



France Decries UK's 'Opportunism' And Participation in AUKUS, Calling London 'Fifth Wheel'

Description

The news of the new defense alliance between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States has caused a stir in France, as the new pact forces Canberra to drop a \$66 billion contract with Paris for submarines. On Friday, France recalled its ambassadors from the US and Australia for consultations.

When asked on Saturday why France did not recall its ambassador to London, French top diplomat Jean-Yves Le Drian replied that he did not see any point in that taking into account Britain's "permanent opportunism."

"Recalling our Ambassador to London was not necessary because we already know that the British government is in a logic of permanent opportunism," he said, speaking to the France 2 television.

He added that the UK role in AUKUS is as a "fifth wheel on the carriage." Paris sees the treaty as an act of subterfuge and betrayal. According to the minister, Morrison informed him about AUKUS and the subsequent rupture of the previous deal just one hour before the pact went public.

"That's why I say there has been duplicity, contempt and lies and when you have an ally of the stature of France, you don't treat them like this," said Le Drian. "When we see the US president with the Australian Prime Minister announcing a new agreement, along with Boris Johnson, the breach of trust is profound."

"No need to call back our ambassador in the UK. We are familiar with Britain's permanent opportunism – and in this case they're the "spare wheel on the carriage"

French Foreign Minister [@JY_LeDrian](#) just now on main French news
pic.twitter.com/9HvltYtawN

— Alex Taylor (@AlexTaylorNews) [September 18, 2021](#)

Le Drian noted that the way AUKUS was formed indicates “a real crisis” in relations between Western partners.

Le Drian rejected suggestions France was isolated in the European Union in its response to the Aukus deal. "I don't believe we are alone in this affair...it's not finished," he said. Le Drian will attend the UN General Assembly on Monday. Should be interesting!

— Kim Willsher (@kimwillsher1) [September 18, 2021](#)

Europe Minister Clement Beaune also made critical remarks on the issue, saying in an interview to France 24, that Britain has returned “into the American lap and a form of accepted vassalisation.”The diplomat stressed that Australia’s cancellation of contracts on submarines undermined the confidence of all European countries, not only that of France. According to him, Europe’s goal is to strengthen its “ability to reflect strategic autonomy and defense.”British Prime Minister Boris Johnson sought to ease tensions and, speaking in the House of Commons on Thursday, suggested that military cooperation between Britain and France remains “rock solid.”Earlier this week, Johnson, US President Joe Biden and the Australian prime minister announced a new defense and security partnership, labeled AUKUS. Canberra expects to replenish its submarine fleet with at least eight new nuclear-powered submarines, using British and American technology. Canberra canceled its contract with France, worth \$66 billion for the supply of 12 conventional submarines, with no warning, according to Paris.

by Alexandra Kashirina

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