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# Franco-British Council Defence Conference

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2018

**A Review**

London, 19-20 September 2018

## Programme

Wednesday 19 September (1900 – 2130)

### WELCOME ADDRESSES:

HE Mr. Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Ambassadeur de France au Royaume-Uni  
Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP

### KEYNOTE SPEECHES:

**A new relationship between Defence and Security.**  
General Sir Nicholas Carter, Chief of the Defence Staff  
Monsieur le Général d'Armée François Lecointre, Chef d'Etat-Major des Armées

**Historical Perspective - A hundred years later.**  
**What did the UK and France learn from the First World War about working together?**  
Colonel Armel Dirou, French Military Attaché, London

### RECEPTION

Thursday 20 September (0900 – 1530)

### INTRODUCTION:

Philippe Peirs, Trustee of the Franco-British Council and Conference Steering Committee

### KEYNOTE SPEECHES:

**Ministerial view of the bilateral relationship.**  
Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Defence  
Madame Florence Parly, Ministre des Armées

**The place of the Franco-British relationship in Capability Development and Acquisition.**  
Sir Simon Bollom, Chief Executive, Defence Equipment & Support  
Joël Barre, Délégué Général pour l'Armement

**The Industrial perspective.**  
Antoine Bouvier, Chief Executive Officer, MBDA

### NETWORKING LUNCH

### ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS:

**Issues of common legal concern for the UK and France.**

**What does Industry's experience bring to the bilateral relationship and how can the interaction be managed more effectively? What deductions for bilateral cooperation can be drawn from the latest national reviews?**

**How can the UK and France best work together to address the challenges posed by the new strategic environment?**

**Readiness for Intervention. How can the UK and France coordinate more closely to prepare for and to respond to crises?**

## The Franco-British Council Defence Conference

The seventh edition of the Franco-British Council Defence Conference was generously hosted within the London Residence of the French Ambassador to the United Kingdom on 19 and 20 September 2018. Since the Lancaster House Treaties in 2010, the Franco-British Council (FBC) has regularly organised this event which has established itself as a networking platform of reference for Franco-British relationships in the defence sector. The conference brings together representatives from the most senior level of military, government, industry and academia from both sides of the Channel. Its objectives are to forge new relationships and reinforce mutual understanding between the two countries' defence communities. The event is supported by the UK and French Ministries of Defence and, in 2018, was funded by the UK Ministry of Defence together with generous commercial sponsorship from MBDA.



## Conference Proceedings

**INTRODUCTIONS.** Following a warm welcome from our host **HE Mr. Jean-Pierre Jouyet** on Wednesday evening, the FBC's **Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP** articulated the depth and enduring relevance of the Franco-British relationship. On Thursday morning M. Philippe Peirs, speaking on behalf of Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Chair of the FBC, described the history of the FBC and its commitment to the Defence Conference before introducing our prestigious panel of speakers. It was clear that, despite short-term political and financial challenges, the appetite for cooperation remains as strong as ever and that the wider community appreciate the importance of events facilitated by the FBC.

**KEYNOTE SPEECHES.** The FBC was delighted that defence ministers, service chiefs, national armament directors and heads of industry were willing to share their time to ensure that discussions could not have been more timely or better informed.

**Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Defence and Madame Florence Parly, Ministre des Armées** spoke about the historical depth of the Franco-British relationship highlighting that, notwithstanding historic incursions into each other's territories, we have been the closest of allies for more than a hundred years. Both speeches felt designed to reassure the audience of the enduring political relevance of the relationship (shared values and shared strategic interest) and of its current vitality (operational commitments, particularly in Mali, progress on the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF), industrial programmes including missiles and mine countermeasures, as well as recent developments in highly sophisticated cooperation on areas including intelligence, cyber and nuclear). The Ministers each noted continuing progress on the implementation of the Lancaster House Treaty.

Madame Parly's speech drew particular recognition for its sharpness and her willingness to describe challenges and potential divergences (BREXIT, managing the transatlantic relationship and facing Russia) while expressing her confidence in the Franco-British ability to overcome them. The overall tone was that of a willingness to pursue cooperation at the highest level and insistence that it should be reflected at all levels of their national defence structures.



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Defence



Madame Florence Parly, Ministre des Armées



**General Sir Nicholas Carter, Chief of Defence Staff and Monsieur le Général d'Armée François Lecointre, Chef d'Etat-Major des Armées.** We were honoured to have the two most senior uniformed officers of French and British armed forces share their views on

**General Sir Nicholas Carter**

the health of the bilateral defence relationship, setting the tone for the discussions ahead. Général Lecointre spoke about the "brotherhood in arms", shared values and respect that grew out of mutual experiences in the First World War and subsequent conflicts. General Carter described the London-Paris link as vital to defence. It was felt that there was clear enthusiasm



**Monsieur le Général d'Armée François Lecointre**

and commitment in their analysis of progress that has been made in exchange programme and transition from concept to operational readiness for the CJEF. Exchanges of deputy commanders at divisional level, the recent deployment of UK Chinook Helicopters in direct support of French forces in the Sahel and the deployment of French troops in eFP operations led by the UK provide tangible evidence of mutual confidence. The European Intervention Initiative (EI2) and cooperation on humanitarian operations seem to be areas where the strength of the Franco-British military relationship will continue to underpin international operations conducted either bilaterally or as part of a wider partnership.



**Sir Simon Bollom**

The two National Armaments Directors (NADs), **Sir Simon Bollom, Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment & Support** and **Joël Barre, Délégué Général pour l'Armement**, noted the value of the conference not only in bringing them together for a bilateral meeting but also in facilitating meetings with key representatives of Defence Industry. They each outlined the strategic context of planning and resourcing defence acquisition. They acknowledged that while BREXIT will inevitably change the UK's relationship with Europe collectively, the core reasons for the bilateral relationship between France and the UK will remain unchanged. Their contribution was commended for their frankness as both spoke openly and realistically about the status of current programmes, noting not only challenges but also significant progress with key programmes nearing maturity.



**Joël Barre**



**Antoine Bouvier**

**Antoine Bouvier, Chief Executive of MBDA and conference sponsor**, concluded the keynote speeches by presenting his thoughts on the industrial view of the bilateral relationship. In stating how easy it would be to overlook the benefits and merits of the Lancaster House Treaty, he emphasised the importance of the mutual dependency reflected in the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) and the imperative of holding true to the long-term vision. He urged political leadership to take the decisions necessary to support industrial specialisation. He described development and enlargement of centres of excellence as the crucial next-step, that would keep European defence industry ahead of their competitors. He offered the success of the MBDA model as an asset and exemplar of what can be achieved when both industry and government agencies commit to a shared objective.



Antoine Bouvier, Chief Executive of MBDA and conference sponsor, concluded the keynote speeches by presenting his thoughts on the industrial view of the bilateral relationship. In stating how easy it would be to overlook the benefits and merits of the Lancaster House Treaty, he emphasised the importance of the mutual dependency reflected in the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) and the imperative of holding true to the long-term vision. He urged political leadership to take the decisions necessary to support industrial specialisation. He described development and enlargement of centres of excellence as the crucial next-step, that would keep European defence industry ahead of their competitors. He offered the success of the MBDA model as an asset and exemplar of what can be achieved when both industry and government agencies commit to a shared objective.

## RECEPTION AND NETWORKING LUNCH.

A reception provided by the French Embassy, following Wednesday evening's speeches, was complemented by an extended lunch break on Thursday. Feedback following the conference highlighted the importance and value that participants attribute to these networking opportunities.



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

Marking the 2018 Centenary of the Armistice, **Colonel Armel Dirou, French Military Attaché** and King's College London Research Fellow, presented a thought-provoking reflection of France and Britain's collaboration during the First World War.



# Round-Table Discussions

The Round-Table discussions provided the opportunity for participants to review in detail four issues that had been identified by the French and UK MODs as relevant to the development of current policy and work-strands for further action. Each session was introduced and moderated by authoritative senior speakers: Wing Commander Calvin Bailey and Capitaine de Frégate Julien Lalanne de Saint-Quentin, both members of the Franco-British Young Leaders Programme.



## ROUND-TABLE 1.

Issues of common legal concern for the UK and France.

Introductions by **Claire Legras, Directrice des Affaires Juridiques du Ministère des Armées**, and **Isabel Letwin, Director, MOD Legal Advisers, Government Legal Department** set the scene for a frank and open discussion. This session focussed on three areas:



Claire Legras

**Judicialisation**, where there is concern that judicialisation diminishes military power and military's ability to do its jobs, particularly with respect to the implications of expeditionary and intervention operations. Interventions contrasted the difference between the pace of intervention

facilitated constitutionally by the French President's prerogative and the perceived "arms race" to increase scrutiny within the UK Parliament prior to authorisation commitment. Discussions also covered the implications for serving and former military personnel being subject to re-investigation of historical cases. There was recognition that each nation's penal codes should be developed to protect service personnel;



Isabel Letwin

**Detention** (especially extra-territorial and non-international conflict contexts). The constraints engendered within Articles 2 and 5 of European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) were debated as they highlight extra-territoriality as an exception that has expanded the differences between criminal courts and the ECHR. There is a view that specialist personnel, separate from those involved in kinetic operations, may be required to conduct detention and questioning;

**Automation of weapons systems.** Discussion centred on the difference between a public perception of Unmanned Autonomous Vehicles (UAVs) as autonomous "killer robots" as opposed to the reality of human analysis and intervention in the system.

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The participants in this round-table session agreed the importance of establishing a Franco-British legal working group to tackle the key issues; the need for a legal working group to complement joint military operations, and the need to update the Lancaster House Treaty to reflect the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

## ROUND-TABLE 2.

What does Industry's experience bring to the bilateral relationship and how can the interaction be managed more effectively? What deductions for bilateral cooperation can be drawn from the latest national reviews?



François Mestre

Statements by IGA **François Mestre, Chef de Service, Service des affaires industrielles et d'intelligence économique, DGA**, **Richard Berthon, Director Strategic Programmes**, and **GDA Éric Charpentier, Adjoint du sous-chef PLAN** set the scene

for lively and wide-ranging discussion. There was interest in the understanding where each nation would be prepared to take risk in the development of capabilities, with recognition that decisions on where not to invest as important as where investment is made. There was agreement that areas such as modern unmanned fighter aircraft and missile programmes must be collaborative if the UK and France are to make best use of limited resources and fulfil their sovereignty and freedom of action objectives.



Richard Berthon

Participants also explored the need for procurement chains to continue to improve their ability and willingness to stimulate small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) so that they can benefit from the innovation offered in these areas. The perception of procurement systems and process being biased towards large national defence companies was highlighted as impeding access to SMEs. Participants described the merits of French and UK schemes designed at accelerating some procurement cycles



Éric Charpentier

and incorporating innovation quicker in defence programmes (UK's rapid capabilities programmes and France's instruments now sitting under the aegis of the new Agence de l'innovation de Défense) and confirmed the appetite to learn and work together in that field.



Image (left):  
Name  
Name

**ROUND-TABLE 3.**

**How can the UK and France best work together to address the challenges posed by the new strategic environment?**



**Alice Guitton, Directrice Générale des Relations Internationales et de la Stratégie, and Peter Watkins, Director General Strategy and International,** provided authoritative and insightful introductions to this discussion. They emphasised

commonalities including: shared values, a unique global perspective/ambitions based on our history, responsibilities as nuclear states, seats on United Nations Security Council, recognition of importance of multilateralism, and respect for law and rules-based order. Discussion encompassed European strategic autonomy, the nature of Franco-British cooperation, the importance of modernisation/innovation and flexibility, the place of the US alongside the bilateral relationship, the challenges posed by terrorism and migration, and the need to modernise the rules-based system.

Recommendations made by the participants in this round-table session addressed four areas:

- The need for Franco-British cooperation to be more proactive and practical, looking for opportunities and quick-wins in the areas of cyber, automation and an increased focus on a younger generation of leaders.
- The need to do more together to advance/invest in military education.
- The importance of (further) overcoming national sensitivities relating to cyber and intelligence sharing.
- The need to explore the case for a treaty to redefine the UK's relationship with the EU.



**ROUND-TABLE 4.**

**Readiness for Intervention. How can the UK and France coordinate more closely to prepare for and to respond to crises?**

**Contre-Amiral Didier Piaton, Adjoint du sous-chef OPS, and AVM Andrew Turner, Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations)** opened this discussion acknowledging the significant progress that both nations have already made towards the CJEF. They invited comments on “how we are doing” in order to define what still needs to be done to achieve all the stated missions of the CJEF, including Full Operating Capabilities, by 2020, and also to understand how the CJEF will drive the European intervention initiative capability.

Discussion recognised that ongoing bilateral commitments are fully within framework as conceived under the Lancaster House Treaty. It was agreed that current challenges, intelligence sharing, C&I system are real strategic issues that would endure as CJEF progresses towards Full Operating Capabilities in 2020. Contributions noted that although the Lancaster House Treaty is recognised as a huge strategic success at the intergovernmental level and that it has created unity of effort both at strategic and tactical levels, wider awareness is not as good as it should be. On an international perspective, it was recognised that the CJEF must be better understood by partner nations and allies as a complementary capability to NATO and

also that CJEF should be a necessary catalyst for the rest of Europe to contribute to our collective security. As part of this, CJEF was seen as fundamental to E12 capability reflecting both Britain and France's leading roles as guarantors of European peace. Looking to the future it was recognised that CJEF will enable both nations to remain Tier One Defence Security organisations. The key strength of the CJEF being that as both nations may be perceived to have become sub-critical in size, CJEF enables both nations to retain a shared critical mass.

The participants in this discussion highlighted the need to communicate more effectively the message about Franco-British engagement (specifically CJEF) under the Lancaster House Treaty. They identified the target audiences as partner nations (in NATO, the EU and other international organisations); the general public; and the wider defence community beyond those that are immediately involved. It was recommended that future development and investment in CJEF should aim to ensure that, on a collaborative basis, France and the UK retain full-spectrum capability. Participants also identified the need for leadership (political and military) to realise the potential of using CJEF on cooperative deployments, to conduct missions such as the suring up of elections as well as being held at readiness to deal with the hardest and most representative missions (particularly mission 9).



# Participants in the Franco-British Council Defence Conference 2018

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## About the Franco-British Council

The Franco-British Council was founded in 1972 on the joint initiative of President Georges Pompidou and Prime Minister Edward Heath in the context of a developing Europe and of an increasingly globalised community. Since then it has dedicated itself to the promotion of a better mutual understanding between the UK and France by bringing together leading representatives of the worlds of defence, science, politics, business, education and culture.

Please visit the Franco-British Council website for further information about future defence conferences; the Franco-British Young Leaders Programme and Local Leaders Initiative; and the Entente Cordiale Scholarships; along with other news: [www.francobritish.org](http://www.francobritish.org)

## Acknowledgements and thanks

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## With grateful thanks to our partners



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