



**MINISTÈRE
DES ARMÉES**

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ARCTIC DEFENCE STRATEGY



The Arctic region is a space of growing strategic interest, at the crossroads of climate, economic and geopolitical challenges. The effects of climate change have opened up shipping routes and opportunities for exploiting natural resources in the region, while increasing security and ecological fragilities. Strategic competition is also intensifying: Russia's invasion of Ukraine has upset regional balances of power, marking a major strategic shift with now seven of eight riparian states being NATO members. **If the Arctic is becoming a place of growing rivalry between great powers, its polarisation will have direct and tangible effects on the stability of the Euro-Atlantic space.**

Against such a backdrop, our defence strategy intends to structure itself around three complementary pillars: **strategic positioning**, with strengthened French presence in the Arctic governance bodies and the political-military dialogues, **cooperation** through the development of bilateral and multilateral partnerships with the Arctic countries, especially within NATO and the EU, and, last but not least, the **capability** strand, which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the French Armed Forces to be aware of, monitor and act in this area.

It is fully in line with our National Strategic Review: making France a power that is loyal to its allies, deeply European and able to take on its responsibilities in an ever more uncertain world.



Building on these three pillars, the French strategy is broken down in **seven strategic defence strands**:

- 1 | **Enhancing France's visibility and legitimacy in the Arctic region** through active participation in the Arctic fora and highlighting of actions carried out by the French Armed Forces in the area;
- 2 | **Ensuring global coherence of our action at national level** through strengthened intergovernmental coordination, guaranteeing a multiplier effect for French actions;
- 3 | **Mastering the Arctic theatre and environment** by intensifying the collection of environmental and intelligence data and by pursuing the targeted deployments to this area in order to strengthen operational experience, interoperability and ability to act;
- 4 | **Developing bilateral partnerships** with the main actors in the region, as well as French private operators present on the ground in order to foster the exchange of information, logistical support and experience sharing;
- 5 | **Strengthening interoperability through NATO** by relying on the Alliance's tools and mechanisms (joint exercises, capability and operational synergies, etc.), and by supporting NATO's ambitions in the Arctic and the High North;
- 6 | **Developing equipment adapted to extreme weather conditions** right from the design stage or by adapting existing systems (reinforcement, protection, specific sensors), while ensuring cost-effectiveness;
- 7 | **Investing the Arctic space** domain, both in the orbital (satellites adapted to high latitudes) and the terrestrial (relay stations) segments, while ensuring strategic monitoring of sensitive foreign facilities and strengthening cooperation with the European countries that are active in this domain.



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