



Ms Céline PAJON
French Institute of International Relations

Evening conference
7 October 2024
17:00 - 18:30

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** organised on **Monday 7 October 2024** from **17:00 until 18:30** by the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence** and the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies**.

France is the first European country having adopted an Indo-Pacific strategy, thereby marking a crucial milestone in 2018-2019. This strategy is unique in Europe as it is centred on a national vision with ambitions of greatness in this region of prime importance. Having positioned itself as a 'balancing power' to overcome the Sino-American rivalry, France has also played a leading role in the adoption of an Indo-Pacific strategy by its European neighbours and at European Union level in September 2021.

However, France's Indo-Pacific strategy has been undermined by several major developments: the AUKUS defence pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, China's growing assertiveness and the ideological shift in the Sino-American rivalry, not to mention the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East, which have diverted the attention and resources of European states to closer theatres. These events have not only exposed the gap between France's ambitions and the military resources that really need to be mobilised in the Indo-Pacific, but have also questioned France's ability to act as a balancing power in the region, and to bring together and mobilise its European partners.

What are the challenges and threats facing France in the Indo-Pacific, and what are their consequences for Europe? Are France's policy and capabilities in step with the various developments in the region and how can they be adapted to this reality, in the face of escalating regional conflicts? Is it possible and desirable for European countries that are less powerful and less present in the region to join this strategy?

In order to shed some light on this issue and to provide the best possible answers to questions concerning both this area of major geostrategic importance for France in the Indo-Pacific and its repercussions in Europe, we will have the privilege of listening to Ms Céline Pajon, head of activities related to Japan and the Indo-Pacific at the Center for Asian Studies of the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) and an expert on foreign and defence policy as regards the Indo-Pacific and Japan.

This conference will take place **in French** on **Monday 7 October 2024 at 17:00 in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**). A simultaneous interpretation in English and Dutch will be provided in the conference room. It will not be possible to follow the conference online. However, subject to the consent of the speaker, a recording of her presentation will be made available afterwards on our website.

We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: www.defence-institute.be. **Registration by Wednesday 2 October 2024 at the latest is compulsory.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng
Flotilla Admiral
Director-general
Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

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