



FROM THE AMBASSADOR

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BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS.

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UK/France DEFENCE CO-OPERATION: 1989-1990

1. In January 1988 the Prime Minister put to President Mitterrand proposals for improving our co-operation in conventional defence matters. She asked him to consider the following:

- (a) Collective defence/NATO: to help strengthen collective defence:
 - (i) by avoiding separate defence arrangements with other European countries which might seem to substitute for, or diminish the importance of NATO's consultative and force planning procedures; and
 - (ii) by finding ways of associating France more closely with NATO's collective defence arrangements.
- (b) Central Front: to discuss bilaterally ways of achieving closer French involvement in the forward defence of the FRG, particularly by French forces contributing to the NORTHAG area and by our exercising reinforcement plans through French Channel ports and the use of French airfields.
- (c) Other Joint Exercises: further developing joint exercises.
- (d) Naval Co-operation: further joint planning and exercises in the Eastern Atlantic and Channel areas.
- (e) Force Planning: to find ways in which the Alliance's Major Military Commanders could take greater account of France's own force plans in their defence planning.

2. I thought it would be useful to measure what has been done against these proposals, and asked my staff to do so. I enclose a summary note of what has been achieved. It shows that over the past two years progress has been made in the areas identified by the PM and thus in improving France's contribution to the strength of the Alliance.

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France has not of course abandoned its long-standing refusal to participate in NATO's integrated military structure or in forward defence arrangements under integrated command. It has also continued to oppose elements of NATO's flexible response doctrine, particularly the role, range and number of tactical nuclear weapons. But as the enclosure shows, these theological problems have not proved a bar to steady and significant improvement of France's performance in the areas we defined two years ago.

3. As was recognised in January 1988, there are many other aspects to the Anglo-French defence and security relationship than those noted above. In these other areas also there has been movement:

- (a) Defence equipment collaboration. Steady progress since the signature of the Reciprocal Purchasing Arrangement in December 1987: I enclose a short note. New industrial alliances are also leading to a deepening of co-operation.
- (b) WE 177 replacement. The UK decision to look again seriously at the possibility of co-operating with France, putting the US and French options to compete on a level playing field.
- (c) Arms control. Continuing close agreement on a politico-military approach to arms control and on the priorities - START, Conventional, CW, with no enthusiasm for SNF negotiations - has been capped by an increasingly intense collaboration on the CFE negotiations: UK interests, analysis and approach have tended to coincide more often with France than with any other Ally.
- (d) Pol-mil consultations. On other Pol-mil subjects too the dialogue has broadened and is beginning to deepen, at all levels from Ministers downwards, with a particular focus on how we can work together to maintain the legitimacy and credibility of nuclear deterrence in Europe in the 1990's and thereafter. The paper which Philippe Guelluy recently gave John Goulden, with high level approval, could prove to be something of a land-mark, and a stepping-stone to more effective co-operation as its message sinks in among the upper reaches of the French administration.



- (e) Other nuclear questions. Continuing progress in the highly classified exchanges between experts, including in areas which we know to be of interest to President Mitterrand. Richard Motram could spell this out further if you wish.

4. I had the impression from the Prime Minister when she was here on 20 January for talks with President Mitterrand that, though well aware of the reasons for working closely with France in the new situation which we face in Europe, she was sceptical whether much had been achieved in the defence field, and retained a rather negative impression of the outcome of her 1987/88 exchange with President Mitterrand. I should not want to exaggerate progress. It is still only a start. But you may think it worth letting Charles Powell have a note on where we have got to. If so, I hope this letter and its enclosures will provide the material.

Yours wa,
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Ewen Fergusson

cc: Sir M Quinlan KCB, MOD
Sir M Alexander KCMG, UKDel NATO
Sir C Mallaby KCMG, Bonn

UK/FRANCE DEFENCE CO-OPERATION: CONVENTIONAL

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON UK PROPOSALS OF JANUARY 1988

1. COLLECTIVE DEFENCE/NATO

- (a) President Mitterrand broke with precedent to attend NATO Summits in 1988 and 1989.
- (b) The French made a substantial contribution to the naval operations in the Gulf in 1988, in close operative liaison with forces of WEU members and the US, though avoiding "political co-ordination".
- (c) They worked closely with us in drafting NATO's Comprehensive Concept in spring 1989.
- (d) They decided to participate in the new NATO Air Command and Control Systems (ACCS).
- (e) They gave NATO's Military Committee a detailed briefing on the confidential defence co-operation agreements between France and NATO Commands.
- (f) They invited members of the NATO Political Committee to visit French nuclear installations in September 1989 and arranged a full briefing programme.
- (g) They have agreed to adopt NATO standards for air-to-air refuelling. (French Fighters regularly refuel from RAF tankers.)
- (h) In May 1989 France hosted the 8-nation mine warfare Exercise NORMANEX off Cherbourg, with a clear NATO reinforcement scenario.
- (i) Bilateralism: The French have not attempted to extend the Franco-German Defence Council and Joint Brigade experiments to other countries or other units; they have confined themselves to getting the Brigade off the ground and using it as a practical means of improving the interoperability of French and German units.

2. CENTRAL FRONT

- (a) Contacts between NORTHAG and 1st French Army have improved, and the two commanders have met regularly.
- (b) The French agreed to exercise the CHANGING JULIET option for French support to NORTHAG in the Command Post Exercise (CPX) CRESTED EAGLE in March 1990.
- (c) They agreed to participate in the high-profile Field Training Exercise (FTX) LIONHEART in Germany in September 1992 and in the preparatory CPXs, SUMMER SALES AND JAVELIN, in 1991 and 1992. An exchange of helicopter pilots is being set up in preparation for these exercises.
- (d) Reinforcement: They agreed to hold a first RED WINDMILL CPX in June 1988 and a second in May 1990; a future FTX is under discussion between Staffs.
- (e) Staffs have begun to consider arrangements for using the Channel Tunnel in reinforcement.
- (f) France's increasing willingness to contribute more visibly and effectively to defence of the Central Front was also marked by the unprecedented participation of substantial German units in a French exercise (CHAMPAGNE) in North-East France in September 1989.

3. OTHER JOINT EXERCISES

- (a) Exercise PURPLE VENTURE, held in Brittany in November 1989, was the first Joint Out-of-Area (OOA) CPX since Suez.
- (b) The French have invited a UK battalion to participate in their OOA FTX Exercise KORRIGAN in 1991. A French battalion will take part in a UK OOA FTX in 1992.
- (c) A number of Special Forces joint exercises and bilateral training projects will take place in 1990 following a series of reciprocal visits in 1989.
- (d) France's increasing willingness to participate in OOA exercises with major allies was also underlined by Exercise PHINIA held in March 1989 in the Mediterranean and Corsica with large-scale US participation, including two aircraft carriers.

4. NAVAL CO-OPERATION

- (a) France has stepped up its level of participation in NATO naval exercises: eg more than 30 ships and submarines took part in Ex SHARP SPEAR in September, which provided opportunities to test the effectiveness of France/NATO naval co-ordination arrangements.
- (b) Bilateral exchanges continue at steady rhythm: each year c 100 ships' visits (including resumption of SSN visits), 20-30 passage exercises, and major exercises with participation of both navies. Additional exchanges of personnel have been instituted.
- (c) Regular staff liaison in some 20 areas of naval business is proving increasingly fruitful. In particular contacts between British and French naval commanders in the Channel and Eastern Atlantic have deepened significantly, leading to the updating of numerous standing agreements and to increasingly effective day-to-day co-operation in training, submarine operating and surveillance activities.

5. FORCE PLANNING

- (a) The French have agreed to take close part in Allied consideration of the Force Planning implications of CFE reductions: France is fully engaged in the key grouping, the High level Task Force (Reinforced). This involvement may prove to represent a radical departure in France's approach to the collective defence.

6. AIR FORCE CO-OPERATION

(Not mentioned in January 1988 because of good existing co-operation: eg the French offer up to 400 sorties per day to Allied Air Forces, Central Europe and up to 300 RAF transits of French air space per month.)

- (a) Recent French agreement to all UK proposals for increased low-flying over France (made in response to increased German restrictions and sensitivities).
- (b) Continued close co-operation in planning AWACs. The two countries will share the use of a front-end simulator installed at RAF Waddington.
- (c) Exercise ARC in October 1989 implemented joint control procedures for the air defence of the South-Western approaches. French and UK radar units controlled fighter and tanker aircraft from both countries using standard NATO procedures.

1. DEFENCE EQUIPMENT ISSUES

- (a) There have been significant developments in the field of defence equipment collaboration in the last two years. In December 1987, the then Defence Ministers Mr Younger and M Giraud signed the Reciprocal Purchasing Arrangements which provided for reciprocal consideration of each other's defence equipment within certain price bands. In the 15 months to March 1989, some £60 million of business resulted from this agreement with a rough balance in each direction; this was in addition to a similar volume of 'normal' business.
- (b) The Reciprocal Purchasing Agreement was strengthened by French willingness to publish a new 'Bulletin des Marchés de la DGA' thus increasing access to the French Defence market; many UK firms now subscribe. There has also been a series of conferences designed to promote the Arrangement which has served to improve mutual knowledge and understanding between officials and industry on both sides of the Channel. To date, there have been four such government-sponsored conferences;
- a) Land Systems on 17/18 Sept 1987 in London
 - b) Sea Systems on 14/15 March 1988 in Paris
 - c) Air Systems on 23/24 Nov 1988 in London
 - d) Opportunities for French subcontractors on 7 December 1989 in London
- A further conference, Opportunities for UK Subcontractors, is planned in London on 15 June this year. UK and French Trade Associations have also been sponsoring their own in-house seminars.
- (c) As a direct result of the warmer climate created by the Reciprocal Purchasing Arrangement, many new subjects, hitherto unthinkable, are under discussion between the two MOD's eg cooperation on nuclear missiles, decontamination, decommissioning, and future naval projects. Most encouragingly, the Anglo-French Defence Research Group has been given a new lease of life, and its activities in the upstream research area may well lead on to the collaborative programmes of tomorrow.