

## Call for Paper - International Conference

# Nuclear deterrence in Europe. Visions, debates, opportunities, and challenges from 1945 to present

Paris, 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Organised by the Interdisciplinary Centre on Nuclear and Strategic Studies – CIENS  
École Normale Supérieure (ENS-Ulm) -- Paris Sciences & Lettres (PSL)



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All along the Cold War, European defence and security policies evolved in a complex ‘balance of unbalances’, often comparable to a “Calder mobile” (Trachtenberg 1999). Nuclear deterrence played a key role in the formation and evolution of this precarious balance, fuelling at least three sets of intertwined tensions. First, West-European nations considered nuclear options with complementary or substitutive nature to cope with the inherent and perceived uncertainties which the American extended nuclear deterrence implied. Second, these options were not only meant to ensure a credible deterrence posture against the Warsaw Pact. They also had to leave room to the no less necessary implementation of a ‘détente’ process with the nations of the Eastern bloc, in an attempt to overcome the divisions of Europe, and emancipate from an unbalance that was increasingly perceived as a “stable” rather than a “mobile”. Third, stemming from the two others -- and continuously at play between NATO allies -- a debate remained open on the articulation between nuclear deterrence and conventional defence policies and plans.

In the last thirty years, the literature on the history of nuclear deterrence has grown exponentially. Part of the literature focused on national nuclear experiences, both of European nuclear powers, France and Great Britain, and European non-nuclear countries hosting American nuclear weapons (Jones 2017; Lutsch 2020; Bozo 1996; Mongin 1997; Nuti 2007; Dujardin 2009; Scott-Smith 2015). Some scholars investigated the nuclear debate within NATO and eventually outlined if and how Europe defended her security interests in this asymmetrical exchange, the United States being the leader and most powerful component of the Alliance (Trachtenberg 1999; Heuser 1997). Other works went further and shed a new light on some European attempts to have an institutionalised bilateral dialogue on nuclear issues, as the Franco-German security dialogue proved (Badalassi and Gloriant 2020). With the end of the

Cold War, the scope of studies has also been enlarged to former Warsaw Pact countries, as well as extra-European countries in their relationships with one or more European states (Mastny, Holtsmark, and Wenger 2006).

Thus, historical studies have gradually introduced nuances in the dominant national narratives as we can see if we consider the three main European nuclear-related countries in the field of grand strategy. These studies have shown that the FRG's key priority was to recover its sovereignty through a form of equality of status rather than to look for an autonomous deterrent. The choice was made in the 1960s to give away any chance of both a national deterrent and an autonomous command and control upon NATO weapons. In turn, transatlantic arrangements guaranteed the FRG a say in the Alliance's nuclear policy and plans, although with a *de facto* limited access, putting the country on a path of cautious 'normalisation', understood as the recovery of autonomy in foreign policy (Kelleher 1975; Lutsch 2020). Symmetrically, historical works have gradually demonstrated that, despite a resolute choice for nuclear independence in the 1960s, France's political and military leadership made room for solidarity, and conceived its deterrent neither as purely limited to its national territory nor as isolated from the rest of its foreign and defence policy, as the Second Berlin Crisis and the Euromissiles Crisis can testify to (Gloriant 2014; Parisi 2017). History has also shown that the UK did put its "special relationship" with the U.S. first, but it also nurtured scientific and technological links with France, sometimes surfacing at the political and diplomatic level with a broader European perspective.

Mutual perceptions of German dependence (as a state), French conceptions of independence as a horizon, and British Atlanticism (as a tradition) kept acting as a glass ceiling on European cooperation, including on a set of conventional cooperation that had nonetheless known key improvements in the last decade of the Cold War (Bozo 1991; Bozo 2020).<sup>1</sup>

The post-Cold War era largely confirmed these patterns. Regarding Western Europe, as soon as 1990, France reaffirmed her struggle for independence, the UK her Atlanticist tradition, and Germany reaffirmed her 'dependence' as a reunified country fully integrated into NATO. Echoing the missed opportunities of the late 1980s, and contrasting with a renewed Franco-British technical and political cooperation (as the 1995 bilateral Chequers Declaration can testify to), the mid-1990s deadlock on the extension of French vital interests to its neighbourhood and potential 'concertation' with the FRG only convinced political-military actors that nuclear deterrence would durably remain a non-starter in the bilateral dialogue, and henceforth had to be side-lined for the sake of future conventional cooperation. Admittedly, the post-Cold War environment was supposed to marginalise deterrence issues, as these were doomed to a rapid devaluation, at least in Europe, and would not permeate every level of strategy anymore. Nevertheless, despite the decreasing salience of nuclear weapons in national/alliance strategies, one may wonder to what extent nuclear deterrence still played a role in concrete progress toward a common security and defence policy at the WEU, then EU level, and toward common features of strategic culture since the 1990s onwards, especially at a time when the European Union and NATO invited former East-European countries to join.

This Call for Paper precisely assumes that deterrence did play a major role, but rather in a shallow, or negative manner, to the extent that it remained a major glass ceiling for Franco-German and broader European strategic cooperation, in the backdrop of major national and

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, when in 1986 President Mitterrand raised the prospect of consultations with Chancellor Kohl in the hypothesis of nuclear use, the latter tried in return to open a dialogue at the planning level, but Mitterrand eventually turned a blind eye to it, convinced as he was that the misunderstandings accumulated between France and its Allies on nuclear deterrence could not be entirely dissipated without a broader reform of NATO nuclear arrangements.

multinational reforms, including professionalisation of the armed forces, evolution of NATO defence planning and structures, and the emergence of a common European security and defence policy.

Eventually, in the immediate post-Ukrainian crisis era, both deterrence and defence were gradually re-evaluated in Europe, reigniting among most of the European nation-states a common will to share a common ‘horizon of expectation’ for European defence, notwithstanding the fact that it has also shed new light on structural divergences and difficulties (de Rougé, 2010; 2020). The re-emerging debate on Euro-deterrence, understood as a prospective European cooperation on nuclear deterrence, has been ignited by many factors including Russia's renewed assertiveness and U.S. unpredictability under Trump presidency. This debate might represent an opportunity to reassess how nuclear deterrence relates to European security in national and NATO doctrines. Questions arose as to whether the French *force de frappe*, and the British arsenal after Brexit, have been and/or could be further Europeanized, as well as whom it may concern, how it could materialize, how it would fit in the existing institutional landscape – especially NATO nuclear arrangements.

Based on multinational and multi-archived studies on bi- and multi-lateral strategic dialogues, this Conference follows a wide chronology running from 1945 to present time and covering the Cold War era and successive -- labelled by default -- post-Cold War era and post-post-Cold War era, the 2014 Ukrainian crisis being posited here as its *terminus a quo*. This conference aims at gathering contributions investigating the gradual emergence, circulation and appropriation of ideas, projects or even programs connecting Europe with nuclear deterrence, whether crafted in, by or for Europe in its broader meaning, in national or international, informal or institutionalised frameworks.

Bilateral and multilateral exchanges on nuclear deterrence are correlated not only to narrowly defined nuclear issues, including disarmament and arms control policies, but also to the dynamics of cooperation in the conventional realm, to the broader context of defence reforms at the national level, to pan-European security dynamics and, last but not least, to deeper evolutions of strategic cultures. Therefore, the Scientific Committee will consider a wide spectrum of research, based on a broad, three-dimensional approach to nuclear deterrence:

- **Nuclear deterrence *per se***, highlighting the role of European nation-states in the evolution of US posture and extended nuclear deterrence, but also UK and France nuclear postures, whether nationally or under NATO arrangements, as well as in the articulation and linkages of these distinct postures with conventional forces, and with the dynamics of disarmament and arms control treaties.
- **Nuclear deterrence and “grand strategy”**, highlighting the trajectories and potential convergences of European governments’ increased “use” of nuclear weapons as a diplomatic tool, leading to a genuine, although limited, “Europeanisation” of nuclear deterrence strategic cultures.
- **Nuclear deterrence and transversal issues** affecting the European construction, including institutions; economics; scientific and technical cooperation; East-West relations and circulations; popular culture and artistic representations.

The CFP is open to researchers in History as well as other Social and Human Sciences (including Political Sciences, Economy, Law and Philosophy), including young researchers and

PhD candidates at an advanced stage of their programme. The organisers will consider additional proposals which potential contributors believe would fit in the overall framework of the conference. **The deadline for proposals is set for June 29th and they should be e-mailed to [nuclear.deterrence.in.europe@gmail.com](mailto:nuclear.deterrence.in.europe@gmail.com). Proposals should include a title, an outline of 400 words (max.) and a one page CV** of the author with a list of major publications. Selected authors will be announced in mid-July. Following the acceptance of the proposals (second half of July), authors will receive editorial guidelines (e.g. format of the papers). In order for the papers to be available to conference participants beforehand, authors will be asked to submit their draft papers three weeks before the conference, that will take place on 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November.

A publication of selected papers will be considered in 2021-2022.

Participants will receive reimbursement for their transportation on the basis of economy fare as well as accommodation during their stay in Paris for 2 nights.

### **Scientific Committee:**

Frédéric Bozo (Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle University),  
Frédéric Gloriant (Nantes University),  
Matthew Jones (LSE),  
Beatrice Heuser (Glasgow University),  
Andreas Lutsch (FUAS, Berlin),  
Dominique Mongin (ENS/CIENS-INALCO),  
Leopoldo Nuti (Roma Tre University),  
Ilaria Parisi (ENS/CIENS),  
Jenny Raflik (Nantes University),  
Guillaume de Rougé (ENS/CIENS-Western Catholic University).

**Organisation Committee:** Ilaria Parisi and Guillaume de Rougé.

**Venue:** École normale supérieure (ENS-Ulm), 45 rue d'Ulm, 75005 Paris, salle des Actes

**Deadline for proposals:** 29<sup>th</sup> June

**Applications and contact:** [nuclear.deterrence.in.europe@gmail.com](mailto:nuclear.deterrence.in.europe@gmail.com)

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