



## Franco-British Defence Co-operation

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The UK and France agreed a series of measures intended to enhance defence co-operation between both country's armed forces, including the signing of two new defence treaties, at the latest bilateral summit on 2 November 2010. The treaties have been labelled by a number of analysts as 'historic', in particular for the implications of co-operation in the nuclear sphere.

This note provides a brief summary of historical UK-French defence co-operation, the main elements of the two new defence co-operation treaties and some initial reactions to the proposals that have been set out.

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## 1 Historical Co-operation

Defence co-operation between the UK and France is a longstanding concept, arguably dating back to the ‘entente cordiale’ of 1904 which provided the backdrop for closer political co-operation, and even, some would argue, beyond that to the Crimean War in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> However, its history is mixed. Co-operation has often arisen out of political necessity (often the result of a direct military threat) or a convergence of national interests which have been relatively short-lived. The success of Franco-British defence co-operation throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is, therefore, the subject of much debate.

The *Encyclopaedia of World History* (2001) notes an early example of Anglo-French defence cooperation in its entry for 10 January 1906:

Beginning of Anglo-French military and naval conversations, which had been unofficially initiated in December. The new Liberal government (Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary since Dec. 1905) refused to promise support to France in the event of German attack, but agreed to nonbinding discussions of the modalities of cooperation in case such cooperation should be decided on. Creation of the “moral obligation” of Britain to France. The cabinet as a whole was not informed of these conversations until 1911.

A book edited by Martin S. Alexander and William J. Philpott called *Anglo-French Defence Relations between the Wars* concludes that defence cooperation between the two countries in the inter-war period was fraught with rivalry, suspicion (largely due to the UK’s American interests) and disagreement on both sides. Another book, *Franco-British Defence Co-operation: A New Entente Cordiale?* Edited by Y. Boyer, P. Lellouche and J. Roper 1989, argued that it was time for the two countries to “give up their long-standing attitude of mutual indifference or even rivalry, and to recognize openly the similarities and natural affinities that exist between them”.

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent summary of Anglo-French relations during this period is available in an article written for RUSI by Professor Andrew Lambert, “The Anglo-French Crimean War Coalition, 1854-1856”: <http://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C4B9F6D33553C3/>

Winston Churchill went to France in 1938 to advocate an Anglo-French alliance, in order to counter the threat of Nazism, and his efforts were, according to most accounts, welcomed by the French. In June 1940 the British Government announced an Anglo-French Union, stating in Parliament:

At this most fateful moment in the history of the modern world the Governments of the United Kingdom and the French Republic make this declaration of indissoluble union and unyielding resolution in their common defence of justice and freedom, against subjection to a system which reduces mankind to a life of robots and slaves.

The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two nations but one Franco-British Union. The constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign, financial, and economic policies. Every citizen of France will enjoy immediately citizenship of Great Britain, every British subject will become a citizen of France.

Both countries will share responsibility for the repair the devastation of war, wherever it occurs in their territories, and the resources of both shall be equally, and as one, applied to that purpose.

During the war there shall be a single war Cabinet, and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea, or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated.

The nations of the British Empire are already forming new armies. France will keep her available forces in the field, on the sea, and in the air.

The Union appeals to the United States to fortify the economic resources of the Allies and to bring her powerful material aid to the common cause.

The Union will concentrate its whole energy against the power of the enemy no matter where the battle may be. And thus we shall conquer.<sup>2</sup>

During the two World Wars there were also various occasions on which Anglo-French forces conducted joint operations, for example, in Gallipoli in 1915 and Dakar, Senegal, in 1940.

In the post-world war two period, the first treaty of alliance and mutual assistance between European countries was the treaty signed between the UK and France at Dunkirk on 4 March 1947.<sup>3</sup> However, by 1950 some kind of transatlantic security structure seemed necessary in order to safeguard Western Europe against the Soviet Union. The death of Stalin led to a revival of Anglo-French cooperation and to the Brussels Pact of 17 March 1948,<sup>4</sup> which later became the Western European Union (WEU). The Brussels Pact, which was the first post-war European intergovernmental organisation and involved the UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. They agreed to establish a common defence system and to consult on economic and cultural matters. However, the British Government in particular was reluctant to cede authority to a supranational body and the organisation was based on cooperation rather than formal integration. NATO, which included the US and Canada, took over as the main military alliance in 1949 and due to the security needs of the Cold War, rendered bilateral co-operation between the UK and France largely unnecessary. One of the

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<sup>2</sup> HC Deb 16 June 1940 cc701-2

<sup>3</sup> *Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance between His Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the President of the French republic*, Cm 8217, 1946-47. Ratified and came into force 8 September 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Its full title was the "Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence". The text can be accessed at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b480317a.htm>

few exceptions was the ill-fated Anglo-French forces campaign to take the Suez Canal (Operation *Musketeer*) in 1956, which represented the closest military collaboration between both countries since World War Two. In 1976 the UK and France also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the *Placing of Services and Facilities of the Government of the French Republic at the Disposal of British Forces* in times of crisis.<sup>5</sup>

The end of the Cold War changed the strategic environment considerably and opened up new opportunities for defence co-operation, particularly within the context of the EU. Many European countries were eager to reap the “peace dividend” that the fall of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact brought about, and many saw greater co-operation as a key element of achieving savings. In contrast, the US was keen to see its European allies take on a greater share of the defence burden which thus far had largely been provided through NATO. Joint allied operations in the Gulf in 1991 and in the Balkans throughout the 1990s also emphasised the need for greater co-operation, both at the political and at the practical level.

In 1992 the Anglo-French Joint Nuclear Commission was established as the main forum for strategic co-operation between both countries in the nuclear sphere. Between 1995 and 1997 the UK and France also signed a series of Letters of Intent outlining areas of potential co-operation between each of the three services of their respective Armed Forces. In 1995 the UK and France formally established the Franco-British Euro Air Group. This group has since been expanded into the European Air Group, involving 7 European states,<sup>6</sup> and provides a framework for co-operation across a range of air issues such as air defence training and reciprocal air support.<sup>7</sup> An LOI on maritime defence was signed in 1996 which covered a range of joint activities, including operations, and the establishment of 20 working groups to examine issues such as aircraft carrier development, amphibious operations, operational doctrine and personnel exchanges. In 1997 a further LOI concerning co-operation between the British and French armies was established.<sup>8</sup> In 1996 the Franco-British Joint Commission on Peacekeeping was also established as a means of harmonising procedures and doctrine for peacekeeping and to develop a better understanding of each country’s approach. In the latter half of the 1990s French and British forces also co-operated in a number of operations including the ongoing in the Balkans, the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998, the policing of the Iraqi No Fly Zones, East Timor in 1999 and in various UN peacekeeping operations.

At the EU level, little progress toward achieving broader defence co-operation was made throughout this period. This was largely due to the intergovernmental nature of decision making inherent in the EU’s common foreign and security policy and the divergence of overarching national interests, in particular among the EU’s three main military actors. While the UK maintained a largely pro-Atlanticist stance, viewing the development of a European foreign and defence capability as an essential means of strengthening the NATO alliance, France and Germany were pro-Europeanist and strongly advocated the establishment of an independent EU military identity.

However, after years of inaction at the multilateral level, the Franco-British summit at St Malo in 1998 arguably took defence co-operation one step further, as agreement was reached that

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in 1997 an exchange of letters between France and the UK allowed for the British use of facilities in Gabon in preparation for a potential non-combatant evacuation operation from Kinshasa.

<sup>6</sup> UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands.

<sup>7</sup> Further information is available at: <http://www.euroairgroup.org/>

<sup>8</sup> Further information on each of these LOI is available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.mod.uk/issues/cooperation/uk\\_french.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.mod.uk/issues/cooperation/uk_french.htm)

would make the development of a coherent EU military capability a central theme of future co-operation. It provided the springboard for subsequent initiatives put forward at the European Council Summits in Cologne and Helsinki in 1999 that saw the establishment, among other things, of the Helsinki Headline Goal and the EU Rapid Reaction Force.<sup>9</sup>

At the Le Touquet summit in 2003 further measures to improve defence co-operation, both on a bilateral basis and at the EU level were agreed between France and the UK. Of note was the joint UK-French proposal for the EU to assume responsibility for the NATO-led stabilisation mission in Bosnia, a proposal to establish an “inter-governmental defence capabilities development and acquisition agency” (which subsequently became the European Defence Agency) and to collaborate more effectively on aircraft carriers. That summit declaration stated:

Our two countries, who already have substantial capabilities in this area, have decided to procure new aircraft carriers and to improve the availability and effectiveness of our carrier groups.

In this context, France and the United Kingdom wish to develop interoperability of their aircraft carrier groups, pursuing all areas of co-operation, in particular harmonising activity cycles and training. The objective will be to have one aircraft carrier permanently available.

France and the United Kingdom will also seek to develop industrial co-operation on the basis of their aircraft carrier procurement programmes.<sup>10</sup>

However, in agreeing to the St Malo initiatives, and indeed subsequent developments in European defence such as the creation of the European Defence Agency, the UK has remained consistently pro-Atlanticist, arguing that such measures have been essential as a means of shoring up the European pillar of NATO and that the Atlantic Alliance remains the cornerstone of UK security policy. Such a position has frequently led to disagreements between France and the UK, one of the most notable being British opposition to the French-led proposal in 2003 to create an EU military planning cell independent of the NATO framework. In August 2003 the UK subsequently circulated a paper entitled *Food for Thought* to all EU Member and Acceding States. Along with proposals on structured co-operation and mutual defence, the paper presented an alternative to the “Tervuren proposal” and one that would place any EU planning capability firmly within the NATO framework.<sup>11</sup> The paper’s support for EU planning within NATO was interpreted by many as a firm indication of UK opposition to the Tervuren plans, a position supported by several EU Member States including Spain, Italy and Poland. However, it was also regarded by others as an acceptance by the UK of the need to be involved in this debate in order to shape any potential outcome and as such, was the first step towards a compromise.<sup>12</sup> In December 2004 the relative success of the push toward establishing a more coherent EU military capability was

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<sup>9</sup> More detailed information on the development of ESDP from St Malo to the present day is available in the following library research papers RP 00/20, *European Defence: From Pörtlach to Helsinki*, 21 February 2000; RP 00/84, *Common European Security and Defence Policy: A Progress Report*, 31 October 2000; RP 01/50, *European Security and Defence Policy: Nice and Beyond*, 2 May 2001 and RP 06/32, *European Security and Defence Policy: Developments since 2003*, 8 June 2006

<sup>10</sup> *Declaration on Strengthening European Co-operation in Security and Defence*, 4 February 2003

<sup>11</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *European Security and Defence Policy: Food for Thought*, 29 August 2003

<sup>12</sup> This issue is examined in greater detail in Library Research Paper RP06/32, *European Security and Defence Policy: Developments since 2003*, 8 June 2006

demonstrated when the EU took over command responsibility for operations in Bosnia under Operation *Althea*, a proposal first put forward at Le Touquet.

From an equipment perspective, collaboration between France and the UK has also been extensive from the Jaguar fast jet aircraft, to the Lynx, Gazelle and Puma helicopters, to more recent programmes such as the PAAMs surface-to-air missile system for the Type 45, the Meteor Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile which will equip the Typhoon and the A400M transport aircraft. In 2000 an updated MOU on Co-operative Defence research and Technology was signed between the UK and France and included proposals for co-operation on a wide range of technologies, including advanced ship propulsion systems, jet engines and airborne radar, and armoured fighting vehicles. In 2000 the UK and France, along with Sweden, Spain, Germany and Italy also signed an LOI Framework Agreement on Defence Industrial Restructuring. However, equipment collaboration has not always been successful. Historically, multilateral procurement programmes have proven complex, costly and in some cases, have ultimately been abandoned in favour of a national approach. The Type 45 destroyer, for example, was developed as a UK only programme after the UK withdrew from the French-Italian-British Horizon project in 1999 largely as a result of disagreement over requirements and work-share. The UK also withdrew from the Trigat MR anti-tank missile programme in 2000 and the Multi-Role Armoured Vehicle (MRAV) programme, initially a Franco-British-German project, in 2003 in order to pursue a national solution.

Following on from the framework of Le Touquet, in 2006 the UK and France reached an agreement on co-operation for future aircraft carrier design. In 2006 then British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and then President Jacques Chirac, also agreed to establish a High Level Bilateral Working Group that would examine ways to build upon and enhance existing co-operation in armaments programmes. With respect to the A400M transport aircraft programme, in 2008 the Franco-British summit agreement also outlined the intention of both country's to pursue "a common approach to in service support for interoperability and through life cycle costs optimisation, including common configuration management with other A400M nations; our aim is to cover the requirements of both France and the UK in a single joint contract". That summit agreement also outlined the intention to establish a joint helicopter trust fund that would improve the availability of helicopters for operations, the intention to pursue a joint industrial strategy for complex weapons and a proposal to establish European carrier group interoperability.<sup>13</sup> In 2008 France also rejoined the NATO integrated military command structure, thereby paving the way for closer defence co-operation with both the UK and the US.<sup>14</sup> The Franco-British summit in 2009 sought to take these initiatives further while also setting out proposals for co-operation on next generation military communications satellites and unmanned air vehicle technologies

In 2010, the UK and France have the two largest defence budgets in Europe<sup>15</sup> and two of the largest militaries in terms of manpower. France has approximately 353,000 personnel in the Armed Forces; while the UK has 175,000, only exceeded by Germany with 251,000 and Italy with 293,000 personnel.<sup>16</sup> Both countries possess similar military assets and have similar requirements. French and British forces are currently operating together in Afghanistan and

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<sup>13</sup> *Joint UK-France Summit Declaration, 27 March 2008*. The European carrier Group Interoperability initiative was subsequently signed in November 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Charles de Gaulle had previously taken France out of the IMCS in 1966.

<sup>15</sup> The French defence budget is €32.1bn in 2010; while the UK defence budget is £32.9bn in 2010 (IISS, *Military Balance 2010* and HM Treasury, *Spending Review 2010*, Cm 7942)

<sup>16</sup> Within the NATO alliance, the manpower strength of the French and British armed forces are also exceeded by Turkey which has 511,000 personnel, although the majority of those personnel are conscripts.

as part of anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia. As permanent members of the UN Security Council, NATO and EU allies, members of the G8 and nuclear weapon states, it is also widely recognised that the defence and security interests of the UK and France are broadly similar, although their relative positions on European integration more generally have differed over the years. Indeed, as outlined above, France and the UK have been viewed in the past as the main driver behind the development of a European defence capability, albeit only when there has been a convergence of political will on this issue.

In short, both countries have a long history of defence co-operation and are viewed as natural partners. In light of the current financial constraints faced by both countries respective defence budgets<sup>17</sup> enhanced co-operation, specifically in relation to capabilities and procurement, has therefore been hotly debated.

## 2 Strategic Defence and Security Review

In February 2010 the then Labour Government published a Green Paper which set out the thinking that was intended to shape any subsequent defence review. Alongside the United States, that paper identified France as “a potential first partner of choice” suggesting that the return of France to NATO’s integrated military command structures offered an opportunity for even greater co-operation with a key partner across a range of defence activity; while stronger European defence co-operation offered many opportunities.<sup>18</sup> In his statement to the House the then Secretary of State for Defence sought to reiterate however that “this is not about Europe taking precedence over the US or vice versa. The two are mutually reinforcing relationships. We strengthen our alliance with the US if we strengthen our position in Europe”.<sup>19</sup>

That position was also supported by Liam Fox when Shadow Defence Secretary. In his response to the Statement in the House on 3 February 2010, Dr Fox commented:

We agree that France and the United States are likely to be our main strategic partners. For us there are two tests: do they invest in defence, and do they fight? Sadly, too few European allies pass both these tests.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed the Liberal Democrats made “Reinvigorat[ing] Franco-British and wider European defence co-operation to ensure procurement costs are kept low” a commitment in their 2010 election manifesto.

Throughout the five months prior to the publication of the SDSR the Coalition Government consistently sought to reiterate the importance of alliances and partnerships, and the UK’s relationship with France in particular.<sup>20</sup> Therefore it came as no surprise to observers that

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<sup>17</sup> The French defence budget is expected to be maintained at relatively the same levels over the next three years, although this falls short of the proposals in the 2009-2014 spending plan which provided for a 1% budget increase in 2012-13. Defense ministry officials have indicated that several equipment programmes will be put on hold, including a decision on procuring a second aircraft carrier which has now been deferred to 2012 (“France rules out cuts to defence budget”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 14 July 2010)

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Adaptability and Partnership: Issues for the Strategic Defence Review*, Cm7794, Session 2009-2010

<sup>19</sup> HC Deb 3 February 2010, c304

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, [Speech by the Secretary of State for Defence to the Royal United Services Institute](#), 14 June 2010 and [Speech by the Secretary of State for Defence to the Farnborough International Airshow](#), 20 July 2010

one of the overarching principles of the SDSR was the need to cultivate more effective, and practical, alliances and partnerships.

From a military perspective, the SDSR stated that new models of practical bilateral co-operation would subsequently focus on those countries with a similar defence and security posture to that of the UK or those allies with whom the UK co-operates in multinational operations. Importantly, and a theme of the SDSR which many have argued is a direct implication of budget and capability cuts, the review set out the commitment of the UK to seek legally binding mutual guarantees with allied nations if “in the context of multilateral operations, we agree with other nations that we will rely on them to provide particular capabilities or conduct particular military roles or missions, and they will likewise rely on us...”.<sup>21</sup> The feasibility of losing carrier strike capability for the next ten years, and the likelihood of operating only one aircraft carrier beyond 2020, is largely premised on this idea.

The review also outlines the intention of the UK to seek strengthened relationships with those nations with whom the UK “can share capabilities, technologies and programmes, ensuring that collective resources can go further” either through bilateral equipment collaboration or off-the-shelf purchases. The UK’s relationship with the US but also increasingly with France, is considered essential to this aim. The SDSR firmly stated that the UK will intensify its security and defence relationship with France, and “where possible, develop future military capabilities in complementary, cost effective ways”.

### **3 UK-France Summit 2010**

The latest UK-France summit was held on 2 November 2010, with enhanced defence co-operation between the two allies widely publicised as the main topic on the agenda.

In light of the comments made by Government as part of the SDSR process on closer co-operation with allies, and in particular France, it was widely expected that the Summit would agree various measures on armed forces interoperability, joint procurement programmes, shared logistics and support and greater industrial co-operation.

Announcing the outcome of the Summit discussions, Downing Street stated:

This summit marks a deepening of the UK-France bilateral relationship. Ours is now a strategic partnership tackling together the biggest challenges facing our two countries.

Working together with France on defence makes good, practical sense. This is about two sovereign countries working together, based on a hard-headed assessment of what is in Britain’s national interest.<sup>22</sup>

The programme for defence co-operation will now be taken forward through an overarching defence co-operation treaty, a subordinate treaty relating to joint nuclear facilities, a Letter of Intent signed by the Defence Ministers and a package of joint defence initiatives. During urgent questions in the House following the treaty announcement, the Secretary of State, Liam Fox, also sought to emphasise that:

This is not about increasing the defence capabilities of the European Union. I repeat – this is about two sovereign nations, which between them spend 50% of all the defence

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<sup>21</sup> HM Government, *Strategic Defence and Security Review*, Cm 7948, October 2010, p.59

<sup>22</sup> Downing Street press release, 2 November 2010



spending of the NATO members in Europe, and 65% of the research spending. It makes a great deal of sense for us to co-operate, but it is absolutely clear that this is about two sovereign nations that are willing to co-operate when it is in their mutual interest to do so, but keep their ability to act separately when their national interests require it.<sup>23</sup>

Both treaties agreed at the summit have been labelled as ‘historic’ and ‘unprecedented’ in the level of military co-operation that they envisage, in particular in the nuclear sphere.

### 3.1 Defence and Security Co-operation Treaty

As expected, the aim of the Defence & Security Co-operation Treaty is to establish the parameters for “co-operation between [British and French] armed forces, the sharing and pooling of materials and equipment including through mutual interdependence, the building of joint facilities, mutual access to each other’s defence markets and industrial and technological co-operation”.<sup>24</sup>

The treaty itself establishes the **overall** framework through which defence co-operation will be taken forward. Specific details fall within the scope of the Letter of Intent and the package of joint initiatives (see below). The main points of the treaty are summarised as follows:

- Among the aims of the treaty (**article 1**) are to:
  - Maximise capacity through co-ordinating development, acquisition, deployment and maintenance of a range of capabilities, facilities, equipment, materials and services, to perform missions across the full spectrum of operations.
  - Deploy together into theatres in which both Parties have agreed to engage, in operations conducted under the auspices of the UN, NATO, EU or in a coalition or bilateral framework.

Support will be provided, as agreed on a case by case basis, to one Party when it is engaged on operations in which the other Party is not. The treaty makes it clear, however, that the control of each country’s Armed Forces, the decision to employ them and the use of force shall always remain a matter of national sovereignty (**preamble and article 5**).

Therefore, were the UK to engage in unilateral action or in a Coalition of the willing in which France was not participating, support to UK operations would only be provided by France if it determined that it was in its interests to do so, and vice versa.

- Co-operation undertaken under the provisions of this treaty shall include (**article 2**):
  - Strengthening co-operation, as defined in a joint Letter of Intent, through the conduct of joint exercises and other training activities; joint work on military doctrine and exchange of military personnel; sharing and pooling of materials, equipment and services; and subject to provisions on the deployment of forces under article 5, through contributing to and pooling forces and capabilities for military operations and employment of forces.

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<sup>23</sup> HC Deb 2 November 2010, c787

<sup>24</sup> UK-France Summit 2010 Declaration on Defence and Security Co-operation, 2 November 2010

- Enhancing the work of the UK-France High Level Working Group on industrial and armament cooperation.
  - The building and joint operating of such facilities as may be agreed between the Parties.
  - The sale or loan of materials, equipment and services by one Party to the other, or the joint procurement by both Parties from a third party.
  - The development of centres of excellence around key technologies on the territory of both Parties in order to establish greater interdependence.
  - The attachment or exchange of personnel.
  - The exchange of information relating to the political, policy, planning and decision-making processes involved in the planning, launching and command and control of bilateral, multilateral and civil-military operations.
  - Subject to national security regulations, the exchange of classified data and information relating to the performance of defence equipment and systems, as well as for operational purposes.
- Parties may enter into written agreements or arrangements to implement specific aspects of co-operation under the treaty (**article 3**).
  - Progress will be assessed, and guidance for the development of co-operation taken, at the annual Franco-British summit (**article 4**).

A Senior Level Group will be established to direct, co-ordinate and oversee co-operation undertaken under the provisions of the treaty. The group will consist of national delegations and take decisions by consensus. That group will report at the next Franco-British summit to be held in France in 2011.

- The deployment of the Armed Forces of each Party shall remain a national responsibility at all times. The deployment or employment of the armed forces of one Party together with, or on behalf of, the other Party shall be by written agreement. The Parties shall agree strategic objectives, scale, mission, duration and end state, and form, in advance of deployment a common understanding of purpose and basis under international law and appropriate and complementary rules of engagement. Appropriate command and control arrangements will be agreed by both Parties for all bilateral deployments or operations (**article 5**).
- Each Party undertakes to make available and guarantee unhindered access to any facility, equipment or support function where co-operation under the treaty has either led to the sharing of those assets or the dependence of one Party on the other. These arrangements are, however, subject to any exceptions set out in any applicable agreement or arrangements relating to such co-operation. The substantive provisions of any arrangements must be honoured where a decision is taken to terminate any agreement or arrangement, until the other Party has generated, established or obtained access to alternatives (**article 6**).
- At the earliest possible date both Parties will compare capability objectives and prospective programmes, and where possible harmonise timelines and requirements.

Both parties will consult before taking any decision on significant capability programmes or procurement (**article 7**).

- Within the context of export licensing laws, and any obligations under the EU,<sup>25</sup> both Parties will undertake to facilitate the transfer of defence and security equipment and services between the Parties. Each Party also undertakes not to hinder legitimate access to its defence and security markets and contracts (**article 8**).
- Both Parties undertake to develop and preserve key industrial capabilities and technologies so as to improve independence, increase security of supply and to develop military capabilities. Both Parties will work to enable the purchase of equipment best suited to the performance and cost requirements of both Parties (**article 9**).
- All costs associated with co-operation undertaken as a result of this treaty will be shared equitably, unless otherwise provided for in any related agreement or arrangement (**article 10**).
- Nothing in the treaty governs the release, use, exchange or disclosure of information, classified or otherwise, in which intellectual property rights exist unless written authorisation of the owner of those rights has been obtained (**article 11**).
- The treaty will remain in force indefinitely unless either Party decides to withdraw, providing at least twelve months notice (**article 14**).

#### ***Letter of Intent and Package of Joint Measures***

Within the scope of the defence and security co-operation treaty a separate Letter of Intent will create a new framework for specific co-operation between each country's Armed Forces on operational matters.

The package of joint measures that have been agreed is as follows:

- The development of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force as a non-standing (ie. not permanent) bilateral capability able to carry out a range of operations either bilaterally or through NATO, the EU or other coalition arrangements. It will involve all three Services: a land component comprised of formations at national brigade level, maritime and air components with associated HQ and logistics and support functions. Work will begin with combined air and land exercises in 2011 and work towards achieving full capability in subsequent years.
- Building primarily on initial maritime task group co-operation around the French carrier, *Charles de Gaulle*, the UK and France will aim to have the ability, by the early 2020s, to deploy a UK-French integrated carrier strike group incorporating assets from both countries. There will be co-ordination of aircraft carriers to ensure that there is always a British or French vessel available for joint operations.
- A common support plan for the A400M transport aircraft will be developed. This is expected to reduce costs, improve spares availability and open the way for further co-operation in maintenance, logistics and training for deployed and home-based operations. A bilateral Joint User Group to facilitate co-operation on the development

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<sup>25</sup> For example Article 346 of the *Treaty on European Union* on defence procurement.

of A400M training will be established. That group will explore operating techniques and procedures as well as exploring opportunities for synthetic and live training.

- Plans to jointly develop some of the equipment and technologies for the next generation of nuclear submarines will be launched in 2011. It is expected that co-operation will help to sustain and rationalise the UK/French industrial bases and generate savings through the sharing of development activities, procurement methods and technical expertise.
- The UK and France will align elements of mine countermeasures equipments and systems. A common project team will be established in 2011 to agree specifications for a prototype mine countermeasures system.
- Both countries will assess the potential for co-operation on future military satellite communications, with a view to reducing overall costs while preserving national sovereignty. A joint concept study will be completed in 2011, with a view to the next satellites entering service between 2018 and 2022.
- The potential to use spare capacity that may be available in the UK's Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) programme to meet France's requirement for air to air refuelling and military air transport is being investigated.
- France and UK will work together on the next generation on medium-altitude, long endurance unmanned air surveillance systems. A jointly funded, competitive assessment phase will be launched in 2011, with a view to the delivery of new platforms between 2015 and 2020.

In the longer term both countries will also assess requirements and options for the next generation of unmanned combat air systems from 2030 onwards. Over the next two years a joint technological and industrial roadmap will be developed under the auspices of the High Level Working Group. This could potentially lead to a decision in 2012 to launch a joint Technology and Operational Demonstration programme from 2013 to 2018.

- A 10-year strategic plan for the British and French complex weapons sector has been agreed. Under that agreement both countries will work towards a single European prime contractor and the achievement of efficiency savings of up to 30%. A series of complex weapons programmes will be launched in 2011. Co-operation in this industrial sector is expected to serve as a test case for initiatives in others.
- Research and technology co-operation will be continued with an annual budget of €50m each devoted to shared research and development. That joint work will focus on 10 priority areas including research support to those capabilities identified above. It will also include new areas such as sensors, electronic warfare technologies, materials and simulation.
- A framework governing enhanced co-operation in the field of cyber security has been agreed. Co-operation will also be enhanced in: early detection of terrorist activities and terrorist recruitment; the sharing of information on changes in the national threat level; the prevention of CBRN terrorism; the protection of populations and critical infrastructure; the security of commercial aviation and support for countries outside of Europe to develop their own counter-terrorism capacity.

### 3.2 Nuclear Treaty

A separate treaty has also been signed that will facilitate collaboration in the technologies associated with stewardship of both countries nuclear stockpiles. To that end, the treaty establishes the following provisions:

- Co-operation, including the exchange of relevant classified information, will focus on the following areas: safety and security of nuclear weapons, stockpile certification, counter nuclear or radiological terrorism.

As a result both Parties will jointly build and operate a dedicated radiographic and hydrodynamics facility at Valduc in France and will co-operate in a joint radiography and diagnostics technology programme in a joint facility (Technology Development Centre) at AWE Aldermaston in the UK. The output of this joint facility shall comprise development work to underpin the technologies used in the French facility throughout its operational life (**article 1**). The TDC facility will be designed, constructed and commissioned by 2014; while the French facility will be built and commissioned in two stages in 2014 and 2016 (**article 4**).

- Either Party will be able to conduct independent hydrodynamics trials needed for its national programmes at the facility in France.

Joint use of the facilities will not imply that all the work conducted by the Parties shall be shared.

The technical, financial, security and administrative arrangements for both joint facilities will be set out in separate and appropriately classified agreements which will be finalised no later than 31 March 2011 (**article 2**).

- The French Directeur des Applications Militaires (DAM) and the UK's Chief Scientific Adviser will meet at least once a year to review the implementation and effectiveness of these arrangements and approve the future direction. They will also report progress to the Senior Level Group established under the defence and security co-operation treaty (**article 3**).
- The French facility shall comprise separate areas for solely national (manned by either UK or French personnel only) and joint use; whereas the TDC will comprise shared areas within a shared facility. Both Parties will have guaranteed and unhindered access to both facilities for 50 years or until such time as mutually agreed by both Parties (**article 5**).
- The UK will meet the costs related to the design, construction, operation, maintenance, decommissioning and dismantlement of the TDC; while France will meet the costs of phase 1 of the French facility. After 1 January 2015, with the exception of work being undertaken solely in support of national programmes the Parties will share all costs and benefits as a result of their participation in the joint programme equitably (**article 6**).
- Waste from trials and experiments at either facility will remain the property and responsibility of the originating state (**article 10**).

- Nothing in the treaty governs the release, use, exchange or disclosure of information, classified or otherwise, in which intellectual property rights exist unless written authorisation of the owner of those rights has been obtained (**article 12**).
- The treaty will remain in force for the entire life cycle of the facilities, including in-service upgrades, which is expected to be 50 years, or until such time as mutually agreed by both Parties. Following receipt of final investment approvals to proceed with phase 2 of the French facility, 10 year notice of withdrawal may be given by either Party. Where the obligations under this treaty may conflict with future treaty obligations which may arise, either Party may withdraw with one year's notice (**article 17 and 18**). If France withdraws from the French facility within the first 25 years of the treaty coming into force, the UK may recover the full cost of UK capital investment in the facility. Reciprocal arrangement shall apply in the event of the UK's withdrawal from the TDC (**article 18**).

## 4 Reactions

Franco-British defence co-operation, particularly in the field of capabilities development, is well established and many of the measures set out in the recent agreements can be regarded as reiterations of already established areas of co-operation or a natural progression of this agenda, building on the initiatives put forward during the bilateral summits in 2008 and 2009. Indeed the seeds of many proposals, including those on the A400M, UAV collaboration and aircraft carriers, were sown at those previous summit meetings.

On that basis, the recent announcements on defence co-operation have largely been met with support and little surprise. Responding to the announcement on the signing of the two treaties, Shadow Defence Secretary, Jim Murphy, expressed support for the move:

Most of us on both sides of the House support and welcome in principle further steps to improve what is already a very strong relationship. That approach makes sense for two strategic reasons. First, the UK and France face many common threats across the world, including global terrorism, cyber-security and piracy on the high seas. Secondly, as the Secretary of State has mentioned, the UK and France have unique capacities. They are the two largest investors in defence capability in Europe and among the highest in the world, significant players in the EU and the only two EU member states with permanent seats at the UN, as well as our independent nuclear deterrent.<sup>26</sup>

Analysts have questioned whether a long term partnership can really be achieved, however, particularly with respect to sharing assets, given that, as history has demonstrated, enhanced co-operation only lasts so long as the political will to push this agenda forward exists. Jim Murphy raised this concern in the House:

We hope and expect that the UK and France will increasingly find common cause, but there is no guarantee that that will be the case in all circumstances over the next 50 years. Reflection on even the past few years shows that this was not the case on the Falklands, Desert Fox in 1998, Sierra Leone and of course the Iraq war.<sup>27</sup>

Bernard Jenkin also picked up on this point during questions in the House, expressing the view that “we cannot have a strategic fusion with a country that has historically had, and still

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<sup>26</sup> HC Deb 2 November 2010, c781

<sup>27</sup> HC Deb 2 November 2010, c782

has, diametrically different strategic objectives on the world stage...”.<sup>28</sup> Commentators have pointed to the differing French position in the Falklands, Bosnia in 1994,<sup>29</sup> French opposition to the military campaign in Iraq in 2003 and the use of the French veto on military targets during the campaign in Kosovo in 1999<sup>30</sup> as evidence of such differences, therefore raising questions over the elements of the defence co-operation treaty which envisage the provision of operational support. The willingness of the French, as the sole provider of a carrier strike capability over the next ten years,<sup>31</sup> to involve themselves in any potential campaign to defend the Falkland Islands during that period has been met with scepticism. As an editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* on 3 February 2010 suggested “while such co-operation [with France] is clearly desirable, France’s selfish refusal to pull its weight in Afghanistan suggests such a partnership may be rather one-sided”.<sup>32</sup>

The majority of analysts have argued however, that the extent of defence co-operation over the last 100 years would point to a more optimistic outlook for closer UK-French defence collaboration going forward. Indeed it has been widely acknowledged that closer co-operation is practical if both countries are to fulfil their global aims. Benoît Gomis, writing in *The World Today*, has suggested that given the unwillingness of both countries to reduce their global role, “austerity programmes” should therefore be viewed as “an opportunity to do things differently” and should form the basis for agreeing a long-term strategic partnership.<sup>33</sup> Robert Fox, has also observed:

The new Anglo-French military agreement is an entente not so much cordiale as practical – or pratique as I suppose we have to say now. France and Britain are two medium powers with global ambitions, but less than global budgets to support them. So why not work together on military projects and missions where there is much the same aim?<sup>34</sup>

An editorial in *The Financial Times* also welcomed the announcement, commenting:

There is no need to hail these agreements as representing a fundamental transformation of the sometimes strained alliance that has united the UK and France since 1945. But the accords are timely, realistic, well-balanced and an encouraging step forward for the two countries concerned as well for their US and European partners in NATO.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, the impact of this new period in Anglo-French relations on the EU defence project as a whole has prompted mixed opinions. The FT editorial goes on to argue:

One lesson of the treaties is that it is pointless to look to Brussels for advances in European defence policy, because EU institutions will never possess the authority to compel member states to adopt a common vision. France and the UK must fill this gap.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> HC Deb 2 November 2010, c787

<sup>29</sup> See “Britain and France clash over Bosnia”, *The Independent*, 20 May 1994

<sup>30</sup> See for example “France played skeptic on Kosovo attacks”, *The Washington Post*, 20 September 1999 and “US general condemns French red card”, *BBC News*, 22 October 1999

<sup>31</sup> Following the withdrawal of the Harrier and the decommissioning of HMS Ark Royal in the SDSR.

<sup>32</sup> “Adapting our defence to a dangerous new world”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 2010

<sup>33</sup> Benoît Gomis, “Signs of Concord”, *The World Today*, November 2010

<sup>34</sup> Robert Fox, “Two powers with less than global budgets to back their ambitions”, *The Evening Standard*, 2 November 2010

<sup>35</sup> “A new entente for Paris and London”, *The Financial Times*, 3 November 2010

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

Yet, arguably it has been the convergence of French and British political will on this issue in the past which has pushed the European defence agenda forward. In an article for the European Council on Foreign Relations, Nick Witney poses two questions: “will the French now have eyes for anyone other than the British? And will the new cross-Channel entente suck the oxygen out of any other form of European cooperation?” He suggests that:

Depending in part on how willing and able France is to play two boards at the same time, one could envisage the new entente having a galvanising effect on other European partners and encouraging them to make a real new effort at forging closer cooperation...<sup>37</sup>

As an alternative, however, he argues that:

The majority reaction in Europe will be in effect to throw in the hand. Public finances are under intense pressure – and it is becoming harder and harder to explain to taxpayers why armed forces should not be cut a whole lot further... Far from galvanising others, the entente could actually encourage what US Defense Secretary Gates has gloomily termed a culture of ‘demilitarisation’ elsewhere in Europe.<sup>38</sup>

He also provides a third scenario:

That the Franco-British couple will selectively invite those of their EU partners they consider still serious about defence to join them –not across the piece but domain-by-domain, depending in which area the prospective additional partner has a serious contribution to offer. The model would be variable geometry, small-group, collaborative partnerships, with Britain and France as the ‘constants’ in all groupings and calling the shots. In short, something pretty like the ‘pioneer group’ system proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, but implemented to assuage the familiar British neuralgia, without reference to ‘Brussels’.<sup>39</sup>

Yet, there are other practical issues to consider when it comes to collaborative procurement. One of the most pressing is arguably France’s inherently protectionist attitude toward its largely state-owned defence sector. As an article in *Jane’s Defence Weekly* noted back in October 2010:

The UK and France take different approaches to their respective defence industrial assets. Paris retains strong control over its state-owned firms, while the almost entirely privately owned industrial base of the UK would need incentives to satisfy shareholders that such projects are worthwhile.

There is also the issue of *juste retour*, which has historically obliterated potential cost savings through joint European procurement. Whether France and the UK would be able to agree on workshare arrangements remains to be seen. Neither should the impact of Anglo-French co-operation on relations with other partners be discounted.<sup>40</sup>

An editorial in *The Financial Times* on 4 November agreed with these views:

If Anglo-French procurement is to achieve the desired goals, lessons must be learnt from the history of such initiatives [...] this means no longer treating cross-border projects as job creation schemes. The aim must be simply to build the best kit at the cheapest cost. It also means not specifying multiple variants of the same platform out

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<sup>37</sup> Nick Witney, “A Strategic rubicon”, European Council on Foreign Relations, 1 November 2010

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> “UK and France look to bridge the Channel”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 20 October 2010



of a desire to protect indigenous contractors [...] Britain and France must learn to walk in this field before they start to run.<sup>41</sup>

During urgent questions in the House, Neil Parish MP also raised this concern observing that “My knowledge of the French is that opening up markets is not their greatest strong point”.<sup>42</sup> This point has also been raised by Charles Armitage, an aerospace and defence consultant, who is quoted in *The Financial Times* as suggesting that “the biggest rifts were likely to emerge over how work on future projects was divided” and that “we have only just started on an extremely difficult journey”.<sup>43</sup>

For the time being, UK industry has welcomed the two new treaties, suggesting that both agreements “may well prove crucial to retaining and developing future capabilities within Europe by ensuring sustained investment in research and technology to deliver the next generation of programmes for our armed forces” thereby retaining a competitive edge with the defence industry in the United States. That statement goes on to comment that “The conditions for co-operating with French industry have never been better. Both countries are seeking to sustain capabilities which they could not otherwise afford [...] we look forward to joint programmes that will benefit from the efficiencies that flow from larger scale purchases and sustain skills and technology”.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “Entente frugale in defence contracting”, *The Financial Times*, 4 November 2010

<sup>42</sup> HC Deb 2 November 2010, c790

<sup>43</sup> “Suppliers eye united front against US”, *The Financial Times*, 3 November 2010

<sup>44</sup> ADS Press Release, 2 November 2010