



Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** organised on **Thursday 19 June 2025** from **17:00 until 18:30** by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence**.

As Europe's strategic environment undergoes a profound reconfiguration driven by the return of interstate war, the issue of nuclear deterrence has re-emerged with renewed urgency. While America's extended deterrent remains the central pillar of Euro-Atlantic security, the role of the British and French nuclear forces within the European security architecture now deserves particular attention.

This evening conference aims to examine the notion of "existential deterrence" — often used to describe the nuclear posture of the United Kingdom and France — and to assess its relevance in the current context of strategic fragmentation, growing uncertainty and Europe's shifting defence ambitions.

Drawing on a comparative reading of British and French doctrines, as well as on recent developments in the EU's strategic debate, Ms Emmanuelle Maitre, research fellow at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris, and Prof. Dr Wyn Bowen, Co-Director of the Freeman Air & Space Institute at King's College London, will shed light on the prospects of a partial or symbolic "Europeanisation" of nuclear deterrence. The goal is not to challenge national sovereignties, but rather to start considering the different ways in which a strengthened strategic solidarity could manifest itself.

This conference will take place **in French** and **in English** on **Thursday 19 June 2025 at 17:00 in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**). A simultaneous interpretation in English, Dutch and French will be provided in the conference room. It will not be possible to follow the conference online.

We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: www.defence-institute.be. **Registration by Thursday 12 June 2025 at the latest is compulsory.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng
Rear Admiral (LH)
Director-general
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

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| 16:30: | Welcome |
| 17:00: | Conference and Q&A |
| 18:30 – 19:30: | Reception |