

Fifteenth anniversary of the Lancaster House Treaty

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On November 2, 2010, France and the United Kingdom signed the Lancaster House Treaty, sealing a strategic military cooperation around two components: conventional defence, and coordination in the nuclear field.

Fifteen years later, the global geopolitical situation raises questions about the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence as a tool for maintaining peace. Nuclear-armed powers - China, Russia, and the United States under Donald Trump - are seeking to impose their influence on neighbouring states, in defiance of international law and multilateralism. These imperialistic tendencies are destabilizing the global balance of power with the aim of weakening or even destroying democracies. This calls for a strong European response.

In this context, conventional military cooperation between France, the United Kingdom, and the member states of the European Union appears more relevant than ever. It should make it possible to strengthen the continent's strategic autonomy and to no longer depend exclusively on the United States for its security.

But the threats are not limited to expansionist ambitions and attacks against democracies. Climate change, the increasing scarcity of resources, and global social tensions are increasing the risks of conflict. In the light of this, it is essential to re-assert strongly respect for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Nuclear deterrence cannot be the sole answer. Diplomacy, based on dialogue between states on an equal footing, remains the most effective means of furthering credible multilateral disarmament. As military, economic, and diplomatic powers, France and the United Kingdom have a duty to act in this regard. The strengthening of conventional military cooperation, combined with strong diplomacy, is today a realistic and responsible way to preserve international peace and stability.