

2017 REPORT

FRANCO-BRITISH DEFENCE



Hand in glove ?



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Plenary session, 2016 FBC Defence Conference

The Sixth Franco-British Council (FBC) Defence Conference took place on 16 and 17 November 2016 at the Residence of the British Embassy in Paris. The annual colloque was hosted by HE Lord Ed Llewellyn, and brought together seventy personalities from senior government, the military, parliament, industry and academia. It was notable for the participation of the two Secretaries of State for Defence, the Chef d'état-major des armées français, the UK Minister for Defence Procurement and the Délégué Général pour l'Armement.

The meeting took place in a specific political context, characterised by a series of past and upcoming electoral deadlines – the unexpected outcome of the British referendum in favour of leaving the European Union, the much-discussed election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the uncertainties linked to the upcoming Presidential elections in France.

« The Franco-British Council offers an incomparable setting for our discussions given the quality of the people that it has brought together. Your work on crucial subjects represents a major contribution to the implementation and the strength of our bilateral defence relationship »

Général Pierre de Villiers

Chef d'état-major des armées

Following up on the subjects discussed in 2015 and taking into account subsequent developments, the conference included four round tables which respectively dealt with – the political impetus of bilateral security cooperation after Brexit; prospects for a shared defence culture in respect of Europe and NATO; the setting up of mutual dependency in industrial domains of sovereignty; added value of the partnership to combat terrorism and put in place scenarios in which the Joint Expeditionary Force could be used. This report, published concomitantly with the triggering of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty by the UK government, offers a cross analysis of the debates and discussions that took place at these workshops and plenary sessions.

« The work of the Franco-British Council is an essential contribution to our bilateral relationship »

Jean-Yves Le Drian

Minister of Defence

« It's an honour to be here at this magnificent embassy for another Franco-British Council »

Rt Hon Michael Fallon

Defence Secretary





Workshop "In Between", 2016 FBC Defence Conference

Brexit: no impact on defence?

Tout va bien

What remains of the Franco-British defence relationship? The question seems legitimate following the UK's decision to leave the European Union, and given that France – a priori – finds itself deprived of its security partner on the Old Continent. In fact, nothing has changed.

This is, clearly, the opinion rendered by the very enthusiastic Secrétariat Général de la Défense et de la Sécurité Nationale (SGDSN) which highlighted the strong performance of what it calls a "necessary cooperation". In particular, the joint work in the fight against terrorism was qualified as exemplary, as this key area of the Lancaster House partnership has not, according to the agency attached to the Prime Minister's services, suffered any negative effects as a result of Brexit. The dialogue and the intensity of the discussions on the subject of protecting societies have been

« En matière de protection de nos sociétés, le dialogue et l'intensité des échanges sont à nul autre pareil car nous avons la même culture »

Louis Gautier, SGDSN

excellent, due to the common culture regarding regular threat assessment. The same questions arise, often in the same terms, on the indiscriminate dangers that citizens in either the UK or France may be exposed to. There are almost daily reports regarding active computer crime prevention, within a network of trusted contacts. In the context of the bilateral agenda, the question of how to treat "returnees" has prompted extremely focused discussions on the judicial procedures, control and traceability relating to such people. Views are also very convergent with regard to the risk of jihadis from the Levant relocating to Libya and the issue of Syrte.





« I can't personally envisage a situation where we would allow Britain's departure from the EU to get in the way of our incredibly important cooperation, I don't think our people would understand that »

HE Lord Llewellyn, British Ambassador

In so far as concerns facilities, the sharing of working tools in the area of intelligence and cyber security has given rise to a special relationship. Methods are exchanged, policies are adjusted, in particular during large-scale surveillance operations such as those put in place for the 2012 Olympic Games in London or Euro 2016 in France. The setting up of the European air passenger data file (PNR programme, *Passenger Name Record*) and audit missions in a large number of airports identified as

being particularly vulnerable, are further examples of close collaboration where each partner benefits from the expertise of the other. In the fight against online radicalisation, France has very clearly taken its inspiration from the successful UK model. And often follows it.

The embassies have confirmed this. And have extended this assessment to the wide spectrum of Franco-British defence cooperation. There can be no doubt about the excellence of the relationship, and whenever any crucial issue is involved both partners understand the importance of remaining united. The European environment has been shaken, but the will of the stakeholders is supreme and remains the essential driving force behind the rapprochement arising from the security treaties. No elections in either of the two countries has so far called into question the rapprochement that has taken place since 2010. Successive Prime Ministers and Presidents have unreservedly given their backing to an enterprise that they resolutely approve. And the growing understanding between the different Ministers, some of whom now call each other several times a week and the involvement of decision makers in communications with the chain of command, bear testimony to the robustness of the political momentum. For six years now, experience has shown that the divergence of the cultural systems means that it is at times necessary to offer incentives to deal with issues that have arisen. But once the obstacles have been overcome, cooperation moves forward. Here again, according to diplomats, the vote on 23 June changed nothing.

They have even seized the opportunity of the debate to reaffirm the importance of the changes that have been brought about within their respective administrative governance. The British thus explain that in the light of the lessons learned from Iraq, David Cameron, as early as 2010, put in place the *National Security Council* (NSC) in order to have the right people around the table at the right time so that foreign policy and domestic security decisions could be taken collectively. In so far as concerns France, the President of the Republic has convened a *Conseil de sécurité nationale* every week since 2015, with the Secretaries of state for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Home Affairs and a number of officers from the security services and the Chief of the Defence Staff (CEMA). An *ad hoc* harmonisation which is wanted independently on both sides of the Channel, but which clearly helps with the indispensable interministerial convergence within the new defence and security continuum, and which facilitates the task of the various Franco-British working groups, including the Senior Level Group (SLG).

« Les trois piliers du traité de Lancaster House ne seront pas remis en cause par le Brexit »

Jean-Yves Le Drian
Ministre de la défense

« The UK is now a demandeur to continue a close relationship with France and other EU members »

Prof. Christopher Hill

London extols bilateral cooperation

The risk that the cooperation might break down is nevertheless on everyone's lips. Doesn't Brexit undermine the fabric of a Franco-British defence relationship that has yet to be built? No, the British replied. Convinced of this, they responded generously in order to reassure the bilateral community of their intentions.

The Lancaster House partnership with France, they made clear from the outset, is not dependent upon UK membership of the EU. Paris-London defence cooperation is anchored in a History that preceded the European project, as can be seen from the moving ceremonies organized in 2016 to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the horrific battle of the Somme. There is, therefore, no reason for the relationship between the two countries to stand still. On the contrary! The unprecedented gravity of the terrorist threat and the fight against Daesh require that the French and the British work together even more closely than before. Both countries, as they move forward together, proudly





Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, Defence Secretary

display their solidarity. It was pointed out that each year, the Lancaster House Agreement becomes stronger and continues to develop the relationship at the highest governmental level. The *Ministry of Defence* (MOD) stressed how Brexit, on the contrary, highlights the need to strengthen the alliance with France and to further develop practical actions at every level. In this respect, it noted that at the end of 2016 the *Joint Capability Review* was an indication of the willingness to identify new avenues of cooperation, an exercise that had not been carried out since 2013.

« We are not about to let a little Brexit come between us! »

The National Security Council (NSC) was of the same opinion. The unique defence arrangement with France, highlighted in the latest Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), is not subject to any interference with Brexit. It has even never been more necessary for the 2010 agreement to expand even further. Undoubtedly the context is difficult, peoples are divided, liberalism is under threat and nobody has any answers on how to protect the portfolio of democracy in the face of populism. Undoubtedly there are undeniable divergences between the partners. But uncertainties are inevitable and must serve on the contrary to make the two countries stronger and to ensure that they move forward despite any difficulties. The NSC thus considers that the current European context is highly sensitive and thus makes consolidating the bilateral relationship even more urgent. Matters were clarified somewhat. When it leaves the EU, the UK has no intention of adopting any so-called isolationist approach, and would like on the contrary to be able to rely on its traditional allies. At the forefront of which is France. The real challenge is to ensure that Franco-British entente continues to fully contribute to joint international security. The Foreign Office also spoke to express its profound conviction regarding the *raison d'être* of Franco-British defence relations.

Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP
Defence Secretary

« Some of the anti-European sentiment in Britain is not exclusively British but reflects concerns in the continent as a whole »

Prof. Vernon Bogdanor

It also reaffirmed that in reality, in the light of the previous referendums on the EU in other European countries, there was nothing surprising about the British vote. Why is it that the EU does not benefit from any broad popular support? The immediate response to Brexit should force Brussels to take a closer look at the old equations that no longer work.

Finally, the assertion of the near inviolable friendship of *Brexiteers* for France fell to a conservative member of the Defence Committee of the House of Commons. Here too, the objective was to nip in the bud any generalisations and impress





upon the audience the need to promote the bilateral security rapprochement. In particular by insisting on the desire to strengthen the most committed relation possible with the countries that remain in the EU after the UK has left it. With the help of specific examples – Sir William Cash, fervent opponent of the EU but great admirer of his father who died for France at the age of twenty-six in the fight against the Nazis; Edward Leigh, MP, anti-European and passionately francophile, recently awarded the *Légion d'honneur* – the purpose is to explain that *Brexiteers* are absolutely not inward looking. In 2017, the question is not so much to know if the United

« Does the vote to leave mean that the UK is becoming isolationist? Absolutely not »

Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis MP
HOC

Kingdom is withdrawing. And if it has chosen to turn its back on any military involvement alongside Europeans, including the French. The real issue is to ensure that it takes its own fully independent decisions, regarding if, where and when, the country takes action or doesn't.

Prudence in France

As far as the French are concerned, they have adopted an attitude of prudence. As, beyond the observation regarding the strong determination of both governments to move forward together, it is not sure that in the medium term Brexit will not in any way be detrimental to the bilateral defence relationship. This critical regard by a certain number of high representatives, is the expression of a desire to warn against the anticipated glorification of the partnership. In fact, they estimate that once Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon has been triggered, the climate risks being different, in any case far more complex. The start of negotiations may reveal varying levels of disagreement, which the public and the press will rapidly pass on.

The strategic question of the emergence of public opinions is thus being given serious consideration. The historic gap with regard to elites, the loss of trust of voters, the need to be listened to are now inescapable realities that are putting pressure on democratic models and increasing uncertainty. And clearly, France and the United Kingdom are no better prepared than others to deal with this. How will public opinion react faced with the degree of military risk taking? The failure to communicate about the Franco-British defence relationship, plus a lack of any explanation on the challenges of this rapprochement may result in significant misunderstandings vis-à-vis political decisions that are often considered by the public, rightly, to be paradoxical. Thus – what of the slogan “*Brexit means Brexit*” if the Lancaster House Agreement repositions British participation in the EU? Why would Whitehall renounce the Single Market (its leitmotiv in 1975) in exchange for a risky involvement in defence affairs in Brussels (difficult since 1954)? Or again – how could French policy makers validate the principle of an à la carte security partnership in Europe – that they have always resisted – and which the United Kingdom is starting to talk about?

« Nous souhaitons demain continuer à associer le Royaume-Uni aux évolutions de l'Europe de la défense »

Jean-Yves Le Drian
Ministre de la défense

About European Defence precisely – France has also expressed a certain reserve in view of the calming messages adopted by its UK neighbours. At the international level, it believes that it is possible that the two countries risk quickly suffering the consequences of the UK's exit from the EU – for example at the UN Security Council, where they will no longer together be able to exert any influence and present resolutions, often in the name of the EU. But also in a strictly European framework, in which it considers that the participation of the United Kingdom in defence policy risks being at best uncertain and at worst chaotic. By giving up its ability to decide, the UK will depend on the will of the EU Member States – the COPS – in order to take part, under certain conditions, in a military operation. So, what sort of partner has





Marc Semo, Linda Dann, Nicolas Roche

the United Kingdom become? Is its loss of influence in Europe manageable? What is the critical limit beyond which France will not go? And what of Franco-British leadership in so far as concerns shaping the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)?

For the Quai d'Orsay, this atmosphere of significant uncertainty, fuelled by a continual barrage of questions that remain unanswered, means that the UK has a duty to come up with concrete proposals. It must explain precisely how it sees its contribution to European defence outside the EU. Brexit requires that it clearly state its vision of future relations with the EU. Its decision to leave is respected but its ally expects it to provide detailed clarification. To what extent does it wish to remain a stakeholder and defend the development of European capacities and budgets? The United Kingdom fully understands France's interests. And the principle of varying degrees of participation in European defence, that would tend towards a logic of EU specialisation at the very bottom of the spectrum, would not be acceptable.

*« Nous avons besoin
de votre vision sur
les relations futures
avec l'UE »*

Nicolas Roche
Quai d'Orsay

The 2017 burden to be shared

We don't know yet

The UK has not hesitated to enter the difficult debate about the future of defence in Europe presented by France. Its replies sent a mixed message – on the substance, it repeatedly maintains that it is not the cause of any fracture, and that its commitment within European defence, alongside France, remains absolute; on the form, it has had no choice but to content itself with being reassuring, to silence any feelings of impatience, being unsure of what it is actually possible to put on the table.

Brexit has not therefore negatively impacted the projects affirming European defence either. Whitehall diplomats have thus made use of this central idea to renew the established principle of the strength of the Franco-British defence relationship, that by far exceeds the limited framework of the European Union. In so far as concerns the threat of international terrorism, the decision to leave the EU is not important. It in no way affects the essential aspect of the rapprochement of the two European leaders. For the Foreign Office, Brexit is even a “*wake up call*” that should alert the Lancaster House partners on the issue of the security capability requirements of the twenty-eight (in opposition to the role of the institutions already rejected during previous referendums). In the medium term, once the UK has left the EU, the FCO considers that there need to be in-depth discussions on the participation of the UK in the defence of the continent. It is in everyone's interest, that the main objective should be to rethink the

« *Leaving the EU will force the UK into being traditional allies. But no excuse for isolationism, and no retreat into bilateralism* »

Gwyn Jenkins, NSC

special relation between the European Union and the United Kingdom. Although no form of commitment actually exists at the moment, they are considering a series of targeted questions – how to actively take part in CSDP operations and policy discussions? What arrangements would enable the creation of bilateral or multilateral missions? How should ambitions be raised, envisage *ad hoc* training programmes on specific questions in which the Franco-British relationship could assume its leadership role?

No risk therefore of “splendid isolation” as was pointed out by the MOD, which, via a detailed review, went back in time to draw attention to the short period of British retrenchment – end of the 19th century, beginning of the 20th century – , which was brought to an end by the *Entente cordiale*. The contemporary era is characterized on the contrary by the close involvement of British security with that of the Old Continent, and by virtue of a deep commitment to France, without Brexit adding any





form of ambiguity to this. Although speaking in the conditional tense, the MOD echoes the thoughts of the FCO – the United Kingdom “could” continue to support CSDP operations and missions after leaving the EU, there “ought” to be opportunities to maintain and extend the British commitment. In particular in the same way as other non EU member States, in appropriate formats. Senior officials also added that their government was giving itself the means to react – in particular, with the creation of a new team within the *Exiting the EU* department, in charge of bringing together various expertises on the future of the United Kingdom in the restricted circle of European Defence. An ambitious programme in search of consistency at the point where MOD/ FCO skills intersect.

However on the question of when exactly France’s partners will be able to put forward concrete proposals, the *National Security Council* was keen to point out – allies need to understand the current ambivalence around British choices. There will be no precise idea about the future participation of the United Kingdom for several months, and current speculation on the details of its future role is inappropriate. The British are undeniably European by their geography. Under no circumstances, will they turn their back on defence in Europe after the vote on 23 June. But on the strengthening of their privileged relationship with France after Brexit, everything remains to be done.

“So, are you going to do it or not?”

Franco-British signals to Washington

This unequivocal question, raised by a senior academic, was addressed to the French and UK policy makers involved in the European Council on Foreign Relations held two days before the 2016 Franco-British Council Defence Conference. The meeting in Brussels was remarkable for its quite unique and encouraging community of views on aspects that are sensitive and often well-worn, in a tense post-Brexit context. Despite disagreements, the two countries had reached an agreement on the implementation of significant progress in the area of global strategy to allow the EU to do more. The new UK support for the renewed French proposals on permanent structured co-operation, and the compromise envisaged on the OHQ (EU Operational Headquarters), bear witness to the ability of the two partners to reach an agreement and move forward.

Donald Trump’s arrival in the White House represented an additional challenge for the consolidation of Franco-British cooperation. An unexpected subject that was not part of the programme of the 2016 Conference, the relationship of the Europeans with the new administration in Washington has assumed a central role in discussions and given rise to a number of concerns. With no possible reading of US political intentions, serious doubts have emerged - is there a risk of fragmentation within the Lancaster House partnership? What is happening to the efforts of visibility in respect of bilateral cooperation vis-à-vis the United States? Can France and the UK together initiate a positive dynamic with the new US administration?

Questions which, in keeping with the cohesion they demonstrated in Brussels, are forcing the two European nations to display a solid determination vis-a-vis the United States. The objective is clearly expressed. For the Direction Générale des Relations Internationales et de la Stratégie (DGRIS), if the US disengagement from Europe is confirmed – in fact the election of Donald Trump has crystallised a change to the Alliance that is not new – and if the order of strategic priorities between the USA and Europe continues to be strained, the Franco-British partnership has no alternative but to impose itself. France and the United Kingdom have a duty to make themselves heard. Together, they are able to raise the threshold of credibility that the USA will request. And at the centre of this flying by sight, they must now accept their responsibilities not only at the European level, but also within the Alliance or *ad hoc* coalitions. In this effort, France does not want to give the impression that it is favouring EU resources only.

The UK has fully accepted the strategic direction expressed by its counterparts and has followed suit. Moreover, according to the MOD, although there is a need to react to the election of Donald Trump, there is however no need to panic. Of course, the influence of the two allies on Washington is limited, but the Lancaster House Treaty includes within it what is required to manage the consequences of any possible US disengagement. This option, which is implicit in the framework of the 2010 agreements, must be seriously considered in 2017. The UK and France have the means to be persuasive and convincing in the eyes of the new US leaders. They must seek out the support they need. In the discussions entered into, Paris and London can make the voice of Europe heard by highlighting





« Il faut coordonner nos messages et nos politiques vis-à-vis des Etats-Unis. C'est devenu indispensable dans la période d'incertitudes »

Philippe Errera, DGRIS



Peter Jones, Philippe Errera

their convergent security actions. Is NATO really obsolete? It can adapt. While maintaining the fundamental US commitment to security in Europe. And by opening up a new recognised area of autonomy for Franco-British defence co-operation.

Finally, the UK representatives spoke at length – more than the French – to develop even further the urgent need to re-examine the budget. In anticipation of a decrease in the US presence, they are raising the threat of an increased imbalance with regard to sharing the burden between Europeans. And in the spirit of what the United States is asking for, they are repeating, with a certain vehemence, their call for a fair financial contribution from NATO members, based on the already established minimum threshold. Everybody needs to do more, every country needs to spend more, they repeated time and again. An objective that it has been historically difficult to achieve but which, in view of the uncompromising stance of the new US administration, may encourage Europeans to assume their responsibilities. They also add, that in return, a financial investment in NATO is a convincing way in which to convince their partner of the substance of the European security project. Except that time is short. As the lack of European autonomy in crucial domains – ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance), supplies, transport – will soon become untenable.

« We need to deepen our practical cooperation at all levels between the UK and France, and we need to persuade together the new US administration »

Peter Watkins, MOD

EU-NATO, a gap that is closing?

It goes without saying that being stronger together impacts the EU-NATO relationship. And indeed, the dossier was also at the heart of the debates at the FBC 2016 conference. But will the uproar triggered in the current context around the transatlantic issue have led to a rethinking of strategic directions? In no uncertain terms France has held their partner to account – by leaving the EU at a time when the USA may be less interested in their involvement in NATO, are you not in a very fragile state? How can Europeans envisage mounting external operations via Berlin + if the British DSACEUR is no longer a member of the EU? In the name of advancing European security, can you accept a French DSACEUR? There will be no immediate answers to these uncompromising questions. All interventions will revolve around the stated desire to strengthen EU-NATO complementarity, in keeping with the renewal of the Washington-London-Paris relationship.

The subject is of course not new. But the Foreign Office insists – an EU-NATO relationship based on cooperation has never been more important than it is today. It has become a necessity and requires that even more be done



Prof. Bogdanor, Peter Watkins, AM Stuart Atha

together to best protect US engagement in Europe. Dealing with the complexity of an environment within which the different institutional affiliations complicate the strategic chessboard is a priority. In reference to the latest NATO summits, the UK backs up its remarks – in Wales in 2014, the first EU-NATO meeting around a common agenda, constituted a major advance. Since then, each organization has been taking account of the other, and information has been circulating between Secretary General Stoltenberg and High Representative Mogherini, who go to the same meetings; in Warsaw in 2016, the joint EU-NATO declaration signed by Stoltenberg and Junker demonstrated the desire of each

of these organizations to increase cooperation in specific, clearly identified areas, including interoperability and joint exercises.

Setting up systematic exchanges of views on the assessment of the danger, before the end of the first half of 2017, is a major objective for the two pillars of Euro-Atlantic security. And the MOD stated – EU-NATO cooperation of tomorrow should essentially focus on the strategic response to hybrid threats. Joint work in the area of cyber security has become a pivotal element in transatlantic relations. Sharing classified information will of course take time, but it must be included on the agenda. Currently, in the maritime sector, NATO support for the EU in tackling the refugee and migrant crisis, whether alongside the Frontex agency in the Aegean Sea or for the operation *Sea Guardian* in the Mediterranean, undoubtedly constitutes a model of inspiration that should be copied elsewhere.

France's findings are no less positive. Cooperation between the EU and NATO has never been more successful. And Brexit has had no effect on the strengthening of institutional complementarity under way to deal with the seriousness of the threat. France and the United Kingdom agree on the need to display consistency within NATO and the EU, and to set aside a whole host of redundant quarrels on transatlantic links. Here too, the speakers stressed the new synergy that ensures continuity between the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Councils of the EU and NATO decisions. A Member of the French Parliament (Defence committee, Assemblée Nationale) evoked the need to embark upon the "multi-bilateral" era that would respect both the Atlantic and the European frameworks, and that would be driven by Franco-British cooperation.

But even though the UK repeated the urgent need for NATO countries to honour their budget commitments, France for its part re-opened the delicate dossier of the structural reform of the Alliance. The DGRIS thus deemed that Franco-British efforts in respect of the evolution of NATO structures should not be put off any longer, given that the strengthening of the EU-NATO relationship and the clarification of the European contribution to NATO depend upon it. Yes, NATO is obsolete and expensive, and yes structural changes given the green light by the United States are indispensable and expected. Nine thousand people are included within the NATO command structures, this is a lot. NATO has more French officers within it than there are in the Defence Staff in France. That is too many. We must stop brandishing the ever-present risk of duplication with European agencies. There is room for reform.

On the move, mutual dependence is under way

The unthinkable six years ago

From the industrial point of view, the debates have led to a revisiting of the equipments pillar of the Lancaster House Treaty, in order to assess its achievements. The officials involved considered that the 2010 agreements have been strengthened. "I reiterate my confidence in the Franco-British relationship, which is currently the most vibrant cooperation in the area of armament in Europe, by far" said the Delegate-General for Armaments, Laurent Collet-Billon, in his opening address at the second plenary session. The 2016 conference stressed the consolidation of the industrial and technological base of Franco-British defence.

The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) in the area of missiles was, in particular, described as historic. The result of work carried out over several years, ratified by the French and British parliaments and coming into force on 12 October 2016, it materializes the key concept of interdependence in a highly strategic sector. Guaranteed over time, it shows the political and

« Today is a portent of future success, a taste of what is possible, not just in missile production but across the vast panoply of defence capability »

Harriett Baldwin MP

Minister for Defence procurement

strategic feasibility of a new model that puts in place two principles which are by nature contradictory – mutual dependence – enter a logic of specialisation and rationalisation – in a capacity area of sovereignty.

The industrial community considers that the progress made is considerable, and, to echo the remarks by the UK Defence Secretary, that it was unthinkable in 2010. This IGA thus makes it possible to overcome the obstacles to optimisation encountered in the cooperation programmes – including in integrated companies, and between allied countries – all up until now contracted based on specific security agreements. The difficulties traditionally raised by, on the one hand, a partnership reduced to exchanges on a case by case basis *via* export licenses, on the other hand, the protection of the project management of technologies on home soil, have been removed. The political

will, at the highest level, has clearly expressed itself in favour of guaranteeing the activation of all the competences of a cross-Channel armaments industry. Under the treaty agreed in 2010, the French and British have done what they said they would do.

The "One complex weapon" initiative between the two governments will thus allow MBDA to enter into totally new logics of consolidation and integration. Rationalisation confirms the location in France and the United Kingdom of eight centres of excellence focussed around the sharing and distribution of competences in certain key technological areas. The stage is set for industrial restructuring on a bilateral basis. Removing duplicates leads to the production of weapons systems that are more powerful, less expensive and "continuously sovereign". Reciprocal access to the technology and equipment of the centres will be guaranteed, with ultimate considerations of the security of supplies and third party country access. Each national structure shall benefit from the orders of both countries and the export potential of each.

« La dépendance mutuelle, c'est le mot de Lancaster House, c'est très fort, ce n'est pas un objectif, c'est une conséquence que l'on accepte de nécessité »

Antoine Bouvier MBDA





Rationalisation of the industrial installations thus allows MBDA – that in Europe represents 70% of the industrial base of the missiles sector, and which exports over 50% outside of Europe – to reach the indispensable critical size required given the competition it faces, in particular American. It guarantees its place for the years ahead. Provided that the test of this pilot IGA is conclusive, in particular to be extended to other stakeholders and sectors in the not too distant future.

Collateral effects of Brexit

This major breakthrough achieved in the field of tactical missiles occurred at the same time as the British people were taking the decision to leave the European Union. Brexit will therefore not have had any impact on the determination to move forward in the area of industrial integration. In reality, the October 2016 agreement confirmed the primacy of the bilateral driving force on questions of armament, that functions independent of any changes within the EU. A finding that corroborates the spirit in which the treaties of 2010 were entered into, favouring the launching of complex and sensitive programmes, initially together, and only subsequently extended to other potentially candidate countries. "On the bilateral level, the United Kingdom is and shall remain our priority strategic partner. Brexit has not changed the fundamentals of the Lancaster House Treaty. They remain valid with or without Brexit" the DGA pointed out. The UK for its part declared its desire to strengthen OCCAR, an agency not linked to the EU, that hosts European programmes – including the A400M and the MMCM.

Certain reserves were expressed about the negative effects of Brexit. The general climate of the Franco-British relationship is an essential indicator of successful cooperation between manufacturers, and the risk of deterioration during extremely delicate negotiations can never be ruled out completely. MBDA thus considers that, politically, in the context of Brexit, it will not be easy to negotiate the introduction of a certain degree of mutual dependence. Communication is necessary to protect the domain of bilateral cooperation from European interference. And



Patricia Adam, Antoine Bouvier

care must be taken to ensure that the exit negotiations between the UK and the EU, that will take time and will not be easy, do not impact the remainder of the programmes. Setting a certain number of easily traceable, short-term objectives and adhering to them, seamlessly exchanging sensitive data at a very early stage between manufacturers and administrations will be crucial to any success.

At the level of the European defence industry, the consequences of Brexit are more clearly identified. In particular in the area of research, where France and the United Kingdom display a visibility to which they are attached, adopting positions that are often similar. The DGA is worried about the prospect that UK manufacturers would no longer have access to European research programmes. The MOD confirms and is apprehensive in particular of the possibility of no longer being involved in the projected fund. "It is absolutely essential to protect this element for the future of the cooperation and in order to maintain regular dialogue" he pointed out. Other questions arise – how will the UK respond to the fact that they are no longer subject to European directives? Without the constraint of the need to adhere to the EU texts, what industrial competition will they create? And how to save the Galileo programme, the defence part of which benefits in full from the motivational dynamic of Franco-British cooperation? Even more than the strictly European environment, the DGA insists – it is more the relationship across the Euro-Atlantic area that will be at the heart of French preoccupations. As the election of Donald Trump risks interfering with the Lancaster House partnership by reorienting the UK-US relationship in the defence industry. What consequences for the Franco-British FCAS combat drone and the new missile weapon array? What changes for the F35 or Five Eyes? This needs to be monitored.



Amiens - cont.

Finally, a number of developments were devoted to the action taken after the decisions adopted in Amiens in 2016. At three levels mainly. The future FMAN-FMC / ASW cruise missile was considered to be a key element in strengthening industrial consolidation. A long-term structuring programme, it will replace SCALP/STORM SHADOW, which was already the subject of a historic cooperation between the two countries, as well as EXOCET and HARPOON anti-ship missiles. In keeping with the Ministerial decisions taken at the last bilateral summit, a study contract must be signed in the spring of 2017 to launch the study and definition phase entrusted to the DGA, this date being seen as a very strong signal that the cooperation is continuing. "Together we will carry out the design work for the future cruise missile. I am convinced that it is moving in the right direction for 2030" the CEMA stated.

The development of new materials with the launch of the realisation phase of the MMCM -maritime mine counter measures- was also discussed. Programme signed in October 2016 in order to develop unmanned naval systems to detect and neutralise mines, it will provide both navies with prototypes by 2019. The new mine warfare operational concepts will give both navies a military edge in this field. Finally the Future Combat Air System (FCAS), that had been featured in 2015, was also confirmed, with the aim of concluding an extension contract to the feasibility phase before the end of 2017.

« Une nouvelle ère s'ouvre inévitablement dans nos relations : nous devons travailler hors du cadre européen qui était le nôtre depuis 1973 »

Patrice Caine, CEO Thales

« We are fully supporting the long term strategy to jointly deliver effective military equipment in the most efficient manner while minimising national constraints and strengthening our common defence technological and industrial base. In support of this, Defence Ministers signed in September 2015 an Inter-Governmental Agreement enabling full implementation of Centres of Excellence into MBDA, a key step towards creating inter-dependence between us around key missile technologies. We also intend to develop in 2016 a portfolio approach to strengthen our industrial links and jointly address the current and future operational requirements of our forces.»

Annex on security and defence, UK-France summit, Amiens, 3rd March 2016



Général Pierre de Villiers, Chef d'état major des armées

The difficulty of joint operations

Look for high intensity

The specifically military aspect of cooperation, was also a major part of the discussions. Flagship of the Franco-British defence rapprochement, the interoperability of forces raises questions six years after Lancaster House.

«Faisons preuve, ensemble dans notre coopération de défense, d'un optimisme de volonté pour le succès commun de nos armes, au service d'une paix d'avance»

Général Pierre de Villiers

Chef d'état major des armées

Here, and certainly more than elsewhere, the importance of the international environment on the partnership is highlighted. To the common observation already made regarding the danger of the threat – degraded global security, logic of power enabled, the overlapping of security issues at home and abroad – are added uncertainties regarding the changes in US foreign policy and the longer-term effects of Brexit. Faced with the ever increasing unpredictability, the French and British militaries stress the convergence of their strategic interests, that form the basis of a solid partnership, consisting of elements of stability to respond to all crises. Their history is remarkably similar, punctuated by a shared expeditionary tradition, and an ability to assume operational risks. The will to act goes without saying.

However, are they ready to leave?

One of the workshops of the annual defence conference invited answers to this tricky question. The military staffs did just that, without concealing their concerns – in 2017 the *Combined Joint Expeditionary Force* (CJEF) is not ready. It is missing the major element of high intensity. Essentially defined as an expeditionary instrument, the CJEF must remain so, a French admiral started. Of course, in a very satisfactory manner, it has moved from the state of concept to that of force, but today – cf. *Exercise Griffin Strike* in April 2016 under British command - it is limited to low and medium intensity. At the risk of changing the nature of this projection element,



« *La CJEF est par essence un instrument expéditionnaire, et elle doit le rester* »

Vice-Amiral Eric Chaperon

it must be raised as quickly as possible to the next level. The main challenges to be taken up are clearly identified - the SICs (information and communication), intelligence and targeting. In this task, the manifestation of a clear political will is indispensable if we are to go beyond the stage of Franco-British interoperability already achieved, and ensure the consistency of proven operational postures. If France is able to boast a successful intervention in Mali, it is because the Serval

operation was based on a high-quality operational presence, materialised by a network of prepositioned forces, military assistance, and defence attachés.

The British military agree on the need to bring the CJEF to the expected expeditionary level. In the same way, they confirm that what has been accomplished so far is certainly very encouraging, but that the work is not finished. Military cooperation requires the whole of the spectrum to be covered, and the true value of the CJEF is appreciated at its operational level. The degree of ambition recorded in 2010 is not at the level of evacuation operations, but at that of crisis management, first in and high-intensity missions. At the current stage, and in the same vein as their French counterparts, they also consider that the credibility of the joint force is in play, in particular in the field of harmonisation of the *command and control* structures where there are clear deficiencies. For its part, the *Royal Air Force* added that the Franco-British alliance needs to be increased by the military partnership with the United States. Because two is not enough. Of course things have changed since Libya in 2011, when France and the United Kingdom entrusted the leadership of their military operations to the United States and NATO, due to their inability to proceed on their own. But six years later, the capacity constraints continue to be too significant. To be successful and honour the international objectives included in the SDSR, the CJEF must be able to rely on US commitment. The two air forces are not enough. The next trilateral exercise on the F35 in April 2017 will be a first. It must be the base for the years to come.

« *We need far more integration so that we deliver the strategy. One eye on what could be the real challenging threat is an absolute necessity* »

Air Vice Marshal Bruce Hedley

Twins at odds with each other

Further upstream, the question asked is which “capacities twins” are being referred to if France and the United Kingdom are not engaging joint forces? Acting together requires a level of unswerving joint political determination. And indeed, the CJEF cannot be taken for granted. The 2010 signatories are sometimes more competitors than partners, and mobilising a Franco-British entity to manage a crisis is a *tour de force* that they have not yet achieved. Of course, the momentum of exercises remains indispensable, and incomparable, but it will not be enough. The officers are thus clearly exhibiting their concern faced with the absence of a shared will to make use of military resources born from the Lancaster House rapprochement. The risk of fatigue or lassitude within the CJEF is real, they warn. The near future requires a decisive impetus to be given to the expeditionary force. The context is propitious for moving forward.

It is in the response of the policy makers to this warning that the line of divergence between London and Paris becomes clear. Both countries do not have the same attitude to the use of military force. For the British, the priority accorded to the benefits of a global strategic approach has never gone away. All the more so within an international environment described as extremely complex. The UK speakers were clear - the increase in non-state actors, climate change, cyber threats, population migrations, to name but a few, are all making things worse in a world rocked by militarised terrorism and extremist violence. The dangers have become much more acute and more diverse. The operational theatre itself is undergoing a fundamental change. Subject to new threats, it requires a military adjustment, in particular in respect of agility, with a radical change over time regarding the use of force. The nature of the fight has changed. And to win, we need to adapt.

Opening remarks that led straight to the main idea that has been developed for a number of years now in the United Kingdom - the primacy of capacity building when managing crises, with a wide range of policy and capacity resources appropriate to the ground.





Workshop "Defeating the evil together"

Here, the best method for defeating the danger remains prevention, which, in so far as is possible, delays the time of military intervention. Becoming involved very early before the break-out of a war and instilling developmental structuring elements, are priorities. The MOD addressed the French senior officials in the following terms - is it conceivable to increase Franco-British cooperation in the area of capacity building? Can we call upon the CJEF or other mechanisms for joint assistance or evacuation activities? How to allocate work? Why not extend what the two countries are already doing together in the Gulf of Guinea to protect international shipping and combat maritime crime? How can the rapprochement of the respective intelligence agencies be improved? In the area of policing, can the very high French ability to mobilise ten thousand men on French soil after the Bataclan attacks inspire the British and be adopted in the UK?

Behind these questions, the willingness of the UK to make use of the CJEF appears to be limited to extremely specific circumstances. There is no urgency to trigger the mechanism of an operational scenario, and wanting to force things in order to engage in joint actions is even dangerous. Two major points guide their argument - on the one hand, the essential lessons learned from Iraq (cf. the Chilcot report, July 2016) require that the "ground truth" be understood before any action is taken, at the risk of worsening any situation; moreover, when the objective to be achieved is not clearly predefined - as is the case today faced with the Islamic threat - public opinion is not disposed to follow. "Don't try to run before you can walk" a senior diplomat said again, in reference to the CJEF. The joint force needs to develop further first. It must not be sent into high intensity conflicts before it is ready.

"Is there not the risk then that the magnificent instrument that is the CJEF, like the EU Battle Groups, will never be used?" the French asked. These are pressing issues, they are not new but they have become more urgent - what level of operational engagement of the forces should be targeted going forward? Is a joint military intervention still conceivable? Is there a UK mechanism? Certainly for the DGRIS, although it is clear that the United Kingdom is not threatening to revert to a form of outdated isolationism, it is indispensable that it should remain engaged in international crises. And that it should demonstrate its willingness to act and to make use of military force. The Syrian episode of August 2013 weighs on the ability of the Franco-British force to engage, and France expects a lot from the implementation of the capacity decisions of the SDSR. The Quai d'Orsay also requested that the bilateral convergence should speak with a joint voice more often about a few major crises, and should become an operational reality. French and British forces must undertake joint operations. "We have a common culture of taking the necessary steps to deal with the risk of war" the CEMA said again in its opening speech. This is the challenge for the future.

« Maybe we should be thinking new, and not doubling down old solutions »

Peter Jones, FCO

Here and there

Is France alone?

The question is probably whether geography continues to divide the partners. Or is there a zone where their strategic interests would converge? By mutual agreement, they note the omnipresence of the threat - the danger is everywhere, and the field of vision needs therefore to be increased by being present on all fronts. The continued fight against Daesh, the surveillance of Russia, the tracking of the strategic directions of international policy in the

« Since the outcome of our referendum, we've not stepped back, we've stepped up »

Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP
Defence Secretary

Middle East, in Asia, in the South China Sea require the adoption of a 360 degree posture. The risk of war is from the North, South, West, East and Far East. However, even if London and Paris defend the principle of a concordant approach, each is tempted to look elsewhere.

Russia is the first subject of difference. Is it a threat or a risk? Both, in fact. As the window of observation does not open at the same angle depending on which side of the Channel you are located. For the UK, it is clear that the Russian manoeuvres are signalling a return of the State as power on the European continent. In the tradition of the strategic thought of the 19th century, President Putin's policy of aggression is seen as a means of reaching beyond borders by projecting its ascendancy. This is a very real threat, that needs to be taken seriously, and that requires a credible and unified response from the international community, in particular in the Balkans. For France, things are not so clear cut. More than a threat characterised with well-identified capacities and intentions, Russia represents more a potential danger, a risk at the Eastern edge of Europe. France is thus adopting an attitude of great vigilance in monitoring military movements. At the political level, it considers that, in the medium term, the election of Donald Trump in the United States will change nothing in so far as concerns the reality of fundamental divergence between the two former protagonists. Like Obama before him, like Bush before him, the attempt of the new President to define a renewed relationship with Moscow will be limited to the short term. How then should we respond to the Russian posture on Ukraine and Syria? On the one hand, by favouring a general security approach that aims to maintain a dialogue, in particular via the impact of the French, British and German diplomatic services. On the other hand, by activating the collective defence policy of NATO established in Warsaw in 2016, and which aims to strengthen deterrent measures. In this respect, French participation in a whole range of NATO operations is significant: the 2013 exercise Steadfast jazz to test the Nato Response Force (NRF), regular air policing missions, the 2017 British-led Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in Estonia.

In Africa, the divide is clearly more marked. It always has been. And it continues to be. French expectations have not changed. Africa is a neighbour. And it is also the major Franco-British subject of tomorrow. The Lancaster House partnership must be seen to be active on this continent in crisis, where the situation is not one that encourages optimism. And the joint assessment of the threat must be put into practice. The officers thus preach for joint action via a common prism. In the fight against terrorism, the added value of the CJEF is more immediately apparent in Africa they explain. Of course France and the UK at times have competing interests in this region of the world, their divergences regarding the role that the EU could cover threaten to increase following Brexit, but the Americans expect to see co-leadership in Africa in so far as concerns burden sharing. What is the response of the UK?

« The UK is not retreating within its borders »

Air Marshal Stuart Atha

British high representatives have provided a limpid report to explain the divergence of perception. Their approach is, here too, based around two fundamental axes. On the one hand, by considering that managing crises on the African continent imposes a form of complementarity between partners, they place geography at the centre of their reasoning. The histories of France and the United Kingdom in Africa are not the same, but there is room for both allies to play a role, provided that each country intervenes in the theatre that it knows best. The logical approach is that France should be involved in the West and the UK in the East. In the Sahel for example, French expertise is undeniable, so why get involved in the Barkhane operation? This is not the right way to optimise the Franco-British partnership. In reality, and this is the second part, the United Kingdom considers that it is able to contribute to the pacification of the Sahel by reducing the risks of terrorist contagion in Nigeria. Not via military intervention, but based on a mission of capacity building, with the full agreement of the host country. The aim therefore is to work closely with the government in



place, by training the Nigerian Army to develop and reinforce its resources in the fight against Boko Haram. It is, according to London, this type of approach that, when undertaken systematically, will be able to short circuit the scourge of terrorism. It is also the best way to support its partner's efforts. And, like the French who pointed out the importance of their commitment to NATO, the British officials highlight the political investment of the United Kingdom in crisis management in Africa - in South Sudan, Somalia, Kenya...

« We in the UK, we have not been good enough at explaining just how much we are doing in Africa »

Peter Watkins, MOD

Conclusion

What was said in 2016



Claire Chick

No turbulence, no final iteration, no solidarity disavowed after the Brexit referendum vote. The November 2016 defence conference started under challenging auspices, marked by the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. Europe, which was traditionally not prominent, suddenly found itself at the centre of the workshops. But the UK came to explain their position and convey a strong message, to put an end to the murmurings of the detractors of the Paris-London relationship. And leave no alternative to the successful continuation of an enterprise that they are keen to see expand.

Providing reassurance with regard to the referendum decision to leave the EU required a special effort in communication. At the invitation of their new ambassador, large numbers of delegates of the United Kingdom travelled to Paris to defend arguments which were above all aimed at bringing people together – the Defence Secretary (Michael Fallon spoke twice over the two days), the UK Minister for Defence Procurement, the very conservative chair of the Defence Committee of the House of Commons, senior military officers and key Whitehall civil servants, from the MOD, FCO and NSC. Everyone made sure they extolled the virtues of shielding the privileged space of the Franco-British defence relationship in such a way as to protect it from outside turbulence, in particular European. *Brexiters* themselves were referred to in a number of presentations to show that they were friends who mean well.

France did not conceal its concern. Its representatives crossed the Seine to display their determination to not dilute the fundamental principles of their defence partnership. Sometimes impatient when faced with the many variables – the British asked for indulgence, they pointed out that the Cameron government had campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU – they described their expectations in a spirit of openness instilled with prudence. Discussions related mainly to a Franco-British forecast included in the overall picture of Lancaster House, within a new Euro-Atlantic context that remains to be built. French elections (May 2017) were expected to be discussed at some of the round tables, but the debate in reality was overshadowed.

"Together" was the watchword of the UK which, by developments that included varying degrees of detail, pointed out the extent to which the outcome of the referendum in no way impacts a defence agreement agreed independently of any membership of the EU. A sort of hymn to bilateral relations was the order of the day. There has been no negative effect on the bilateral relationship which, like the new Ginkgo Biloba tree planted on the Balard site, is taking root in the future. Franco-British cooperation must continue to create an ever closer rapprochement, where each takes inspiration from his neighbour's model, and where the expertise of one must serve the other. In the fight against terrorism, the analysis of the threat, the sharing of intelligence, the pre-positioning of units, the building of capabilities.... Cyber security is also, and increasingly, penetrating the circle of interchangeable competences.

It is in the industrial sector that the exemplarity of the cooperation has been evident. In a turbulent European environment, the French and British governments have succeeded in completing a long process of evolution.



Signing the intergovernmental agreement on missiles is anything but a formality. In keeping with what was agreed at the Amiens summit of 2016, it puts an end to the concerns raised in 2015 on the risk that the project of mutual dependence may lose momentum, and introduces an unprecedented level of reciprocity, in the domain of sovereignty. Significant on the political level, it marks a commitment over time that adheres to the principles set forth in the 2010 treaties, and emphasizes the ability of the signatories to share. Regarding the form, with the creation of the centres of excellence, regarding the substance, with the renewal of Scalp/Storm shadow. The progress made in industrial integration is decisive as, in reference to the Lancaster House principles, the two neighbours will engage in “pooling” so as not to “lose”.

What needs to be done in 2017

2017 will probably be a year of vigilance. As it will be necessary to provide answers to the major uncertainties of 2016. And monitor subjects which are expected to provide, if not results, at least progress. Thus, for example, will the European defence be able to make a place for the United Kingdom? The talks around this issue will undoubtedly test the resistance of the partnership in its ability to move forward. They will perhaps enable initial clarification of European defence, where France would envisage triggering a multi-speed model, and where the United Kingdom would make a commitment to “customised” solidarity. It is also based on this new point of balance that the EU-NATO relationship could evolve, provided it is able to assess the aims of US foreign policy.

Having the capability to deal with military risks could be the second major dossier. Is it an objective? Exercise Griffin Strike of April 2016 marked a stage that requires pushing further ahead in the area of joint strategic reflection. What to do with the CJEF? What do we want to accomplish? After six years of successful exercises, the time to go back to the texts has perhaps come in order to know what the treaties of 2010 say and what their intention is. Are France and the United Kingdom moving towards high intensity/first in missions, or towards evacuation operations? Are they still following the Lancaster House road map or are they scaling down their future military interoperability? The effort by the UK to provide clarification on the way in which it wants to intervene in Africa has advanced the debate started in 2013, but requires a position to be taken on a narrow tightrope between a policy of capacity building and a desire to make use of military force. While waiting to get a clearer view, if the keyword for the UK in 2016 was “Together”, we must probably expect that of the French in 2017 to be “Leave”. Unless the next President in France decides otherwise.

Claire Chick, March 2017



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