

2014 FBC ANNUAL DEFENCE CONFERENCE

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REPORT



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HE Sir Peter Ricketts, British Ambassador to France

The Fourth Franco-British Council (FBC) Defence Conference took place on 3 April 2014 at the British Embassy in Paris. The annual colloque was hosted by HE Sir Peter Ricketts, British Ambassador to France, and brought together seventy delegates from senior government, the military, parliament, industry, research and the media. It benefited in particular from the presence of the French and UK Ministers for Defence, and from the co-presidency of the *Chef d'état-major de l'Armée de terre* and the Chief of the General Staff at the opening of the plenary session.

The gathering took place two months after the Franco-British summit in Brize Norton, and discussed the decisions taken and the assessment drawn up in respect of the joint work undertaken since November 2010. It also had the added advantage of historical considerations with fresh light being cast on the previous defence partnership, at a time when the First World War centenary commemorations were being launched. Finally, the bringing together of leading French and British figures involved in implementing the Lancaster House Treaties facilitated the organisation of much appreciated smaller meetings, on the margins of the 2014 FBC conference.

« It is a real pleasure to once again host the Franco-British Council defence conference which is really becoming an institution »

HE Sir Peter Ricketts
British Ambassador to France

Following up on the subjects dealt with in 2013 and taking into account developments since then, the conference included four round tables which respectively, dealt with: the meaning of the use of force in the French and UK democracies; openings for joint management of security in Africa; difficulties and opportunities for cooperation in respect of the Entente over the long term; possibilities of a Franco-British continuum with regard to defence on the international scene. This report offers a cross-analysis of the debates and discussions arising from these workshops.



Dinner reception, 2014 FBC Defence Conference

The driving forces behind the defence partnership

The RAF Brize Norton summit, triggering decisions on capabilities

Bilateral summits are not easy exercises. The January 2014 RAF Brize Norton summit, devoted essentially to defence issues, opened in a tense climate. It was the second Franco-British meeting of Heads of State and Government since the Lancaster House Treaties had been signed, and the first since the Socialist Party had won the French presidential elections. It was held in the context of the resurgence of the European question, and at a time when the chronic

« There is more interest between the UK and France than there is with any other nation in Europe »

Philip Dunne

Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology

misalignment of the domestic agendas – publication of White Papers, voting on defence budgets, elections - and the difficult joint preparation of international security meetings have, on more than one occasion, caused the partnership between London and Paris to stall. The delegates to the 2014 Franco-British Council (FBC) conference were keen to comment on this state of affairs. “Let’s try to keep politics out of the policy” a Foreign Office official suggested, for whom, the long-term political vision laid out in the 2010 treaties must take precedence, with a work environment resisting internal contingencies specific to each, even if there can never be any guarantees.

In fact, the FBC conference's assessment of the summit was far from negative. In particular because the decisions anticipated on capabilities had been taken. The British Minister for defence equipment did not hide his enthusiasm and spoke of a new impetus that had been given to co-operation. In addition to advances in the Maritime Mine Counter-Measures project (MMCM) and in training and support for the A400M, the RAF Brize Norton summit will be remembered for two major dossiers. On the one hand the FASGW programme (Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon), that, MBDA considered, would trigger the implementation of the principle of mutual dependence contained in



Eric Trappier, Nathalie Guibert, Axelle Lemaire

the 2010 Lancaster House Treaty. The industrial specialisation organised around the creation of centres of excellence is designed to guarantee the concept of shared access and format a cross-licensing export model between the two countries. For the CEO of MBDA, over and above the strictly bilateral dimension, this co-operation in the missile industry constituted a test aimed at validating a new type of organisation for the European defence industry over the next ten years.

The chairman of Dassault provided further background on the other landmark dossier of the 2014 summit - the Future Combat Air System (FCAS). The launch of feasibility studies for the pilotless combat aircraft (piloted from the ground, and not replacing combat aircraft) carried out jointly by Dassault Aviation and BAE Systems will pave the way for 2016 technological choices in the area of demonstrators and programs. The challenge is daunting. The result of a laborious decision process regarding sharing joint operational needs in a context of budget cuts and changing governments, this Franco-British cooperation in combat aircraft will be put in place without integrating any companies. In order to avoid the pitfall of competition, the idea was put forward to create an executive agency

« *We are ready for Franco-British co-operation* »

Eric Trappier
CEO Dassault Aviation

that would represent both Defence Ministers to manage the program and for which both States would define a *modus operandi*. A plan would be put in place to enable companies to organise their project management with a direct interlocutor and a team brought together around two aircraft manufacturers, the engine manufacturers Rolls-Royce and Safran and the electronics companies Thales and Selex ES.

Personal relations central to bilateral cooperation

The personal relations established between French and British politicians were considered to be a measure of the success of the 2014 bilateral summit. The choice of RAF Brize Norton, in David Cameron's constituency, underlined the Prime Minister's role as host, and he had chosen a traditional pub in the Cotswolds as the place to have lunch with François Hollande. More generally, the friendly nature of the meetings was highlighted by the British Secretary of State for Defence, and on the French side, the importance of the personal relationships between representatives of both countries was specifically noted. According to Philip Dunne, the close collaboration between both countries continued to build trust. His correspondence with his counterpart Laurent Collet-Billon was thus sustained by the political determination to drive forward the dossiers of co-operation despite the different processes applied by each side.

This declared esteem between individuals was echoed in the armed forces. The two Chiefs of Staff of the Army, guests of honour at the 2014 FBC conference, testified to their close relationship. For General Ract-Madoux, the Lancaster House Treaties were a day-to-day reality in both armies due to the sustained political thrust that brought the men closer together at the operational level. General Sir Peter Wall was also enthusiastic – the very good understanding

that existed at the level of the general staff confirmed the overriding importance of personal relationships, which had a knock-on effect at officer and non-commissioned officer level. Representatives of the Foreign Office also intervened to explain that people are getting to know each other much better. The Paris-London-Brussels meeting organised ahead of the European Council of December 2013 between the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers, the Elysée and Downing Street, demonstrated the interest of this type of meeting and its impact on the bilateral agreement. As a result of the regular discussions between Foreign Office Ministers and Ministers at the *Quai d'Orsay*

« Sole command was not agreed until March 1918, when, at the Doullens Conference, the political leaders named General Foch as Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front. He was in some sense the first SACEUR in history. Foch subsequently explained that he had accepted this nomination very cautiously. He never gave any orders, he simply offered advice, and if there were disagreements, he drafted notes and asked his British contact to think things over. That's how things worked right up until the end. I must stress this. Foch had the wisdom to never use the sole command in a literal way. »

Professor Georges-Henri Soutou
Member of the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques*

it was possible to identify this willingness to work together within the Civil Service. Civil servants were learning to co-operate taking into account cultural differences, and increasingly working towards ensuring complementarity rather than systematic convergence.

The presentation made by a historian provided rich insights into the decisive aspect of personal relationships within defence cooperation. For example, at the start of the 20th century, the closer relations between individuals had a significant impact on Franco-British relations. In the absence of official texts and agreements, and despite the language barrier, political and military leaders got to know each other and created close ties. The 1904 Entente Cordiale signed between Edward VII and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs Delcassé was not an alliance but a sort of agreement designed to offer protection against the German problem, and the First World War itself was waged with no formal military agreement between the two countries. Conversations between General Staffs based on personal relationships and with no political cover confirmed an unequalled mark of trust that convinced the British to enter the war alongside the French after Belgian neutrality was violated. Military collaboration between the two countries intensified and became a genuine brotherhood of arms (in 1916 there were almost as many British soldiers in France as French soldiers), here again based on the good relations that existed between British and French leaders. A sole command had not been put in place until March 1918, and the political and military entente between France and the UK was not formalised until 1925 with the Locarno Treaties.

The dynamics of memorial, a way of bringing nations closer together

Following this reference to history, the start of the centenary commemorations of the First World War and the seventieth anniversary of the allied landings in Normandy were seen as initiators of the Franco-British defence rapprochement. The celebrations organised for the anniversaries of previous battles served as a reminder that the two countries were very close military partners, running the risk of lives being lost. This gave extra impetus to current joint operations. In 2010, for example, for the first time, General de Gaulle's Appeal of 18 June 1940 was celebrated in London. Several decades of shared history enabled the organisation of a major event, at a time when the Lancaster House Treaties were on the point of being signed, by a final redoubling of efforts in the final straight of diplomatic negotiations. A ceremony was held at the Royal Chelsea Hospital with WWII war veterans, a bilateral meeting took place between Ministers and Senior Officials, as did the first meeting between President Sarkozy and the new Prime Minister David Cameron as part of the process of concluding Franco-British defence treaties for the next fifty years.

The Director of the *Mission du Centenaire* for the First World War was present to explain that the one hundred year anniversary of the outbreak of World War I was clearly today a diplomatic marker used by nations to further strengthen traditional ties. Over the next four years and longer, eighty countries were to explore their past to show to the world the benefits of their reciprocal alliances. On a Franco-British level, since 2010, the Ministries of

National Education had launched a number of initiatives designed to pass down a legacy to future generations within an intercultural environment - in the UK, each department had offered pupils the chance to visit the Western Front (the major part of which was in France) and military cemeteries; in France a system of comparative memory was put in place between schools on either side of the Channel. The parade of 14 July 2014 on the *Champs-Élysées* and the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in August in Glasgow would be other memorable moments inspired by the centenary theme. The shared historic heritage offered an array of opportunities for rapprochement between France and the UK. In September the commemorations organised for the First Battle of the Marne of 12 September 1914 would offer another occasion to remember the way in which the two countries co-operated at the highest level on the battle field to halt the German invasion at the gates



Général de brigade aérienne Bruno Maurice, Air Vice-Marshal Stuart Atha

of Paris. Later in the year, other major commemorative initiatives would maintain the momentum within the bilateral defence partnership. Later still, on 1 July 2016, the anniversary of the battle of the Somme would be marked. This was a defining moment in Franco-British memory - sixty thousand casualties with twenty thousand killed on the first day of the offensive alone – and it is expected to lead to intense diplomatic links, equivalent to a State visit, and will provide a particularly powerful moment of reflection. Could this be an opportunity perhaps to invite the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) to join the parade of 14 July 2016?

Towards strategic convergence?

Joint analysis of the threats in question

A subject on which there is less unanimity is that of the necessity - or not - of strategic convergence, which underlines the basic differences between London and Paris and left a number of unanswered questions.

The prospect of the next *Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) raised questions about the possibility of completing a major stage in the joint reflections on strategic rapprochement. However in reality, policy makers in Whitehall had taken the step of reviewing their latest White Paper (SDSR 2010) in order to highlight the correspondence of views with the French 2013 strategic document which followed: similar identification of global challenges - defence budgets under pressure, growing regional instabilities, technological threats not mastered, destabilisation of international trade - where the vocabulary used was symbolic of the similarity of the the two countries' interests. The *Ministry of Defence* (MOD) has not responded to the idea of a more theoretical approach or a joint formulation of the threats with France in 2015, and has directed its resources towards the challenge, which it considered essential,

« I don't understand why we don't go even further, and implement a sort of more or less joint Franco-British strategic approach that would then serve as a starting point for discussions with the other European countries »

Hubert Védrine

Former Minister for Foreign Affairs



Général d'armée Bertrand Ract-Madoux

of Franco-British reactivity in the event of a crisis, symbolic of the pragmatic solidarity of any intervention. The House of Commons Defence Committee, however, had reiterated the very high level of British satisfaction, impressed that France had invited their Ambassador in Paris, Sir Peter Ricketts, to participate fully in the work on their Defence and Security White Paper. Considering that the same should also apply in reverse, the Committee had adopted a position in favour of a French contribution and the further strengthening of the Lancaster House alliance. A position paper had been produced supported by the British representation in Brussels according to which the combined expertise of the two countries would result in the identification of a joint interest in matters of defence strategy. This is something which EU institutions cannot do, as they do not have any shared methodology.

What does France want?

The French were very happy to have “opened up their books” to British diplomats, as this stressed the dispassionate nature of the discussions that had taken place when finalising crisis management preparations. The distinction between joint strategic zones and those more concerned with vital national interests, the assessment of the place of nuclear deterrence and that of conventional weapons in each country, all contributed to the strategic dialogue arising from the Lancaster House Treaties. These had all been considered at a very high level, interspersed with confidential discussions and were based on a high degree of confidence. The *Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques* did, however, express its hope that France might, in turn, be invited to contribute to the 2015 SDSR. France and the UK ought to be able to work together to develop a strategic convergence and they have a responsibility to draft together a more conceptual approach to their co-operation in the area of defence in order to share a joint analysis in the service of their European partners. The French Minister for Defence spoke in support of a pragmatic arrangement, noting that an emerging concept of crisis management in Africa had brought about a special role for France and the UK. The similarity of the agendas noted in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) -rapid intervention under cover of the international rule of law, the creation of an African force followed by a UN peacekeeping operation, the provision of an EU training mission for African armed forces - would encourage exploration of the further strengthening of partnership modelling in order to optimise the combination of crisis management tools.

« The rapprochement of the two armies is ambitious but remains within our grasp »

Général Ract-Madoux
Chef d'état-major de l'Armée de terre



Pr Christian de Boissieu, General Sir Peter Wall

A political ambition that does not enjoy unanimous support

On the operational side, the armed forces had testified to the gap that exists between effective co-operation at the tactical level and the void created by the lack of political synchronisation regarding the use of force. The subject was new - or at least its expression out loud was - as probably, the approach of the 2016 deadline on the finalisation of the architecture of the joint expeditionary force made the response to the question on its method of intervention more urgent. What should the purpose of the CJEF be? When should this initial component be used first, if previously there had not been a clearly formulated joint analysis of the threat?

« *We don't have a common start point for a common solution but we do have a basis for some commonality and for complimentary solutions* »

General Sir Peter Wall
Chief of the General Staff

The *Armée de terre* reasserted the importance of ground combat in modern-day warfare. Its close work alongside the British Army, that first started three years ago in applying the Lancaster House Treaties, was greatly appreciated. The development of the ground component of the CJEF had led to genuine progress in so far as concerns interoperability and complementarity,

and there was a strong correlation between the political determination of States to engage forces in the event of a crisis, and the flexibility of troops faced with necessary changes in strategy. But it was clearly highlighted that it was only when joint strategic interests could be validated by the political decision makers that progress could be made. This was particularly the case with regard to the sharing of capabilities between the two armies, something that was both desired and expected.

In the same vein, British officers praised the defence partnership that has arisen from the November 2010 treaties, in particular in respect of sharing in the field of tactical operability. The rapprochement effected over the last three years between the 11th parachute brigade and the 16th air assault brigade, under sole command, showed the high degree of preparation in place to allow joint interventions. And, like their French counterparts, they also praised the prospect of increased pooling of equipment within the two armies. But as with Whitehall civil servants, British military personnel had remained cautious regarding the virtues of strategic convergence and clearly preferred the pragmatic aspect of increased interoperability. The Chief of the General Staff thus considered that although it might be necessary to go beyond the tactical level and to seek to fuse intelligence and information at a higher command

level, there was no requirement for any joint strategic ambition. The May 2014 Rochambeau exercise - an assessment of Franco-British division-level command posts – was specifically designed to meet an additional challenge and rectify any problems noted during the Flanders exercise in 2011 on information exchange. Rochambeau, which is the last Franco-British ground training exercise before the joint operations phase, may, however, according to Sir Peter Wall, put to the test the manner in which the two partners are able to interact at the political and military level using different systems.

On the institutional level, the officers in charge of the two countries' higher military establishments have taken the initiative of instigating a political and military discussion exercise that serves as an ideas laboratory, in particular on the question of the feasibility of a joint external operation. The hope is to present the Heads of State and Government with a range of options along with an assessment of the risks involved. The challenge for the French CHEM (*Centre des Hautes Etudes Militaires*) and the British HCSC (Higher Command and Staff Course) is to see how the mechanics of the decision-making processes can be reconciled. The structural differences of the presidential and parliamentary regimes are clearly testing institutional rapprochement at both the political level (the verticality of the command between the President of the Republic and the CEMA versus a greater collegiality of decisions that the British Prime Minister must respect), and the military level (a *Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations* - CPCO - connected to the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, a Permanent Joint Headquarters –PJHQ- more restricted to the operational function).

Raising public interest to legitimise operations



Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP, Ann Kenrick

« I don't think the UK has turned against the idea of fighting in a good cause, they had no wish to fight in a bad one »

Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP
Chair of the Defence select committee, HOC

In addition to the lack of any declared strategic convergence between France and the UK, the apathy of the general public with regard to defence questions was noted. People are simply no longer interested. For British MPs, the deep disconnect between the public and the armed forces can be explained in particular by the "Peace dividend" arising from the end of the Cold War, as a result of which Europeans disparage the importance of their defence. Failing any clearly defined enemy, global instability and a fragmented threat are not seen as imminent dangers for the security of their vital interests. Military missions appear to be limited to actions against piracy, humanitarian operations and surveillance of major sporting events. Modern hi-tech fire power, that reduces the need for soldiers on the ground, also undermines the spirit of defence with a general public that does not understand what the armed forces do. According to the Chairman of the House of Commons Defence Committee, this situation represents the real strategic threat. The crucial role played by MPs in convincing their electorate, backed up by sound arguments and explanations, is essential in obtaining the public's agreement on the use of force. The Westminster decision to not intervene in Syria illustrated the crucial requirement to talk to constituents before any vote. Since the decision taken by MPs in August 2013 was not a refusal to intervene militarily in the Middle East, there was in fact no opposition to the use of military force but rather a reaction to the lack of clarity as to what was being



Patricia Adam, SE Jean-Baptiste Mattei

proposed. MPs refused to back two resolutions in defence of military intervention as no arguments had been put forward regarding the clear identification of who the enemy was, achieving a result, any unexpected consequences and the cost of the operation.

The French were in complete agreement with the absolute need to provide the public with further information on the principle of the use of force. For the Chair of the *Commission de la défense nationale*, although the scope of a military intervention defined within an international legal framework (mandate of the United Nations, chapter 7 on action in the event of threats against peace) justified a just foreign war, the explicit support of public opinion was an essential condition to legitimise external action. The members of the National Assembly are duty-bound to announce clear objectives and the financial resources available, as they relate to the vital interests of their country, in particular for ground operations with the central question of casualties weighing greatly on any decisions that they would take.

At the bilateral level, interparliamentary work must also play its full part. The recent rise in nationalism in France and the UK has revitalised the sensitive question of national sovereignty and, within the respective parliaments, is hampering cooperation initiatives such as the Lancaster House Treaty. MPs - in particular via the Franco-British parliamentary working group - thus have a role to play as observers of the progress of cooperation initiated by both governments (for example, monitoring any work carried out by the French White Paper committee, monitoring any announcement of industrial cooperation), and informers with regard to the challenge of sharing any political decisions reached between France and the UK. If necessary, they could also explain why the two partner States, sometimes, do not leave on operations together. The idea that a specifically Franco-British concept of military interventions could help to mobilise public opinion, was also put forward. France and the UK could organise a joint discussion to analyse their previous co-operation, and provide explanations designed to increase public awareness.

« We need a joint analysis which we can make available to our European partners »

Patricia Adam

Chair of the *Commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées, AN*



Workshop, 2014 FBC Defence Conference

Meeting the security challenge in Africa

The *Armée de terre* and the British Army - brothers in arms in times of crisis

In the field, how credible is the defence partnership seen to be?

A specific workshop was devoted to Africa at the 2014 FBC conference. The format was original bringing together the two chiefs of staff of the army as co-chairs of the session, joined around the table by French and British Defence Ministers to address a specific question - can France and the UK work together on the African Continent?

In a threatening context of chronic future crises - Nigeria? Cameroon? Guinea-Conakry? - the French delegates opened the debate on the unresolved question of crisis prevention. They pointed out that the *Groupe d'Anticipation Stratégique* (GAS) meant that the fragility of situations is understood at the highest political and military levels. At the same time they underlined the fact that the strength of the strategy lies in the prepositioning of the forces. Thus, the particular strength of the French units in Africa, special forces or first response units, was due to the fact that they represented a crisis prevention resource which, given its proximity to the potential sources of instability, could complement diplomacy. France, moreover, has learned the lessons from events in Mali - even if terrorism has suffered a serious setback there, as the Guinea Bissau-Horn of Africa corridor for trafficking has caused it to reorganise its forces in the Sahel-Sahara zone in order to make it even more reactive.

This know-how was of particular interest to the British. Having just emerged from a decade of lengthy operations within multilateral allied coalitions, they are interested in reverting to a model based on greater intervention or more frequent emergency actions. The Chief of the General Staff described this French ability to understand the environment of those crisis situations in which they may be called upon to act. He was full of praise and gratitude for the visit that he had made to Mali in January 2014 on the invitation of General Ract-Madoux, and considered that Serval was an operation in which the *Armée de terre* had demonstrated its skill in partnering with the other regional players in Africa. The British Army spoke of a French model in Mali, which could be interesting for future operations, and envisaged learning the lessons of the precise way in which France has changed its *modus operandi* (rapid offensive manoeuvre, deployment of mobile air-land capabilities), with the objectives of agility and the ability to take risks. In the course of the debate, the idea was put forward of considering allowing British units to join French units on a temporary basis.

« *The French Army does that extremely well: contracting partnership with regional players in Africa* »

General Sir Peter Wall
CGS

The approach of the British Secretary of State for Defence remained cautious. Philip Hammond declared that he was extremely interested to see the determination and speed of the French intervention, and recognised the acuteness of the prior analysis of the situation. The concept of prevention is said to be one of the models of interest to the UK government. On the question of a possible joint Franco-British prepositioning in some regions of Africa, the Minister considered that the work on the next SDSR would offer the opportunity for discussing new options. He was particularly keen to ensure that a balanced budget was maintained within his Ministry, and whilst pointing out the difficult relations between organisation of the armed forces and available resources, he did, however, mention the possibility of financing a more significant stance of British forces abroad on a more permanent basis. For the future strategic posture of the UK, some of the armed forces training could perhaps be done outside the country, in regions weakened by political instability.

Challenges and geography - double standards

Does this first identification of common operational interest exist at the political and strategic level?

Africa is clearly seen as presenting a security challenge for France and the UK. The understanding that there are certain responsibilities that need to be assumed on this continent for peace and security is clear, and the potential for increased cooperation in Africa has been recognised - in particular between the two armies. By mutual agreement, the vulnerability of Europe faced with the instability of Africa's North-Western quarter, the risks and consequences of major population upheavals, the presence of extremist groups in non-governmental areas (Al-Qaïda in the Maghreb, Boko Haram in the north of Nigeria, Al-shabab in Somalia), drug trafficking throughout the Sahel, piracy in the Horn of Africa, are all threats that are well documented by both London and Paris. The willingness to work

« *The common bilateral interest in Africa is absolutely clear* »

Vice Admiral Ian Corder

UK military Representative to Nato and the EU

together is unmistakable. British diplomats in Brussels were, moreover, promoting a more detailed roadmap regarding the emergence of a Franco-British leadership. In Europe, it is up to France and the UK to take charge of security questions relating to Africa. Both countries have the responsibility for putting in place a preventive crisis management strategy to avoid the option of military intervention that the EU will not be willing to adopt.

However, the geography of any interventions in Africa is a major issue on which the Lancaster House partners are divided. Both States cooperate closely of course on the policy of evacuating their nationals and the fight against terrorism, but the culture of military operations within the territories of the ex-colonial powers is not the same. The British have remained fairly reserved and have shown little enthusiasm for any joint regional approach in Africa. They have no desire to reinforce the French presence locally, as it is already very effective in their eyes, preferring instead to position themselves in different regions of the continent that are significant for British security. France, for its part, is keen to avoid a partition of Africa and considers that dividing it up into zones of influence is an inappropriate way of dealing with the scale of contemporary challenges. For the French Minister for Defence, the focus should be on a global concept of security that the two countries must implement



« Why not discuss together the possibility of an initial deployment of the CJEF in Africa? Why not envisage that this joint force could be the rapid reaction tool that could encourage other partners to join? »

Jean-Yves Le Drian
Minister for Defence

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP

together, as, he declared, “in my vision of our commitment in Africa, there are no exclusive provinces or preserves”. In his opinion, divisions of security tasks between France and the UK in Africa based on the past, were diminishing - the British are present in Mali and CAR, France has been involved in operations in Somalia and is taking part in Operation Atalanta. Jean-Yves Le Drian has, moreover, raised the idea of using joint forces in Africa. The question arises of how it is applied, and the conditions governing its implementation and use. Although the concept of prepositioned French forces should not constitute a model, he considered that joint positioning in Africa based on the joint force could be envisaged under a certain number of conditions. The question was left open.

The Africanisation of conflict management

An academic point of view presented a more conceptual approach to the issue of security management in Africa. An analyst from the *Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)*, specialist in political transitions, drew attention to the fact that given the radically new context, Africa must be placed at the heart of any strategic discussions engaged by international bodies. While enjoying economic growth of between 6 and 7%, Africa is at the same time experiencing an outbreak of crises that are unprecedented in their scale and intensity and increasingly localised. The grammar of African security is changing with less large-scale conflicts (such as the Rwandan genocide at the start of the 90s, and the famine in Ethiopia in the 80s) and a clear atomisation of wars like those in Mali or in the CAR, the major political instability of some countries (Burkina Faso and Gabon; Senegal very exposed in 2013) which threatens to rapidly degenerate.

This new geopolitical phase means that State building in Africa should now be seen as a priority long-term objective. This is because, according to this academic, insecurity has its origins in the weakness of the State structure, undermined by cross-border, migratory, criminal and terrorist movements that muddy the waters of national interests and territorial contiguity. In order to rectify the instability generated by transnationalism, military interventions need to be re-thought, they must be “Africanised” with trained indigenous armies, empowered in the area of crisis management and free from the need for outside assistance. In this approach, France and the UK have a role to play in combining political and military tools, protecting against the disintegration of African armies (measures taken to fight against the proliferation of the militias and paramilitary factions) and encouraging economic development.

« *Denationalisation is without doubt the most central security problem in Africa today* »

Dr Mohammad-Mahmoud
Ould Mohamedou
Head of Regional
Programme, GCSP



Dr Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou

How are governments reacting to this analysis?

“We must help Africans to change their words into deeds” declared Jean-Yves Le Drian, according to whom the gap between the ambitions displayed and the reality of the implementation is a recurring debate first raised in Paris at the end of 2013 with the African states then, in Brussels during the EU-Africa summit of April 2014. France is in favour of this idea of supporting the structuring of African forces under the control of a State authority, and accepts the objective of professional armies which in many countries do not have the level of discipline needed to deal with the threat from militias and clans. The Chief of Staff of the *Armée de terre* reminded everyone of the role of his units in consolidating African defence and security capabilities. Between 2008 and 2012, 58,000 African soldiers were thus trained by France and 20,000 in 2013 alone. French ground forces also offered a whole range of graduated response capabilities to reassure the population and consolidate States by supporting development.

In so far as concerns the Africanisation of crisis management, the position of the British government is less clear cut. The Secretary of State for Defence reminded everyone that the current debate in the UK first of all raises the crucial question of their current defence commitment. But influence in Africa and support for the creation of independent military capabilities are at the heart of the discussions. Bolstered by its close cooperation with the French CEMAT, the CGS testified to the benefits of working closely with Africa with regard to training armed forces, and in this respect, sanctioned the importance of instructing African partners in prevention, in particular in the region of the Sahel which is coming under pressure. The idea of a non-permanent programme of exercises with a deployment of a few weeks was mentioned and supported by Philip Hammond, who considered that it was likely that the British forces themselves would benefit greatly from training abroad. But in concrete terms, and in particular for the Foreign Office, consolidating the State above all requires a long-term economic development policy. Africa was considered to be an area with significant possibilities for growth in which the UK has been a major financial contributor for a number of years.

International visibility for Lancaster House

Together in Newport in 2014: on which topic?

There remains the question of the Franco-British continuum in the defence sector. How do the Lancaster House partners envisage going to the September 2014 NATO summit, after having passed the test deadline of the December 2013 European Council and that of the bilateral summit of January 2014? Can they rely on a unity of purpose on the Euro-Atlantic strategic stage?



Tim Rowntree, Général d'armée aérienne Jean-Paul Paloméros

« *The Franco-British partnership is undoubtedly one of the best drivers of our alliance* »

Général d'armée aérienne Jean-Paul Paloméros

Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, NATO

the security challenges may extend to a willingness to act, with the possibility of being players, ahead of any US commitment. However, for the *Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques* (DAS), it was regrettable that these joint interests were not visible within international organisations, and it was noted that the excellent bilateral relationship is of no benefit to NATO. The Newport summit therefore would represent an opportunity for both countries, as driving forces within the Alliance - and given the evolution of the France-NATO relationship - to share joint positions, compatible with the EU.

The influence of both countries as agents to reform the structures of the Alliance was mentioned without surprise, but the debate focussed on the missions of the future NATO. Collective defence or crisis management? The upcoming departure of allied forces - notably British - from Afghanistan, and the actuality of the crisis in Ukraine had made the

The transformation of the Alliance will be at the heart of the agenda of the meeting in Newport in Wales, and for the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, France and the UK were expected to be a driving force behind proposals. This was primarily on the strategic level. The sharing of information that they initiated during the work on the French White Paper of 2013, the prospect of a possible co-operation at the next British SDSR are, in his opinion, high points that should benefit future discussions between the twenty-eight allies. By defining joint approaches together, the Franco-British partnership is contributing to determining the Alliance's security policy for the next five years. The two countries have the ability to develop concepts and doctrines based on the experience acquired. Their contribution to the assessment of the threat and its implications for the Euro-Atlantic zone in crisis contexts could be an essential element of NATO's new

political and strategic wasteland. This also applies to capabilities. As they need to take care to underline their know-how and endeavour to be the leaders in Smart defence projects. Finally on the operational level. Could the future CJEF serve the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI)? Could the successful tactical interoperability between the French and British units extend to the joint utilisation of NATO command structures?

French participants considered that the incentive of the Lancaster House Treaties for a greater strategic connection with the UK was undeniable - there is an ability to co-ordinate national responses, and joint understanding of



Philippe Errera

« We have to spend more time and efforts rolling the pitch as we say in cricket »

The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Defence

place of article V particularly important. The role of the Alliance after the ISAF operation (*International Security Assistance Force*), and the re-evaluation of NATO strategy in central Europe raised the question of both the political credibility (what red line should not be crossed?) and the military credibility (what was the result of the 2013 NATO exercise Steadfast Jazz in Poland?) of collective defence. For many delegates, if article V of the North Atlantic Treaty still constitutes the pillar of the Alliance, the annexation of Crimea must not obscure the substantive debate on the future of NATO.

How should we envisage the Alliance for the next twenty or thirty years? Where should it intervene? What balance should be struck between nuclear deterrence and conventional defence? Above all, the role of NATO in crisis management has encouraged reflection. With a classic division emerged between the British approach, favourable to the development of NATO crisis management missions; and the French approach, warning against the strengthening of the Alliance's collective defence resources to the detriment of those used for interventions by the EU. With the Newport summit in September 2014 in mind, and by virtue of their experience in the CAR, the representatives of the French government have promoted the constitution of a visible "positive Franco-British agenda", that consists in connecting together the roles of NATO and the EU. A new double or quits, where France is ready to promote NATO's part in crisis management on condition that the British play the game in so far as concerns the EU.

« Franco-British relations offer a unique arena. We must make full use of it »

Philippe Errera
Directeur de la Délégation aux
Affaires Stratégiques



HE Julian Braithwaite

Together in Brussels in 2015: for what reason?

To what extent does David Cameron's government, which is in trouble at home on the European question, want to adhere to this agenda as regards the EU?

The argument that the British had put forward when they went to Brussels in December 2013, was repeated. They declared, moreover, that they were satisfied with the outcome of the European Council which, according to them, in the civil and military domains, laid out directions in harmony with their expectations for Newport, and which were encouraging in so far as concerns the European meeting of June 2015. The promotion of the EU's global approach continues to be their policy line, with a clear preference for Franco-British leadership within a multilateral framework ensuring the continuation of military interventions. Of course, they confirmed that the two countries were the only ones in the EU capable of initiating high intensity operations, in particular with the CJEF, but this should remain the solution of last resort. The constitution of the AMISOM force in Somalia, the MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the training of forces within the EUTM Somalia and EUTM Mali, the unblocking of eight hundred million euros over three years for the African Peace Facility (APF), were all initiatives on which the Lancaster House partnership had had a positive impact.

« The EU will never be for acute crisis management but for dealing with chronic crisis before they turn into conflicts »

Ambassador Julian Braithwaite
UK Representative, EU Political and Security Committee

France had not interpreted the results of the European Council of December 2013 in the same way. It had not overlooked the difficulties that the two partners have when trying to reach agreement on shared responsibilities within the security organisations and underlined the persistent divergence of approaches to EU-NATO relations and the future of the PSDC. In short, as with the UK, it attached special importance to the development of the EU's civilian and military missions. In particular, the training of armed forces must be confirmed as a European tool of excellence. The EUTM missions, which were initiated by a few framework-nations, illustrated the good relationship that exists between the French and the British. Maritime security in the Horn of Africa is another subject that operated effectively between the two

countries and that validated the principle of EU-NATO relations. But the pooling of European capabilities remained a priority objective. The French Minister for Defence was satisfied with the progress achieved on air-to-air refuelling and the consideration of the industrial aspect of defence by the Council of December 2013, but was still concerned by the fact that the British were rejecting prospects of an organic link with the EU in respect of capabilities.

Making the transition from two to three?

Finally, putting the partnership in perspective on the international scene presupposed a better understanding of the positioning of the United States vis-à-vis the Franco-British initiative. But what is also important is the way in which its political and strategic choices are received by France and the UK, and how they impact on their security cooperation. The now classic debate on the US pivot to Asia started with the observation that the European perception of a new balance based around the Asia-Pacific was incorrect. Apart from the fact that it does not represent a significant break with US policy in this region for the last twenty years, the real challenge for the USA related to the repositioning of their resources on the global chessboard, and the way in which the EU, in particular via the Franco-British partnership, had to play its role within the new transatlantic balance and in the discussion on collective defence.

« *The rebalance, a cover for US disengagement from Europe? I really don't think that is the case* »

Leo Michel

Distinguished Research Fellow,
National Defense University,
Washington DC

This approach, defended by a US analyst from the National Defense University of Washington DC, underlined the fact that the current orientations of US foreign policy were not directed toward any US disengagement from Europe. In his opinion, 2014 had, on the contrary, seen a new balance in the Europe/USA relationship. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) reasserted US interests in European security, and the very reactive airborne deployments over the Baltic Sea and in Poland to reassure allies faced with the crisis in Ukraine confirmed the US's commitment to the Old Continent.

In addition, he considered that the USA, the UK and France were the three countries within the Alliance that could make a difference with regard to security. This idea of trilateral cooperation had already taken place in a number of different forms, but in the context of the strengthened Franco-British partnership, it might be formalised. Of course, this analyst pointed out that the management of the crisis in Syria in August 2013 showed the limits of a three-way division, in the same way that the thorny issue of classified information and intelligence sharing remained a major problem. But as nuclear powers, these States shared an analysis on strategic threats and it would be interesting to see their Ministers for Defence set up joint consultations. On the operational level, co-operation between the three air forces was long-standing and fruitful, with high-level meetings, officer exchanges and regular joint exercises. The three navies work together in several regions around the world, and for the future, it would be interesting to reflect on a form of association of the US forces with the CJEF in the event of a crisis. The Sahel Multilateral Planning Group was another indicator of the effective operation of trilateral cooperation in the Sahelian belt. The industrial aspect should also be able to open up to a more conciliatory and consistent approach between the USA, the UK and France...

Conclusion

What was said in 2014

At the end of the Fourth Annual Franco-British Council Defence Conference, there was one observation to be made and three points that need to be considered. Important decisions in the area of capabilities announced in 2013 and expected for 2014, have effectively been taken and in particular, in addition to the progress made on the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon (FASGW) of MBDA, the rapprochement between Dassault Aviation and BAE Systems marks a milestone in R&T cooperation in combat aviation. The idea of creating an executive agency between the Ministers for Defence to facilitate dialogue with the two aircraft manufacturers was also new. Within this favourable context, and more generally over 2014 which started with the Franco-British summit at RAF Brize Norton, the personal relationships established between politicians, the military and industrialists was considered to be a particularly instructive indication as to the state of cooperation.

Strategic rapprochement, the visibility of the partnership on the international level and joint crisis management in Africa were the three dossiers that gave rise to questions. Do we need to envisage the creation of a strategic convergence between London and Paris? This was already raised at the 2012 Annual Conference during the exchanges on the joint intervention in Libya, but in 2014, the prospect of a new British White Paper relaunched the debate with greater urgency. And it is an issue that divides. The French wanted to at least progress along the path of a joint analysis of threats, notably for European defence, whereas the British promoted the virtues of ever wider Franco-British interoperability. The officers spoke of the successful optimisation of tactical cooperation between the two countries' forces, but the expression of a joint political ambition on the prospects of sharing capabilities and use of the CJEF was clearly expected by the military. The second subject, which was already discussed in 2013, on the way in which the Franco-British leadership can be applied within international bodies was, once again this year, widely debated without coming to any decisive conclusion. The global British approach that consigned external high-intensity operations to NATO, *versus* the ambitions of strategic European autonomy *à la française* continue to exist side by side.

The third and final aspect, Africa was the new subject in 2014. The French Minister for Defence considered that the FBC workshop devoted to the security of the African Continent offered the opportunity to generate concrete proposals, in particular on joint pre-positioning with a view to preventing crises, and on the way in which the bilateral expeditionary force should be used. The British openly welcomed the expertise of the French Army in the Sahel, but their caution *vis-à-vis* the options for co-operation put forward by France was symbolic of a political and strategic context determined by a heavy domestic schedule the outcomes of which are uncertain.

What needs to be done in 2015

The referendum on independence in Scotland, the start of the work on the *Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR), and the general election will be major events in UK domestic politics in the coming months. And there is always the risk that a temporary freezing of the dossiers started between London and Paris may hamper the progress of the Franco-British roadmap.

The governments of both countries will thus have special responsibility for averting roadblocks and maintaining a steady course in so far as concerns all the initiatives in order to avoid shelving decisions. The general challenge of progressing strategic discussions - more clearly championed by France, it has to be said, than by the British authorities -, and that, in particular, of modelling the africanisation of crisis management would be helped if the NATO September 2014 summit and the European Council of June 2015 constituted deadlines that maintain the Franco-British continuum in the area of security.



Claire Chick, Joseph Zimet

The memorial of the anniversary of the First World War had just started, and would continue up until 2018, in an unbroken line of commemorations. It represents an opportunity that must be seized to strengthen personal relationships, which are increasingly marked by trust and are essential to the development of defence co-operation. All the more so as the numerous recent and future changes in positions each time redistribute the cards of individual relationships. The dynamics of memorial drawn from the events organised to mark the centenary of the First World War may encourage rapprochement and could raise public awareness at a time when people are seeking to understand contemporary defence initiatives. The director of the *Mission du Centenaire* pointed out: "the historic heritage around the Great War, between France and the UK, is exceptionally rich". He then added: "the centenary creates a space for opportunities for significant and meaningful bilateral cooperations"...

Claire Chick, Août 2014



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