

‘Forward deterrence’: strengthening Europe’s defence whilst respecting national independence

The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the nuclear blackmail perpetrated by Russia since then, and the United States’ withdrawal from Europe serve as a reminder of ***the importance for France of having an operational, credible and independent nuclear deterrent.***

In these circumstances, President Emmanuel Macron’s speech on 2 March 2026, delivered at the Île Longue operational base, marked both the culmination of a process of reflection led by successive Presidents of the Republic on the European dimension of French nuclear deterrence and ***a starting point for establishing partnerships with the nine countries which, in September 2026, responded favourably to France’s offer of ‘forward deterrence’.*** ***This evolution in nuclear doctrine does not call into question the fundamental principles on which it has been based since 1964*** (sovereignty of decision-making, independence of means, and the definition of ‘vital interests’ by the Head of State). The President of the Republic has, however, paved the way for partnerships that could range from ***close coordination with the United Kingdom*** within the framework of a deepened strategic relationship to ***‘à la carte’ cooperation with the nine other states,*** which could take the form of participation in French nuclear force exercises.

The Head of State announced ***two important decisions.*** The first concerns ***an expansion of France’s nuclear arsenal*** – breaking with the reduction in the arsenal initiated in 1995 and confirmed in 2008 – ***designed both to deter a coalition of adversaries possessing nuclear weapons and to respond to improvements in competitors’ surface-to-air defences.*** The second involves offering European countries that so wish the opportunity to host ***‘contingency deployments’ of the Strategic Air Forces (FAS) on their territory.*** ***The rapporteurs consider that these ‘contingency deployments’ can only be implemented in the medium to long term, with Parliament’s involvement.***





The 10 main recommendations

1. Maintain an independent French nuclear deterrent and continue to adapt our arsenal in light of the changing strategic context.
2. Maintain both the ocean-based and airborne components of France's nuclear deterrent, taking into account developments in adversaries' technologies.
3. Continue the modernisation of the ocean-based and airborne components and ensure that the necessary budgetary resources are made available, whilst preserving the expertise of the French defence industrial and technological base (BITD).
4. Expand the fighter force structure by strengthening the resources of the Strategic Air Forces (FAS), without ruling out an increase in the number of squadrons in the long term.
5. Continue the modernisation of second-generation SSBNs in order to equip them with state-of-the-art equipment wherever possible.
6. Strengthen the surface-to-air defence capabilities of the most sensitive nuclear sites in order to be better able to respond to high-intensity conflict in Europe.
7. Launch studies for the development of a sixth-generation nuclear-capable successor to the Rafale, drawing on the expertise of French manufacturers whilst seeking European or international partnerships.
8. Develop an operational, strategic and sovereign ballistic missile capability to provide conventional support for nuclear deterrence and prevent it from being 'bypassed from below'.
9. Prioritise a long-term vision for the logistical investments to be made at the Brest naval base and the Île Longue operational base in order to accommodate future third-generation SSBNs until 2090.

10.

Open a debate on the application of the provisions of Article 35 of the Constitution concerning the provision of information and, where appropriate, consultation with Parliament in the event of a 'contingency deployment' of the Strategic Air Forces (FAS) in a European country.

In an increasingly uncertain world, and whilst the risk of war spreading to Europe persists, ***the rapporteurs wish to reiterate the indispensable role of nuclear deterrence in defending the nation and the need to safeguard, in the long term, the resources allocated to its renewal in all its dimensions (carriers, delivery systems, warheads).***

I. REDISCOVERING THE KEY ROLE OF NUCLEAR DETERRENCE IN OUR DEFENCE POLICY

Nuclear deterrence occupies a unique place in French strategic thinking, having been the cornerstone of its defence policy since the 1960s. ***It had taken a back seat following the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of asymmetric conflicts.*** The annexation of Crimea acted as a catalyst for reorienting our defence efforts towards Europe in three ways: by raising awareness of the threat; by subsequently accelerating the reappropriation of the fundamentals of our nuclear doctrine; and, finally, by enabling the adaptation of our defence capabilities, as evidenced by the last two Military Programming Laws (LPM).

The rapporteurs consider that the ***work of rebuilding 'nuclear IQ'*** is not yet complete and that strategic studies should be developed to strengthen the expertise of civilian and military actors, as well as academic research.

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Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, it took ten years to regain full mastery of nuclear deterrence.

A civilian authority interviewed by the rapporteurs

A. An organisation structured around the Head of State

Under the Fifth Republic, the President of the Republic *'is the guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity and respect for treaties'* (Art. 5–2 C). He is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and *'chairs the higher councils and committees of national defence'* (Art. 15 C). Finally, since 1962, he *'is elected by an absolute majority of the votes cast'* (Art. 7 C) directly by the French people. ***The Head of State remains, to this day, the key authority for determining the various aspects of nuclear deterrence policy. This policy is based on three distinct forms of credibility:***

- ***Political credibility***, embodied by the President of the Republic, particularly in his speeches and through his decision-making;
- ***Operational credibility***, embodied by the strategic forces, which maintain round-the-clock readiness and demonstrate their expertise through regular exercises and operational missions;
- ***Technical credibility***, which rests on the expertise of the DGA, the CEA and the industrial partners who contribute to the *'joint endeavour'*.

The Head of State's authority to decide to use nuclear weapons derives from Article R*1411-5 of the Defence Code, which stipulates that: *'The Chief of the Defence Staff is responsible for ensuring that the operations necessary for the deployment of nuclear forces are carried out. He shall ensure the execution of the order to engage issued by the President of the Republic'*.

The rapporteurs can confirm that, **once issued, the presidential order cannot be overruled by any civil or military authority.**

The political credibility of France's nuclear deterrent also rests on an organisational structure that enables the planning of requirements and the organisation of deployment, involving several distinct authorities: the Chief of the President of the Republic's Military Staff, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the EMA-Nuclear Forces (EMA-FN), the SGDSN, the DGRIS of the MINARM, the DRM and the DGSE.

The operational credibility of the Nuclear Forces is based on their constant readiness to take action whatever the circumstances and on the operational excellence of the two components: the ocean-based nuclear component (CNO) and the airborne nuclear component (CNA). **Both components possess specific features and highly complementary characteristics.** The CNO consistently provides resilience and stealth (permanent presence at sea and invulnerability, due to the dispersal of ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), as well as guaranteed second-strike capability). The CNA consistently provides the speed and responsiveness characteristic of aerospace military power, as well as visibility (the demonstrative nature of strategic signalling, which contributes to deterrence dialogue) and, in certain circumstances, a degree of reversibility.

B. A sustained capacity to manage the various nuclear programmes

The credibility of France's nuclear deterrent still owes much to its technical excellence, which is based on regular investment to ensure the renewal of its components, and on maintenance in operational condition (MCO) to guarantee the availability and effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent at all times.

The body responsible for carrying out this task is the Nuclear Armaments Council (CAN), which sets strategic guidelines and monitors the progress of nuclear deterrence programmes. The General Delegation for Armaments (DGA) manages the industrial programmes for nuclear deterrence and **guarantees its technical credibility by ensuring its effectiveness** against all types of defence systems, taking into account developments in these systems. The CEA's Directorate for Military Applications (DAM) is responsible for managing defence nuclear programmes within the framework of France's deterrence strategy. Its activities cover **three main areas: nuclear weapons, nuclear propulsion (on-board nuclear power plants) and the nuclear materials required for weapons and power plants.**

Nuclear deterrence supports a vast number of jobs in France, whether at the major industrial prime contractors within the French defence industrial and technological base (BITD), such as *Naval Group, TechnicAtome, Thales, Ariane Group, MBDA and Dassault Aviation*, or among the numerous subcontractors across the country, many of which are SMEs.

Around 2,000

companies work directly or indirectly for nuclear deterrence

Without nuclear deterrence, France would have found it extremely difficult to maintain, over the long term, the technological excellence required to produce nuclear-powered

submarines, high-performance ballistic and cruise missiles, fighter aircraft such as the *Mirage 2000* and the *Rafale*, as well as all the components that enable them to operate (radar, electronics, etc.).

With regard to the resources allocated to nuclear deterrence, **the industry representatives interviewed considered that these were calculated ‘to meet exact requirements’ and that they were also guaranteed over the long term, thanks to oversight at the highest level of government. The rapporteurs note that nuclear deterrence programmes not only remain within their allocated budgets, but also, in most cases, adhere to the scheduled timelines for studies, development, testing, production and delivery.**

C. A doctrine set out in the speeches of the President of the Republic

Nuclear deterrence is not limited to the possession of nuclear weapons and the capacity to use them at any time. It is also based on a doctrine that sets out a framework for a ‘dialogue of power’ with a potential adversary. The speeches of the Presidents of the Republic are public and are delivered approximately once per term of office, in order to take stock of evolving threats and their implications for France’s nuclear doctrine. French doctrine is largely based on **two fundamental concepts: the definition of France’s vital interests and the capacity to inflict assured destruction.**

The first speech formally establishing the ‘strike force’ was delivered by General de Gaulle on 3 November 1959 at the École de Guerre. Its fundamental principle was that ‘the defence of France must be French’, thereby reaffirming **the inviolability of national independence.** However, General de Gaulle also pointed out that ‘our strategy must be coordinated with that of others. On the battlefield, it is highly likely that we would find ourselves side by side with our allies’. From that point on, the two principles were established: **France must be autonomous in its capabilities and must take its place alongside its allies.**

With regard to the procedures for carrying out a ‘nuclear warning’ strike – which forms a cornerstone of French nuclear doctrine – **the rapporteurs can confirm that both components are capable of carrying out this mission.** This ‘one-off and non-repeatable’ warning must demonstrate to an aggressor that the nature of the conflict has radically changed.

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The roles of the two components should be understood in the following terms: they can, either together or separately, fulfil all the missions assigned to the nuclear forces. In particular, each component contributes to ensuring a second-strike capability, even though only the submarine on patrol is capable of guaranteeing a second strike in the event of a massive surprise attack.

The rapporteurs

II. BOTH NUCLEAR COMPONENTS ARE FULLY OPERATIONAL

For more than fifty years, the presence of at least one SSBN at sea has guaranteed the ability to deliver a second strike at any time and has made any decapitation strike plan futile. However, the operational mandate of the French Strategic Oceanic Force (FOST) is not limited to a single vessel; it provides for the possibility of deploying up to three SSBNs simultaneously, as was the case, according to certain French and international media outlets, in March 2022 following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The availability of resources also applies to the FAS, which rely *on a permanent state of alert and mastery of the operational techniques required to penetrate air defences, enabling them to launch a nuclear response within a relatively short timeframe.*

A. The Ocean-Based Nuclear Component (CNO) of the French Naval Forces

Whilst many navies are experiencing availability issues, the French SSBN fleet is fully operational. In addition to the four SSBNs currently in service, the FOST comprises a range of logistical assets, as well as communications systems and acoustic reconnaissance capabilities.

The ocean-based component provides strategic depth based on the principles of dispersion and stealth, which underpin the invulnerability of SSBNs on patrol. *Each SSBN commander is the sole decision-maker regarding the vessel's manoeuvres, which he adjusts in light of the information continuously relayed to him by the FOST headquarters. In the event of a launch, whilst the commander is aware of the details of the vessel's arsenal, he has no knowledge whatsoever of the targets, as this information is the sole prerogative of the Head of State.* As French doctrine does not specify any particular adversary, the weapons systems have no targeting information until the firing order is transmitted. *For reasons of engagement control, the missile firing protocol requires the involvement of the commander and his second-in-command from two separate locations on the vessel.*

The high level of operational readiness of the SSBNs is attributable to the quality of the French military nuclear programme, both in terms of their manufacture and their maintenance in operational condition (MCO), *whether this involves regular maintenance after each mission or the 'major refit' operations carried out every ten years.*

The rapporteurs recommend *continuing to modernise the second-generation SSBNs by replacing, where appropriate, certain original equipment (periscope, sonar) with more advanced, latest-generation equipment to maintain the technological excellence of these submarines.*

B. The Airborne Nuclear Component (CNA)

The Strategic Air Forces (FAS) constantly demonstrate to rival powers that the nuclear weapon is indeed *a weapon intended for use. The FAS conduct around 70 operations and exercises of all kinds each year to reinforce their credibility.*

FAS aircraft are available at all times with very short notice periods, and placing them on alert would form part of the nuclear dialogue in the event of a serious crisis, as the adversary would be able to gauge, in real time, the progress of preparations for a nuclear strike. Once a strike has been decided upon and set in motion, the Head of State would retain the ability to call it off as long as the nuclear forces have not yet been committed. *This reversibility of the airborne component is undoubtedly its main operational advantage.*

Given the accumulation of operational commitments for the Strategic Air Forces (FAS), the rapporteurs consider that the increase in their missions will necessitate a review of their capabilities and of the number of squadrons required.

C. A renewal programme for the two nuclear components, launched in 2015

The timeframe of deterrence does not align with the political cycle. Nuclear deterrence has been possible and remains a reality solely because successive Presidents of the Republic and parliamentary majorities have reaffirmed this commitment, year after year, on behalf of the entire nation. *France is currently engaged in the modernisation of its two nuclear components, which constitutes a challenge in human, technological and financial terms.*

The 3G SSBNs will respond to the evolving threat, particularly in terms of invulnerability, and will carry future versions of the M51 missile until 2090. *The launch of phase 2 of the 3G SSBN programme includes the detailed design of the four vessels that will make up the 'Invincible' class.* The orders placed are not limited to the 'lead vessel' but cover all long-lead-time procurements relating to the various components required to construct the nuclear reactors (e.g. reactor vessels), as well as the hulls (e.g. stocks of special-grade steel).

The programme for the future fourth-generation Air-to-Surface Nuclear (ASN4G) missile was launched in March 2026, with commissioning scheduled for around 2035. *This change in missile class will also necessitate the development of new nuclear warheads adapted to the characteristics of the new delivery systems. The rapporteurs were informed that the CEA had sufficient stocks of nuclear materials to manage the transition between the two types of nuclear warheads.*

The ASN4G missile's hypersonic and manoeuvrable characteristics will ensure the weapons system's operational superiority, taking into account the evolution of enemy defences right up to the time of its decommissioning and providing the capability to penetrate those defences.

Funding allocated to nuclear deterrence stood at €6.36 billion in 2024, €6.89 billion in 2025 and €7.38 billion in 2026. *Approximately €57 billion of the €436 billion provided for in the 2024–2030 Military Programming Law will be allocated to nuclear deterrence.* The additional funding provided for in the update to the Military Programming Law will enable the expansion of the arsenal and the consolidation of the national Tritium programme.

€57 billion

This is the amount estimated by the rapporteurs as the funding allocated to nuclear deterrence in the 2024–2030 Military Programming Law

III. EXPANDING THE FRENCH ARSENAL: NOW A NECESSITY

The Head of State's speech on 2 March 2026 reaffirms fundamental principles such as *the strictly defensive nature of French nuclear deterrence*. French doctrine does not adopt the concept of 'no first use', which would preclude two key possibilities: the use of nuclear warning and the possibility of employing nuclear weapons to counter an act of aggression or a threat to our vital non-nuclear interests.

The ambiguity surrounding the definition of vital interests remains, whilst the notion of nuclear escalation continues to be ruled out. As France's nuclear arsenal is purely strategic

in nature, 'nuclear warning' is intended to re-establish nuclear deterrence. Furthermore, **nuclear deterrence remains sovereign and independent.**

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Five major developments since the Head of State's previous address on 7 February 2020 have made it necessary for him to issue a new statement this year:

- 1- The increase in sub-threshold conflicts involving nuclear-armed states;*
- 2- Changes to the deterrence doctrine of several rival powers;*
- 3- Alliances and coordination involving nuclear-armed states;*
- 4- Technological developments in nuclear arsenals;*
- 5- The quantitative and technological expansion of adversaries' anti-missile defences.*

A military authority interviewed

This new speech nevertheless draws conclusions from the changing geopolitical context and acknowledges the difficulties in continuing efforts towards disarmament and the fight against proliferation, whilst reaffirming the necessity of these efforts.

The main change in the doctrine concerns the increase in the number of nuclear warheads, without France, however, committing to an arms race. The French position remains built around the concept of 'unacceptable damage', even if the term is no longer used. The statement suggests that **France is equipping itself with the means to penetrate any defences in order to strike targets that are no longer limited to 'centres of power'.**

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'French nuclear deterrence is intended to deter any state from encroaching on our vital interests. And what are they? We have deliberately never defined them precisely. Our red lines are not clear. They cannot be. Without a doubt, our interests, although they cover mainland France and overseas France, should not merely be considered as what is within our national borders.' (...)

'Could we consider that the survival of our closest partners might be put at risk without it affecting our vital interests? Or conversely, that an extreme threat in Europe only concerns us? For these fundamental reasons, successive Presidents have referred to the European dimension of France's vital interests' (...)

Emmanuel Macron, 2 March 2026

A. From 'strict sufficiency' to 'strict coherence'

For decades, a balance had been maintained between Russia and the United States in terms of the number of operational nuclear warheads, at around 1,500 to 2,000 for each power. Now, however, this balance of power is estimated at 1.5 to 1 when China's capabilities are added to those of Russia, and could reach 2 to 1 in ten years as China's arsenal expands, or even 2.5 to 1 if North Korea's arms are taken into account. **This marked and prolonged deterioration in the balance of power is therefore regarded as a threat to the preservation of the global strategic balance.**

The expansion of the French nuclear arsenal enables deterrence to retain its 'power of assured destruction'. This expansion responds to two major trends: changes in the

strategic environment, which require us to envisage more complex threat scenarios, including combined threats from adversaries; and technological developments in defence systems, which must be – and are – anticipated.

B. A French contribution to a strengthened European defence

The proposal for ‘*forward deterrence*’ represents a major shift in French nuclear doctrine. It gives concrete form to the European dimension of this deterrence, which was often referred to in previous speeches without a precise definition. According to one expert who gave evidence, it should help foster ‘*strategic solidarity*’ among partners.

The choice of partners was made with care, taking into account the geopolitical stakes. The idea was, in particular, to ensure that the strategic debate did not concern only the major countries and to build a European strategic culture. The nine countries (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden) that responded favourably to the proposal to participate in France’s ‘*forward deterrence*’ are mainly situated in northern Europe, which is likely to complicate the adversary’s calculations given the points of contact that exist with Russia on land, at sea and in the air.

Through the ‘*forward deterrence*’ proposal, France is helping to pool European capabilities and promote their coherence, with each partner being invited to strengthen its resources in the conventional sphere to contribute to its implementation.

C. The need to develop conventional support

According to another expert who was interviewed, ‘the nuclear risk in Europe is currently quite low. On the other hand, the risk of conventional attacks using drones, cruise missiles and/or ballistic missiles poses a real threat, against which we currently have relatively few defensive – and indeed offensive – capabilities to respond proportionately’.

This is why the Head of State’s speech on 2 March 2026 marked a significant shift in terms of the emphasis placed on conventional capabilities. The reason surface-to-air and anti-missile defence has become a priority is that states possessing nuclear weapons are no longer immune to a high-intensity conflict involving the use of cruise or ballistic missiles. ***In 2025, four nuclear-armed countries – India, Pakistan, Russia and Israel – were hit by missile attacks, with the latter two continuing to suffer strikes in 2026.***

The rapporteurs consider it essential to strengthen the surface-to-air defence capabilities of nuclear-capable bases to respond more effectively to a high-intensity conflict in Europe ‘below the nuclear threshold’.

Developments in the war in Ukraine have highlighted the key role of deep strikes in destroying infrastructure or equipment behind the front lines using drones or missiles. However, improvements to the surface-to-air defences of the belligerents have gradually reduced the effectiveness of drones and cruise missiles travelling at low altitude. Whilst drones are now deployed in salvos to ensure the survivability of a sufficient proportion of them, the cost of cruise missiles makes it difficult to increase their use.

The specific constraints of cruise missiles have revived interest in ballistic missiles, which follow downward trajectories from a greater altitude and arrive at significantly higher speeds, thereby making them more difficult to intercept. The war waged by Israel and the United States against Iran has demonstrated the effectiveness of ballistic missiles of various ranges, particularly that of aeroballistic missiles with a range of approximately 1,000 km. This is why, during the debate on the draft bill updating the Military Programming Law, the Committee on

Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Armed Forces requested and secured provisions for the development of a comprehensive ballistic missile capability with a range of up to 2,500 km.

The rapporteurs are in favour of developing an operational, strategic and sovereign ballistic missile capability to provide conventional support for nuclear deterrence and prevent it from being 'bypassed from below'.

IV. 'FORWARD DETERRENCE' TO STRENGTHEN EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

A. A gradual approach aimed at complicating the adversary's calculations

There is currently a willingness in Europe to develop a common culture of nuclear deterrence linked to the conventional dimension. This culture of deterrence, sometimes referred to as ***'nuclear IQ'***, should foster sufficient ***'strategic intimacy'*** to enable, if necessary, the joint management of an escalation dynamic. Nine countries (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden) have already shown interest and entered into discussions on the French proposal to contribute to 'forward deterrence'.

For the French offer of cooperation to succeed, it had to ***avoid two pitfalls: giving the impression of seeking to replace NATO*** in its role as a nuclear defence alliance, and ***suggesting that France might 'share' the decision*** to resort to nuclear weapons. Both these pitfalls have indeed been avoided.

According to the EMA-FN: *'On the one hand, these cooperative initiatives will aim to demonstrate the growing strategic convergence and solidarity between France and its partners. On the other hand, they will enable the development of operational components tailored to each partner. They will be based, first and foremost, on establishing a dialogue of trust and shared strategic cultures on nuclear deterrence issues. They may involve certain partners in operational activities: participation in exercises with a nuclear dimension, involvement in strategic signalling manoeuvres, and even the possible deployment, as circumstances require, of elements of the airborne nuclear component'.*

B. The participation of allies in French nuclear deterrence exercises

The involvement of European partners in exercises must take place gradually. Such exercises require a thorough mutual understanding, particularly with regard to each other's operational procedures. Furthermore, the integration of partners could initially involve ***electronic warfare and intelligence exercises before progressing to in-flight exercises.*** 'Small-scale Poker' exercises could then be envisaged, followed, where appropriate, by exercises on a European scale.

These national or European-scale exercises may also take various forms: partner conventional forces could participate in dedicated exercises with strategic forces (in French airspace or in joint airspace) or elements of the strategic air forces could be deployed to the partner's territory, etc.

Bilateral *nuclear steering groups* have been set up with each partner to define the shared ambition and roadmap for both the nuclear mission and strategic support. The bilateral nature

of the cooperation means that one group must be established for each partner, making a total of nine steering groups (ten including the UK).

Following the Franco-German Defence and Security Council meeting held in Brühl on 17 July 2026, Chancellor Friedrich Merz stated that Germany would take part in a nuclear exercise involving French forces as early as this year.

C. 'Contingency deployments' in Europe

The President of the Republic announced the possibility of carrying out 'contingency deployments' of strategic forces to our allies, stating that 'our strategic air forces will thus be able to spread deep into the European continent' and that 'this dispersal across European territory, a sort of archipelago of forces, will complicate the calculations of our adversaries and will make this forward deterrence very valuable to us'.

The rapporteurs questioned the meaning to be attributed to the expression 'contingency deployments'. The vagueness of the President's wording is intended to allow for the greatest possible flexibility. However, ***such deployments could be justified by the circumstances in times of crisis***. These deployments would then constitute a strong gesture on France's part, since the aircraft deployed would be armed with ASMPA-R missiles fitted with nuclear warheads, thereby signifying that this is not a drill.

Discussions with the allies concerned have only just begun, and it is through bilateral dialogue that the contours of the concept and the arrangements for its implementation will be clarified. ***We are, in reality, only at the beginning of the process***, which explains why this announcement has not yet led to the definition of an operational framework.

Whilst the decision to deploy the Strategic Air Forces (FAS) in a European country in the event of a major crisis falls to the Head of State in accordance with institutional practice, Parliament will need to be informed of the duration of such a deployment, as well as its conditions and objectives. This raises the question of ***how Article 35 of the Constitution applies, requiring the Government to inform Parliament of its decision to deploy the armed forces abroad and subsequently to obtain Parliament's approval to extend such a deployment beyond four months***.

Whilst the organisation of a 'Poker' nuclear raid exercise – even in Europe – would not fall within the scope of Article 35 of the Constitution, as it would then be an exercise without the carriage of nuclear weapons, the situation is different for 'contingency deployments' of FAS units armed with ASMPA-R nuclear missiles and ready to be committed. ***Such deployments would, in fact, have all the characteristics of an external military intervention, whether in terms of the projection of military capabilities beyond national territory or the rationale concerning the defence of our strategic and security interests, as well as those of our partners and allies***.

In the absence of an international treaty adopted by Parliament formalising the possibility of permanently deploying FAS aircraft carrying nuclear weapons, it is the provisions set out in general terms by the Constitution that should apply.

The rapporteurs consider that the President of the Republic's ability to exercise his 'forward deterrence' powers through 'contingency deployments' would be strengthened by Parliament's agreement to deploy FAS units to an allied European country on a long-term basis – for more than four months.

FURTHER INFORMATION



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