AI as an indispensable strategic technology to maintain security and operational superiority which will be mostly beneficial in the field of technological data.⁴⁷ President Emmanuel Macron has emphasised a necessity to keep up with the growth of AI.⁴⁸ France has acted on this information by developing an AI-Cluster scheme which aims to consolidate national training and research centres to increase the number of AI specialists in France by 2030.⁴⁹ The development of AI takes place across multiple relevant organisations, including the DGA, SGA, DGRIS, EMA, and the AID.

Collectively, these organisations have identified several opportunities created by generative AI:

- AI can streamline the collection and use of intelligence in an era where there is an abundance of information;
- AI can automate certain low-value tasks to allow experts to focus on issues that are more prevalent;

⁴⁷ Héloïse Fayet, *French Thinking on AI Integration and Interaction with Nuclear Command and Control, Force Structure, and Decision-Making* (London: European Leadership Network, November 2023), 1–24.
https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/French-bibliography_AI_Nuclear_Fin_al.pdf.

⁴⁸ Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie, Ministère chargé du Budget et des Comptes publics, "16/06/2023-France 2030: Emmanuel Macron Annonce un Effort Sans Précédent de la France En Intelligence Artificielle," *Gouvernement*, accessed November 18, 2024,
<https://presse.economie.gouv.fr/16062023-942-france-2030-emmanuel-macron-annonce-un-effort-sans-precedent-de-la-france-en-intelligence-artificielle/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid

- AI can accelerate the production of goods while leaving people at the core of decision-making.

Artificial intelligence is a dual interest technology which will enable opportunities that benefit civilians as well as the military. The ultimate goal of AI development, in the context of the military, is to increase strategic/operational autonomy and the technological superiority of French armies. AI will be undoubtedly beneficial in improving foresight and decision making by analysing and cross referencing sources of different origins. A task force organised by the Ministry of the Armed Forces has identified seven priorities for the development of AI.⁵⁰

- Decision making for planning and logistics;
- Collaborative combat;
- Cyber defence and influence;
- Logistical streamlining;
- The support and maintenance in operational conditions;
- The collection of intelligence;
- The improvement of robotics and autonomy;
- And the administration and health of French soldiers both abroad and domestically.

Understanding the potential for harm, France aims to be a pioneer for the responsible use of AI. To achieve this, France is focused on developing trustworthy AI that is both robust and well-suited for use in national defence. Issues of defence are inherently tied to ethical considerations. Therefore, the use of AI in military operations, particularly in the development of autonomous systems, is a major subject of debate. This debate is particularly intense regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), which raise serious ethical and strategic concerns.⁵¹ To address these concerns, France has pledged to ensure that military commanders retain ultimate responsibility for the use of weapons.⁵²

In the context of current Euro-Atlantic security the threat of nuclear warfare can not be neglected. AI has the potential to alleviate this threat, but at the same time there is an

⁵⁰Fayet, *"French Thinking."*

⁵¹Ibid

⁵²Ibid

issue of trust. AI can potentially improve detection systems and improve readiness to launch upon potential threats. The reliance on this however could have dramatic consequences.⁵³ France has officially stated that they would never use their nuclear weapons for the purposes of war; however, AI plays a major role in defence.⁵⁴ It is the official position of France that a complete surrender of nuclear defence to AI will never be accepted.

AI opens the way to several operational risks:

- Cyber attacks that could lead to the hacking, luring, or reprogramming of vital AI systems;
- Potential foreign interference that limits or prohibits French use or control of AI;
- Incorrect system programming that could lead to potential misfires or misaction;
- Misunderstandings of the operation of the system by either the operator or commander;
- Or the disempowerment or extinction of the critical human influence in security decisions.

Within international relations the use and development of AI will serve an imperative function. The actors that use AI to support their decision making process will have a significant advantage over potential adversaries.⁵⁵ In issues of cyber and exo-atmospheric spaces, AI plays a major role with regards to: the effectiveness of strategic planning, navigation, high precision time synchronisation, observation of earth, long range communications, and early warning systems.⁵⁶

The broad understanding and use of artificial intelligence is certain to shift as technology advances, but regardless of the outcome, France aims to be ready. By encouraging responsible use by all actors, France believes that AI can avoid the tendency of innovation to become confrontation.

⁵³Ibid

⁵⁴Ibid

⁵⁵Fayet, *"French Thinking."*

⁵⁶Ibid

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