

Punching Below Their Weight? Critical Reflections on Anglo-French Cooperation in Africa

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Executive Summary

At the December 1998 Saint-Malo summit, Britain and France promised to set aside past rivalries and work together on African issues. While brief indications were given as to possible areas of bilateral and ‘bi-multi’ cooperation, the terms and scope of this partnership were not spelt out.

Was this to involve merely a deconflictualisation of approaches, whereby the UK and France avoid public quarrels and collaborate only at moments of crisis? Or was the aim to develop a relationship that was more like the Franco-German tandem, which is characterised by a high ‘degree of institutionalisation of exchanges.’ Or was it their intention to build a partnership that was akin to the more ‘natural’ Anglo-American ‘special relationship’?

These questions are central to this report, which draws upon extensive interviews with key officials in London, Paris, Brussels, New York, Addis Ababa, Kinshasa, Dakar and Abuja. It focuses on:

- **UK-French rivalry in Africa from the colonial to early post-Cold War period (Section 2)**
- **the factors militating in favour of closer Anglo-French collaboration (Section 3)**
- **the emergence of new linkages between the UK and France (Section 4)**
- **the extent of cooperation in response to the key challenges of Africa, notably poverty reduction, democracy promotion and chronic instability (Section 5)**
- **the constraints on collaboration (Section 6)**
- **conclusions and an assessment of the scope for future cooperation (Section 7)**

Finally, the risks associated with Anglo-French cooperation and non-cooperation are evaluated (Section 8) and recommendations are put forward which would enable the UK and France better to join forces and punch at a level commensurate with their combined weight in the international arena (Section 9). These revolve around the need to:

- **Strengthen resolve, particularly at the level of capitals**
- **‘Institutionalise’ or make explicit linkages**
- **Bolster exchange programmes**
- **Build institutional memory**
- **Enhance policy coherence**
- **Encourage strategic thinking**
- **Identify policy synergies**

1. INTRODUCTION

At the December 1998 summit, the British and French governments signed the Saint-Malo II agreement which committed them to set aside past rivalries and tackle the challenges of Africa together. This undertaking, which was much less reported upon than the Saint-Malo I declaration on Anglo-French defence collaboration, committed Britain and France to engage in joint actions, either bilaterally or in a ‘bi-multi’ fashion (that is, with London and Paris reaching a common position then bringing in other partners).¹

While similar promises have been repeated at subsequent summits, notably in 2001, 2004 and 2008, there has been no attempt to spell out the exact terms of cooperation. Was this simply to involve a deconflictualisation of approaches, whereby the UK and France avoid public quarrels and collaborate only at moments of crisis or when their agendas ‘naturally’ converge? Or was the aim to develop a relationship that was more like the Franco-German tandem, which is characterised by a high ‘degree of institutionalisation of ... exchanges’.² Or was it their intention to build a partnership that was akin to the more natural’, although still interest-driven, Anglo-American ‘special relationship’.³

1.1. Aims and Structure

Surprisingly, given the importance of this initiative for Africa and for Europe’s Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP), there has been no attempt to study this evolving UK–French ‘partnership’ on Africa. This report, which is the product of a three-year research project funded by the British Academy, plugs this gap.⁴ Drawing on over 150 off-the-record interviews with officials and politicians in the British and French Foreign and Defence Ministries, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the European Council, the European Commission, the United Nations and African regional/ sub-regional organisations, it focuses on:

- the history of Anglo-French rivalry from the colonial era to the immediate post Cold War period (**Section 2**).
- the pressures for closer Anglo-French collaboration (**Section 3**)
- the extent of any ‘institutionalisation’ of Anglo-French linkages (**Section 4**)
- the degree of cooperation in response to Africa’s challenges, notably poverty reduction, democracy promotion and security issues (**Section 5**).⁵
- the constraints on collaboration: interests, institutional factors and extractive capacities (**Section 6**)
- conclusions and an assessment of the scope for future cooperation (**Section 7**)
- an evaluation of the risks involved in closer Anglo-French collaboration and of the dangers associated with failing to engage in such cooperation (**Section 8**)
- recommendations designed to enable the UK and France to join forces more effectively and punch at a level commensurate with their combined weight in the international arena (**Section 9**).

1.2. Research Parameters

Before proceeding, it is important to sharpen the focus of this report. First, while it does not assume that the British and French states should systematically cooperate on Africa, it does provide a risk assessment of both a policy of cooperation and non-cooperation. In particular, it shows that, while cooperation might not always make sense from either a policy or resource perspective and could limit opportunities to develop relationships with other partners, both countries stand to derive significant mutual benefits from enhanced collaboration, in a context in which their positions in Africa are increasingly under challenge from new external actors..

Second, the primary focus is on state-to-state relations, with emphasis on linkages between ministers and officials, although it is recognised that new links have for example developed – with official encouragement –

between UK and French foreign policy research centres, such as Chatham House and the Institut Français des Relations Internationales.⁶

Third, while the authors of this report would argue that closer collaboration should enable the UK and France better to tackle the challenges of Africa, space constraints will not allow for an assessment of the impact of Anglo-French cooperation on Africa or Africans in terms of policy outcomes. This is clearly an important question but it must be left to future researchers to identify and analyse the huge array of factors that determine the result of any joint UK-French action.

Finally, this report does not cover the following policy areas where the Anglo-French partnership has been more virtual than real:

- The fight against international crime, where, despite the November 2004 UK-French Action Plan on transnational crime, ‘cooperation on the ground has remained patchy’.⁷
- Intelligence-sharing, where the UK exchanges intelligence with the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia under the ‘5 Is’ initiative, while generally only sharing non-confidential information with the French.⁸
- The civilian aspects of security sector reform (SSR). In 2005, the UK and France deconflictualised their approaches in the DRC, with Britain providing funding and the French supplying a police contingent, military staff and leadership for two civilian European Security and Defence Policy Missions. Ultimately, however, the UK and France have disagreed over the role of the army mission and over the priorities for police reform (e.g., community policing versus riot control). In 2008, reports were written, with DFID funding and French Foreign Ministry backing, with a view to promoting closer UK-French collaboration on SSR. These studies were, however, subsequently shelved, and the colloquium that was to discuss their findings failed to materialise.⁹

2. A HISTORY OF RIVALRY AND NON-COOPERATION

Anglo-French rivalry in Africa is often traced back to Fashoda where, in 1898, the French were compelled by Lord Kitchener’s forces to beat a humiliating retreat from Sudan. It was partly assuaged by the 1904 Entente Cordiale and subsequent military cooperation, but the relationship was marked by the ‘Fashoda syndrome’ (French anxiety about ‘Anglo-Saxon’ territorial ambitions in francophone Africa) throughout the colonial era.

Anglo-French rivalry persisted during the early post-colonial decades, as the UK and France pursued realpolitik objectives and chose not to work together on the challenges of Africa. **Poverty reduction** was not a high priority for UK governments, while successive French administrations accorded gave less aid to least developed countries (LLDCs) than to upper middle-income African states.¹⁰ The UK and France also adopted a semi-competitive approach towards **democracy promotion**, bequeathing their own models of government to their ex-colonies. On African **security**, here too the approaches diverged, sometimes sharply: in the Nigerian civil war (1967-70), the UK and France backed different sides. The British had no bases, undertook few interventions and offered only small-scale British Military Advisory and Training Teams to former colonies. By contrast, France adopted a ‘voluntarist’, unilateral military approach, with pre-positioned forces in ex-colonies and military personnel embedded with African forces under the terms of defence and military cooperation agreements.

A similar lack of cooperation was apparent during the early post-Cold War period (1990-1997). Thus, while the UK and France increased support to the poorest African countries (cancelling some debt, untying some aid and targeting some assistance), they did not cooperate on **poverty reduction**. Britain remained primarily concerned with promoting neoliberal reform while France provided hard loans and allocated a fifth of its aid to cultural *rayonnement*. Similarly, while, in 1990, London and Paris both linked bilateral assistance to **democratic progress**, they remained reluctant to impose aid sanctions on former colonies (e.g., Uganda and Togo). Finally, Britain and France did not always see eye-to-eye on **security issues** such as military-humanitarian interventions. The UK, for example, lobbied against military intervention in Rwanda in 1994 and, subsequently, used the UN Security Council (UNSC) to limit the scope of France’s Operation Turquoise.¹¹

Nonetheless, during much of this period, Anglo-French ‘competitive clientelism’ in Africa was attenuated by:¹²

- The Cold War context in which the UK and France were required to work alongside one another to keep their former colonies in the Western orbit.
- Britain's benign neglect of Africa,¹³ which prompted one French official to comment: 'We did not really get the impression that the British were rivals, since they were not particularly present [in Africa] before the creation of the DFID'.
- The emergence of forums in which the UK and France could exchange views on Africa and work at a bilateral or bi-multi level. The UNSC was one mechanism, but cooperation was limited by Britain's tendency to side with the US and France's pretention to a 'non-aligned' policy. The European Community provided another channel after the UK joined in 1973, but differences soon emerged over the Lomé Convention (Europe's aid and trade agreement with its former African, Caribbean and Pacific [ACP] colonies). The annual Anglo-French summit, which first met in 1978, was valuable for bilateral exchanges but rarely used to discuss Africa.

3. THE DRIVERS BEHIND CLOSER ANGLO-FRENCH COOPERATION

The UK and France have in recent years come to recognise the benefits to be derived from closer collaboration. This cooperation has been facilitated by a number of developments on the international and domestic scene.

3.1. Key Developments

i. The end of the Cold War. This lifted the lid on civil and inter-state conflict in Africa and exposed the overstretch of international organisations and bilateral donors involved in peacekeeping. The UN did not have the capacity to respond to the growing number of complex emergencies. The US was reluctant to undertake military interventions in Africa following its humiliation in Somalia. France was also wary of unilateral action following the Rwandan debacle and the UK showed no interest in such actions prior to its intervention in Sierra Leone. Against this background, the need for Africans to peacekeep themselves and for the EU to make faster progress on its rapid reaction force had become compelling, even if the Al-Qaeda attacks of 9/11 did initially cast doubt on the prospects of operationalising this force.¹⁴

ii. The emergence of a 'new generation' of African leaders, including Thabo Mbeki, John Kufuor, Abdoulaye Wade and Olusegun Obasanjo, who espoused the idea of an African renaissance. This was reflected in their prominent role in pushing for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD, 2001), and the G8 Africa Action Plan (2002). It was also reflected in the replacement of the Organisation for African Unity by the more credible AU which abandoned the OAU's commitment to non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states and sought to take greater responsibility for peace, security and governance on the continent.

iii. The shift in the way that the EU engaged with the continent. EU African policy was – through the successive Yaoundé and Lomé conventions – largely driven by the European Commission (EC), its partner was the ACP and the focus was on 'technical' issues: trade and development.¹⁵ EU-African relations became more political in the 1990s with the introduction of conditionalities under Lomé IV, the launch – at the Cairo summit in 2000 – of a political dialogue outside the Lomé/Cotonou framework, and the development of a European Africa strategy (2005). In this changing EU-African relationship, the European Council, rather than the Commission, now took an increasingly important role in driving African policy while the EU's privileged interlocutor was the AU and not the ACP. This shift towards intergovernmentalism thrust the UK and France, as the two member states with the largest residual responsibilities and interests, to the centre of EU policy-making on Africa.

iv. The election in the UK of a reformist Labour government and its creation of DFID in 1997 signalled a new readiness to engage with Africa. British policy-makers realised that they could only make an effective contribution to stabilising the continent and progress the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if they became more active in francophone Africa and engaged more effectively with France, as the only other European power with the ability and will to intervene south of the Sahara. British politicians also realised that Africa, particularly on security matters, represented a propitious domain for cooperation with the French and a stepping stone towards the achievement of Tony Blair's promise to 'put the UK at the heart of Europe' despite Britain's failure to join the euro.

v. The **election in France of Lionel Jospin's modernising socialist government** (1997-2002) cleared the way for France to scale down its military presence, provided new impetus to the process of realignment of its diplomatic and military efforts to its key commercial interests (which were increasingly in anglophone Africa) and encouraged France to move away from its image as 'gendarme of Africa' by ensuring that its future operations took place within a UN or EU framework.

3.2. Common Interests, Mutual Benefits and Comparative Advantage

In this changing international and domestic context, the UK and France, as middle-sized powers, became increasingly aware of their inability to cope with the scale of Africa's crises. They were also facing growing challenges to their privileged positions within the UNSC, IMF and the World Bank.¹⁶ By working together, they could pursue common interests and secure a number of mutual benefits. In particular, they could:

- garner a majority of the votes on the Security Council by drawing on their influence in their former empires and 'a set of contacts and influences globally which were very complementary'.¹⁷
- swing votes within the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) and Africa Working Group (AWG)
- compensate for the fact that they have become a smaller part of African foreign relations, not least since the rise over the last decade of dynamic suitors like China, India, Japan, South Korea and the Middle East countries.
- restrict the capacity of African politicians and negotiators to play them off against each other
- avoid tripping each other up in their attempts to resolve seemingly intractable crises in former colonies such as Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire (discussed later).¹⁸
- better respond to threats arising from Africa, whether from illegal immigration, terrorism, piracy, AIDS, drugs trafficking, money laundering or the risk of genocide in fragile states.
- reduce duplication, cut down on reporting and lower transaction costs; this is important for the FCO, which has suffered over recent years from African embassy closures and the loss of 20 per cent of its staff working on Africa, and the French Foreign Ministry¹⁹ which lost expertise when it absorbed the Development Ministry (1999) and then merged the Development Directorate into a Directorate for Global Affairs (2009).

The comparative advantages of closer Anglo-French cooperation south of the Sahara have come to the fore particularly at moments of crisis. Thus at the time of the 2003 Iraq War, the UK and French governments were keen to find common ground in Africa as a way of overcoming the deep divisions caused by this conflict. In the context of the current global financial crisis, the benefits of closer collaboration and the prospects of financial savings that this offers have also not been lost on British and French policy-makers.

4. SAINT-MALO: TOWARDS A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIP?

As noted earlier, the UK and French governments signed two important agreements in December 1998: Saint-Malo I paved the way for ESDP missions to be conducted autonomously of NATO and Saint-Malo II was a pledge to 'seek to harmonise their policies towards Africa'.²⁰ While scant details were provided, it was stated that the UK and France would 'pursue close cooperation on the ground in Africa', intensify information exchange, explore the scope for co-location of French/British embassies in Africa and engage in joint ship visits.²¹

4.1. Formal Linkages

Saint-Malo encouraged closer formal and informal or *ad hoc* ties between the two policy-making establishments. The formalisation of these linkages can be seen in the following:

- the inclusion of a distinct 'Africa chapter' and the increased ministerial presence at Anglo-French summits (e.g., ten ministers plus the Prime Minister and President in 2006)

- six-monthly meetings between staff from the UK and French Foreign Ministry Africa Directorates
- periodic senior-level meetings between the DFID and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials working on international development.²²
- an exchange programme involving officials from, on the UK side, the Africa Directorates of the FCO and the DFID and, on the French side, the Africa and Globalisation Directorates of the MFA.
- Exchanges of *chargés de mission* between the French and British defence ministries (2005-08) as well as the embedding of a French officer with British forces in Nairobi and the secondment of a British officer (until 2009) to French forces in Dakar.

4.2. Ad Hoc and Informal Ties

Turning to the informal or *ad hoc* links, these have been event-, issue- or personality- driven. They include:

- occasional joint ministerial visits, the first of which involved a trip in March 1999 to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire by the UK and French foreign ministers, Robin Cook and Hubert Védrine, and the most recent of which was by David Miliband and Bernard Kouchner to the DRC in November 2008.
- joint ministerial statements by, for example, the UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Sudan/ Darfur (March 2008).²³
- Visits by newly appointed British and French ambassadors to Paris and London respectively before beginning their African postings.
- Invitations to specific events, with Bernard Kouchner coming as a special guest to the FCO's annual ambassadors' conference in London in March 2009.²⁴

Many of the above linkages have been possible because particular UK and French ministers (Cook/ Védrine, Miliband/ Kouchner, Lord Malloch-Brown/ Kouchner) and senior officials (Heads of Foreign Ministry Africa Directorates, Africa advisers in Downing Street and the Elysée) actually 'got on'.

Informal ties have also become a more important feature of Anglo-French relations within multilateral forums.

- In the context of the **G8/G20**, senior UK and French officials have engaged in regular exchanges. Meetings take place, for example, between officials, usually from the DFID and Elysée, who are on the G8 Africa special representatives group (established in 2002).
- Within the **EU**, the scope for Anglo-French consultation has increased over recent years as some meetings have become more frequent (e.g., the AWG has been convened weekly rather than monthly since July 2009) and as new forums have emerged. The latter include the ambassador-level Political and Security Committee (PSC), which has, since 2000, focused on ESDP missions; the *ad hoc* working group on the EU-Africa strategy (set up with strong UK-French backing); and the eight panels (the most important of which are led by the UK or France) established to implement the priority actions agreed in the 2007 Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.²⁵
- Informal links have been closest at the **UN**. As permanent members of the UNSC, Britain and France are invited to attend informal lunches hosted by the Secretary General.²⁶ Furthermore, Britain, France and the US make up the P3, an informal mechanism, launched in late 1997, to facilitate consultation on UNSC matters.

With two-thirds of UNSC business relating to Africa, the P3 has been an important arena for Anglo-French cooperation, particularly when the French and UK permanent representatives have enjoyed good relations. This was the case, at least prior to the Iraq crisis, with Sir Jeremy Greenstock (1998-2003) and Jean-David Levitte (1999-2002), who had been Chirac's diplomatic adviser at Saint-Malo.²⁷ It was

equally true of relations between Sir Emyr Jones Parry (2003-07) and Jean-Marc de la Sablière (2002-07).

During the Bush presidency, the P3 initiative regularly saw Anglo-French talks to coordinate positions as a prelude to trying to bring the US on board. The UK-French initiative, launched in late 2008, to improve UN peacekeeping mandates is a good example.²⁸

4.3. Limits to Coordination

There have, however, been clear limits to Anglo-French coordination. This is partly due to a lack of ‘institutional mechanisms that bring ministers, officials and institutions together’.²⁹ In this context, it is worth noting that:

- the main bilateral forum has remained the Franco-British summit, a gathering whose existence predates Saint-Malo by over a decade;
- It has taken over ten years for the DFID and AFD to sign an overarching agreement;
- there has been no staff exchange between the DFID and AFD;
- the UK stopped sending a *chargé de mission* to the French Defence Ministry in Paris in 2008 and ended its practice of embedding an officer in French forces in Dakar in July 2009;
- there are no mechanisms for ensuring that lessons learned by exchange staff are formally recorded and no arrangements for regular ‘reporting back’ to the ‘home’ ministry;
- there have been no joint ship visits, and there is no evidence of co-location of French and UK embassies in Africa: in Monrovia and Abidjan, where UK missions have been closed since March 1991 and April 2005 respectively, British officials are reportedly more comfortable in the US than in the French embassies.³⁰

Clearly this lack of institutional architecture ‘does not mean that cooperation is not taking place’.³¹ However, it suggests that ‘there is nothing to fall back on’ when officials or Ministers, such as UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, and French ‘Development Minister’, Charles Josselin, do not ‘get on’.

In other instances, cooperation does not happen because of a lack of awareness on the part of officials of the Saint-Malo process, because there is no pressure for it to happen from capitals or simply because officials in London, in particular, express uncertainty as to who their interlocutor in Paris should be. This phenomenon is less common within international organisations.³²

Moreover, within the EU, UK and French officials do not see each other as obvious partners on African development. Indeed, on the CODEV, a key British concern appears to be to ensure that France and Germany do not exercise their ‘blocking minority vote’.³³

As a rule, on development issues, Britain is closer to the ‘likeminded countries’ (the Nordics and the Dutch) while France leans more towards her Mediterranean neighbours. In the UN too, differences have sometimes been hard to conceal, notably at the time of the 2003 Iraq War when the UK and France competed over the votes of the three African UNSC members (Angola, Cameroon and Guinea).

5. TOWARDS PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE?

Having demonstrated that there is now a clearer framework for Anglo-French coordination, we now examine whether Britain and France have collaborated on their stated priorities for Africa.

5.1. Tackling Poverty Together?

The UK and France have taken tentative steps towards closer cooperation on poverty reduction. They have supported each other’s strategic initiatives:

- On health, the UK backed, in 2006, France's UNITAID proposal, which finances vaccinations through a tax on international flights.³⁴
- Paris reciprocated by supporting the UK-inspired International Finance Facility for Immunisation, a scheme to raise capital for the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunisation.³⁵
- On education, Prime Minister Brown and President Sarkozy made a joint statement in March 2008, promising to train an additional 3.8 million teachers and to help get 16 million children into school in Africa by 2010 and every child by 2015.³⁶
- Britain and France also signed up to a 'silent partnership' or joint programme on education following the 2005 visit to Niger/ Zambia by UK Secretary of State for Development, Hilary Benn, and French Development Minister, Xavier Darcos. With no diplomatic representation in Niger, the DFID provided 7 million euros to the AFD to promote primary education through the Fast Track Initiative.

Ultimately, however, Anglo-French collaboration has been hampered by the fact that London and Paris do not attach the same priority to the MDGs. The DFID has, since 1997, placed poverty reduction at the core of its aid programme, enshrining it in legislation (International Development Act, 2002) and White Papers. By contrast, the French government did not sign up to any overarching poverty reduction targets until the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 and has continued to view these targets as unrealistic and overly technocratic.³⁷

Against this backdrop, joint initiatives on poverty reduction have not always been followed up:

- France has not kept its promise to match Britain's commitment on school places, providing £50 million for one year compared to the DFID's commitment of £500 million over three years.³⁸
- Britain's contribution to the education scheme in Niger is paltry when account is taken of the size of the DFID's budget (£5.7 billion in 2008-09) and the scope that this cash-rich agency has to use the French aid administration in silent partnerships.³⁹

The relative lack of joint programmes is partly down to an issue of trust. The UK had expected the French to reciprocate by funding a DFID-run education project in Rwanda. But this fell through when the French ambassador was expelled from Kigali in 2006. There is now residual suspicion in the DFID that the French are taking credit for UK aid monies. There is, equally, concern in France that the UK may expose its failure to deliver on aid promises.⁴⁰

5.2. Promoting Political Reform: Towards a Common Approach?

The UK and France have taken hesitant steps towards closer cooperation on the promotion of democracy and human rights. The key forum for Anglo-French exchanges has been the EU, particularly through the AWG, the CODEV and the Africa-EU Panel on Democratic Governance and Human Rights. Examples of UK-French coordination include:

- **Kenya**, where there was 'good, close cooperation' following the elections of 27 December 2007. Standing in as the EU Presidency on behalf of Slovenia, which had no representation in Nairobi, the French helped ensure that the UK channelled its response to the Kenyan crisis through the EU rather than acting unilaterally or primarily with the US.⁴¹
- In or around 2005, the UK and France struck a 'deal' whereby France backs UK efforts on **Zimbabwe**, particularly within the EU, while the British support France on **Côte d'Ivoire**, particularly in the UNSC. This has made it easier for Britain to have EU sanctions rolled over annually since 2002, despite the reservations of some European member states.
- In the **DRC**, the DFID has allocated £10 million to a four-year silent partnership (2007-11) aimed at promoting political freedom via the media. The French aid mission has provided the office space for the DFID's largest media project in Africa, while France Coopération Internationale (FCI) – a state-funded 'interest group' – has coordinated the project and provided the media expertise.⁴²

That said, however, active collaboration on democracy and human rights has been patchy, as the following examples demonstrate.⁴³

- In 1999-2000, the UK was pushing for EU aid sanctions against **Liberia**, whose president, Charles Taylor, was arming Sierra Leonean rebels (the Revolutionary United Front) in their civil war against the elected government of Tejan Kabbah. However,⁴⁴ French support was not forthcoming until Taylor subsequently supported rebel forces in Côte d'Ivoire and began destabilising French West Africa.
- In 2002, the UK and France disagreed over EU aid sanctions against **Togo**, whose autocratic regime Paris had been backing unconditionally for decades.
- In February 2003, France invited Mugabe to a Franco-African summit on the day European sanctions expired against **Zimbabwe's** President. The UK acquiesced in exchange for French support to prolong European sanctions after the summit. In February 2007, the French did not invite Mugabe to the Franco-African summit in Cannes, but the trade-off was that Britain would not block his attendance at the 2007 Africa-EU summit in Lisbon.⁴⁵
- In 2008 and 2009, differences have arisen over how to respond to unconstitutional changes of government in francophone countries such as **Mauritania** in 2008; **Niger, Guinea**, and **Madagascar** in 2009; and Niger again in 2010. While the UK has generally spoken out, the French have taken a more softly-softly approach.⁴⁶
- In **Madagascar**, for example, the UK's Lord Malloch-Brown became the only European minister publicly to condemn the coup from the outset. Yet Britain had closed its embassy in 2005 and was thus at a disadvantage compared to the French who had retained their mission and 'initially took an even softer line than the African Union (AU)'.⁴⁷

The reasons for this relative absence of UK-French cooperation include:

- divergent national interests, institutional constraints (i.e., different bureaucratic set-ups, 'national policy styles' and institutional approaches) and differences in the 'extractive capacity' of the foreign policy establishment in each country (discussed later)
- the fact that UK-French coordination within the EU has to take into account the views of 25 other countries plus the European Commission
- the fact that the UK and France have a different understanding of key concepts such as human rights and governance. To illustrate, the UK has seen governance in technical terms as a way of ensuring an economically well managed central state, whereas the French have prefixed 'governance' with 'democratic' and viewed this concept in political terms as a means of promoting local and central state structures that are legitimate and provide an effective legal framework (an *Etat de droit*).
- the fact that the UK and France, when operating outside of the EU or UN, often turn to the Commonwealth and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie as mechanisms to promote democracy and human rights. However, in so doing, they completely overlook the possibilities for joint action by each of these organisations.
- internal divisions: the Elysée has typically been less forthright on human rights than the Foreign Ministry, while competition between the DFID and FCO has led to parallel African policies, DFID allegations that the FCO is prioritising strategic and commercial interests over developmental needs, and FCO accusations that the DFID gives priority to economic development concerns over human rights.⁴⁸
- a continuing lack of trust: the UK remains wary that it is only dealing with the more enlightened parts of the French political establishment, whilst other French actors linked to 'la Françafrique', are pursuing practices (such as collusion with autocratic African leaders) that directly contradict official discourse.⁴⁹ Equally, the French are aware that the British have taken a less forthright stance on political freedom in countries that fall within their 'sphere of influence' (Uganda, Rwanda) or that are allies in the war on terror (Ethiopia).

5.3. Co-constructing Peace and Security?

While there has been little Anglo-French collaboration on ‘soft’ policy issues, such as poverty reduction and democracy promotion, there has been greater coordination on ‘hard’ security questions, notably on ESDP military missions and training African peacekeepers.⁵⁰

5.3.1. ESDP Missions

The UK and France have been instrumental in establishing the institutional framework for European peacekeeping operations: the PSC, the EU Military Committee (the supreme military body within the European Council) and the European rapid reaction force (initially proposed at the Saint-Malo summit).⁵¹

Britain and France have also collaborated to some extent in the following ESDP missions:

➤ ***Operation Artemis*** (DRC, June-September 2003)

This stabilised the humanitarian situation in Bunia following the withdrawal of Ugandan forces. It was the first ‘autonomous’ EU military operation (that is, without recourse to NATO assets) and the first ESDP operation outside Europe. The UK sent 100 engineers, who played a key role, resurfacing the runway at Bunia and enabling supplies to be flown in. Britain also persuaded Uganda to offer airport facilities at Entebbe.⁵² France was the ‘framework nation’, providing the operational headquarters and the majority – 90 per cent – of the 1400-strong force.

In the aftermath of European divisions over the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, ‘France badly wanted a mission to show the EU was capable of acting alone, where NATO would not be involved’, while London’s go-ahead was mainly to prove that the UK was still interested in developing a European defence capability. Anglo-French cooperation was therefore the product of convergent agendas.

➤ ***EUFOR DRC*** (July- November 2006)

This supported the UN in supervising the 2006 Congolese elections. France provided, together with Germany, the largest number of troops and saw EUFOR as a way of demonstrating their European credentials following the French rejection of the EU Constitutional Treaty. The UK supported the mission politically in a joint statement by the British and French Defence Ministers, John Reid and Michèle Alliot-Marie,⁵³ and gave 50 million euros in funding, making the UK the largest contributor to the elections. But the UK did not send combat troops, partly due to concerns about military overstretch.

As with Artemis, the mission was the product of the convergence of French and British agendas in the DRC. For France, EUFOR DRC was a test case for the EU Strategy for Africa in 2005 and a ‘laboratory’ for the ESDP, while for the UK, the stability of the DRC was paramount: it was a significant contributor to SSR and the success of the elections was a key concern.

➤ ***EUFOR Chad/Central African Republic (CAR)*** (January 2008-March 2009)

Like its predecessors, this was once again a carefully circumscribed and time-limited operation that aimed to ‘create the security conditions necessary for reconstruction’ in Chad and the CAR before the hand-over to a UN force, MINURCAT II, in March 2009. France provided the largest contribution (2500 out of 3700 troops) and the operational HQ, although the force commander was Irish. Initially, the UK refused to participate and blocked European funding, suspecting France of using the ESDP/ UN to shore up its influence in Chad and the CAR.

In the end, however, the UK co-sponsored the UN Resolution (1778) authorising the mission. London also sent two staff officers to the operational HQ in Paris and two to the field HQ in Chad. It later unblocked the money for a more restricted mission, partly because of French pressure, partly because the US supported the operation; and partly because the killings in Darfur were being widely reported in the UK media, with British NGOs pressing for ‘humanitarian intervention’.

➤ ***EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta*** (December 2008-ongoing)

This seeks to prevent piracy off the Somali coast. With 1200 personnel and 16 ships, Atalanta is the first ESDP naval operation and the first mission to be led by the UK, with Northwood as Command HQ. Britain has, however, only committed one destroyer and views piracy as ‘a symptom of a wider problem on the mainland’.⁵⁴

For France, Atalanta offered a new arena to demonstrate European military capability, even if – for political reasons and due to defence cuts – the French did not to take the lead. Britain became involved, partly due to pressure on the Ministry of Defence (MOD) from the UK’s diplomatic mission in Brussels, anxious that Britain had not participated militarily in previous operations; and partly due to private sector lobbying for UK engagement (London is a major international hub for commercial shipping and hosts the International Maritime Organisation).

To conclude, there has clearly been meaningful Anglo-French cooperation on ESDP. This has been facilitated by the fact that the European Council, rather than the Commission, is increasingly playing the lead role in EU African policy, as it is the Council, often pressed by France and with UK support or acquiescence, that is tasked with planning and conducting missions.

That said, Anglo-French collaboration has remained limited:

- The UK intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000 and French operations in Côte d’Ivoire in 2002 were both largely unilateral despite coming after Saint-Malo and being only partly driven by interests.⁵⁵
- Cooperation has improved since 2003 but often continues to be more about the coincidence of agendas than any genuine need to work together on African crises.
- There have been instances where neither the UK nor France has deployed forces; this was the case in the DRC in late 2008, when Kouchner’s enthusiasm for intervention was curbed by the Elysée and by the refusal of both Britain and Germany to commit battlegroups

5.3.2. Training African Peacekeepers

The UK and France have also worked together to bolster African peacekeeping capacity and to train peacekeepers from African regional and sub-regional organisations.

➤ *Capacity Building*

By the late 1990s, the UK, France and the US, working within the P3, had recognised the need to harmonise their African capacity-building programmes: RECAMP (France: Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix), the UK’s African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme (subsumed within the Conflict Prevention Pool (CPP) in 2001) and ACRI (US: African Crisis Response Initiative).

The UK and France have participated in each other’s military training exercises in Tanzania (2001) as well as in Ghana and Benin (2004). They have, moreover, together with the US, established in West Africa a regional network of training centres to reduce duplication:

- the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, for which the UK provided substantial start-up funding, focuses on operational level training;
- the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix in Bamako undertakes tactical-level training (the UK is represented on the School board); and
- the National Defence College in Abuja undertakes strategic-level training.

The French, with UK support, took this process of harmonisation to its logical conclusion by transforming RECAMP into an EU programme, **EURORECAMP**, in the wake of the December 2007 EU Summit in Lisbon. Based in Paris, as France is the ‘framework nation’, EURORECAMP has a French general as its director and a British officer as its deputy director. It is explicitly focused on building up African ownership, notably through

its first training cycle, **Amani Africa**, which was launched in November 2008 and aims at assisting the AU in crisis management at continental level.

➤ ***Support for AU Peacekeepers***

In the context of regional organisations, the UK and France have provided support for AU missions in Sudan and elsewhere. Funding for these operations has also come from the Africa Peace Facility (APF: a mechanism financed by the European Development Fund and established with strong UK and French support in 2004).

Britain and France have, moreover, backed AU efforts to create its own institutional framework for crisis management: the **African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)**, which was launched in 2002 and provided among other things for the creation of a political decision making body, the **Peace and Security Council**; an intelligence-gathering and analysis centre, **the Continental Early Warning System**; an external mediation and advisory body (**the Panel of the Wise**); and a military element or operational arm, the **African Standby Force (ASF)**.

The UK is the largest financial contributor to Amani Africa, while France takes the lead role in agenda-setting and implementation as the EU framework nation.

In practice, however, there have again been limits to Anglo-French coordination on the AU:

- Both the UK and France continue to provide a significant proportion of their support for the APSA on a bilateral basis.
- While the UK, through its CPP, is one of the largest bilateral donors to the APSA, France is one of the smallest.⁵⁶ However, France plays a much more prominent role than the UK in supporting peacekeeping training exercises in Africa, thanks to its pre-positioned forces, totalling some 9,000 personnel, in Dakar, Libreville, Djibouti and La Réunion. As a result, it often prefers to undertake capacity-building initiatives on its own, rather than in conjunction with other partners.
- More generally, the creation of the EUSR office in Addis Ababa (seat of the AU) has not so far led to any increase in formal Anglo-French joint working with the AU, despite the fact that the 2007 Africa-EU Strategic Partnership accorded priority to its chapter on peace and security (which was largely written by Britain and France) and to African regional peacekeeping organisations.

➤ ***Support for African Sub-Regional Organizations***

France and the UK have bolstered the peacekeeping capacity of African regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS).

- The UK contributed equipment to the RECAMP exercise Tanzanite in 2001 and France took part in the UK-led map exercise, Blue Pelican, at the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat in November 2000.
- Between 2002 and 2006, the UK and other EU member states provided *ad hoc*, mainly logistical support to RECAMP military exercises.
- In December 2007, Britain supplied 25 per cent of the funding of a Franco-ECOWAS military training exercise, with France providing 50 per cent.

However, here again Anglo-French cooperation has been far from systematic.

- ECOWAS has long been a higher foreign policy priority for France than for the UK. This became clearer still in 2009 when budgetary constraints and a FCO strategic review of priorities led the British government to cut spending on peace and security in Africa, downgrade the strategic priority accorded to West Africa and reduce support for ECOWAS. The UK also withdrew support for the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra.

- France has continued to do a great deal of training on its own (notably in West Africa via its 14 regional military training schools, all of which are in francophone countries and operate in French). It has been successful in obtaining EU funding for some of these schools. Indeed, in seeking support for military training, the UK is sometimes in competition with France, as happened in 2008 when the UK tried to get its Sierra Leone training school accredited as an ECOWAS centre of excellence, which would have brought in EU funding. However, France's counter-proposal, to designate its logistics training school in Burkina Faso a centre of excellence, was eventually adopted by ECOWAS
- In East Africa too, there have been divergences. The UK initially took the lead in supporting the East African brigade (EASBRIG) of the ASF but France was reluctant to acknowledge UK leadership and in 2007 provided a secure LAN for EASBRIG without discussing it with the UK. Such problems arise because there is no formal mechanism for deciding what the two countries can or should do together.

6. CONSTRAINTS ON COOPERATION

Given the pressures to cooperate and the potential benefits involved in pooling their resources, it is perhaps surprising that Anglo-French cooperation has been so limited outside the security field.⁵⁷ Constraints on cooperation have come from divergent interests, institutional factors and different state capacities.

6.1. Divergent Interests

NATO: France has traditionally seen ESDP missions as a way of working towards an autonomous European security identity, whilst the UK views ESDP operations as complementary to NATO and consistent with the maintenance of strong transatlantic security links. However, these entrenched views have been attenuated somewhat by President Sarkozy's decision in March 2009 to reintegrate France into NATO's high command and by the emergence of a 'spatial differentiation' between ESDP and NATO missions, whereby the EU takes the lead in sub-Saharan Africa and NATO is active in more geo-strategically important zones.⁵⁸

Africa's relative importance: For France, Africa plays a crucial role in enhancing its rank in the international pecking order, while for the UK, Africa is much more centrally a development issue.

Competition for influence: The fact that the UK and France have both sought, at times, to be the sole champion of Africa's interests in the global arena has also been a source of friction. This was clear when the Blair government launched the Commission for Africa report on Red Nose Day (a nationwide UK-specific event), then sought to impose its recommendations on the G8 at Gleneagles.⁵⁹ It was also evident when the French President announced in January 2009 the 'Sarkozy Plan', a unilateral initiative aimed at unlocking the dispute between Rwanda and the DRC over resources and border security.

Vested Interests: These are particularly pronounced either where the African countries concerned offer major trading opportunities (e.g. South Africa), oil (e.g. Nigeria), or where they are outlets for the projection of French power and the *rayonnement* of French culture. This applies to francophone Africa as a whole where France feels, according to former foreign minister Hubert Védrine, that there is 'a need to preserve French influence'.⁶⁰ There is also an anxiety that Britain's new interest in Africa has come at a time when France is said by some commentators to have 'lost Africa'.⁶¹

Colonial legacy: The UK and France continue to take the political lead in those countries that were their former colonies, with the UK concentrating on maintaining good bilateral relations with key ex-colonies, such as Nigeria in the west and Kenya in the east, and France traditionally focusing on its francophone '*pré carré*' (sphere of influence). As such, parts of the political establishment in both countries remain reluctant to give up or share 'sovereignty' over African policy or to lose autonomy in their traditional spheres of influence. This is especially evident in west and central Africa where, because of the density of its links, a presence in the region remains a strategic priority for France.

6.2. Institutional constraints

- *Lack of institutional counterparts*

- The most important example of this is the different UK and French institutional arrangements for supporting and promoting development in Africa. DFID, with a cabinet seat and a massive aid budget, has no clear counterpart in France. Indeed, there is no longer a French Development Ministry or even a Development Directorate within the MFA, and the AFD feels closer to the German aid agencies, GTZ and KfW, than to the DFID.⁶²
 - There is no exact counterpart of a Foreign Office Minister for Africa in France, and there has been a greater tendency for the MFA to be left out of the loop by the Elysée than there is for the FCO to be excluded, at least on African policy, by Downing Street.
 - The MOD in Britain is more centralised and has greater input into defence policy than the Defence Ministry in France, which often plays second fiddle to the President's and Prime Minister's offices.
- ***Different 'national policy styles'***
- The FCO, with its deliberate approach to decision-making based on consensus-building is anxious not to be dragged into unplanned initiatives proposed by France's spontaneous and energetic Foreign Minister.⁶³
 - Conversely, the French foreign policy establishment has at times perceived the FCO's approach to be a form of foot-dragging and is keen not to be sucked into the quantitative, announcement-driven approach used by Downing Street and DFID over recent years.
- ***Different sectors and procedures***
- Britain's emphasis on primary education and budgetary aid are not matched in France, which attaches greater importance to tertiary education and prefers more visible project work.⁶⁴
 - France's focus on infrastructure and cultural promotion finds little or no echo in the DFID. Furthermore, although it has a large bilateral aid programme, the DFID likes to think of itself as having a multilateralist outlook and a strong strategic focus, which facilitates cooperation with the 'like-minded countries'.
 - By contrast, the French aid administration is more oriented towards bilateral assistance, lacks strategic direction and employs a *modus operandi* that brings it closer to its Mediterranean neighbours.
 - While DFID potentially offers opportunities for SSR through the Africa CPP, this is not really intended for 'hard' operations of the type that France is particularly well placed to undertake thanks to its pre-positioned forces in Africa.

Needless to say, all of the above institutional constraints have been compounded by cultural and language barriers as well as by a certain lack of trust between officials which makes relations between officials less 'natural' than in the US-UK special relationship and less concerted than in the Franco-German tandem.

6.3. Different 'Extractive' Capacities

The limits to Anglo-French cooperation depend ultimately on the 'extractive capacity' of the two states.

➤ ***Mobilising Aid***

- In the UK, there has recently been little difficulty in mobilising high levels of aid, including three-year budget allocations from the Treasury, given strong support from the public, NGOs and even the Conservative Party in opposition.
- This does not, however, usually translate into cooperation with the French, since UK government departments must meet Public Service Agreement targets and must be satisfied that assistance will be delivered effectively by partners such as France. This is by no means guaranteed since, despite recent improvements in the effectiveness of French aid through the introduction of results-based management

tools and the reinforcement of evaluation units, France is simply not as focused on economic development matters as the UK, particularly the DFID, and does not take its commitments to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and donor harmonisation as seriously as does DFID.

- This disparity in available resources is a constraint on collaboration, as is the fact that the French government has enormous difficulty in freeing up enough bilateral aid to be a credible partner on development. The French state's extractive capacity has clearly been limited by membership of the 1997 European Stability Pact, by internal spending cuts agreed under the 2001 Loi organique relative aux Lois de Finances and by commitments to the EDF.⁶⁵

➤ ***Mobilising Troops***

- Conversely, the UK finds it much harder than France to mobilise troops for ESDP missions. There are several reasons for this. First, Britain's small professional army, with its heavy commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, is more overstretched than the French armed forces. Second, the UK government has to seek parliamentary approval for such missions. Third, successive British governments have generally been sceptical about autonomous ESDP operations, wary of any mission that might undermine NATO and anxious about any future prospect of a European operational HQ being established to coordinate such missions. These concerns are likely to be to the forefront under the current Conservative-led coalition government.
- The situation is different in France where the French President finds it comparatively easy to approve military operations, particularly ESDP missions, not least because France has 9000 pre-positioned troops in Africa and its parliament and civil society have little say in such decisions.

7. CONCLUSION: STILL PUNCHING BELOW THEIR WEIGHT?

This report has shown that:

- Britain and France have increased to a significant, but ultimately limited, extent their collaboration on Africa since Saint-Malo;
- Formal and above all informal linkages have developed;
- Policy cooperation has been enhanced, particularly on security issues, though less so on poverty reduction and democracy promotion.

It has also argued, however, that:

- While there has been some success in 'deconflictualising' UK and French policies on Africa, the UK-French connection is a long way from the 'entente formidable' or even the 'entente amicale' that Gordon Brown and Nicolas Sarkozy, respectively, hailed in March 2008.⁶⁶
- The Anglo-French relationship falls well short of the instinctive rapport enjoyed by the UK and US and is less firmly rooted and less institutionalised than the Franco-German tandem. Significantly too, it is not underpinned by the same security interests as the 'special relationship' or the same economic considerations as the Franco-German alliance.
- It is instead a pragmatic arrangement whereby, according to one FCO official, 'We cooperate with the French on Africa where it is useful to do so. It is a loose framework and one of many we work in'.

In practice, the relationship is 'uneven, personality-driven and event- and political interest-driven', with cooperation most likely in the following instances:

- on high-profile occasions (e.g. summits, the announcement of major initiatives (e.g. on vaccinations));
- at the height of major crises (e.g. Operation Artemis, joint Miliband-Kouchner visit);
- in parts of Africa where the UK and France are not the former colonial power (DRC, Guinea-Bissau – ESDP missions);⁶⁷
- on innovative/new schemes that are likely to raise fresh capital (UNITAID/ IFFM, possibly even Tobin taxes);
- where key officials and politicians are aware of and have embraced the Saint-Malo process or seen the advantages of closer cooperation;

Conversely collaboration is unlikely where:

- there are competing commercial or other interests at stake (e.g., RSA, Nigeria);
- one power has a dominant or leading role (France in francophone West Africa, UK in Sudan and east Africa);
- there is no crisis or media attention (e.g. Ghana which had originally been singled out for close cooperation but where none has taken place);
- the administration has not signed up to the new agenda (French Foreign Ministry on joint education initiative, DFID on Saint-Malo as a whole, particularly after the Niger scheme was not reciprocated);
- lower-ranking officials are unaware of, opposed to, or simply do not have time to advance the idea of any privileged Anglo-French collaboration;
- the gap between UK claims to an ethically driven approach and France's more overtly 'realpolitik' stance is too great: the different UK and French perspectives on the MDGs is a case in point.

7.1. Whither?

The future of Anglo-French collaboration in Africa is hard to predict and will depend largely on the assessment that UK and French policy-makers make of the risks involved in closer cooperation as opposed to the dangers associated with non-cooperation (see section 8). There are nonetheless a number of reasons for supposing that the UK and France may not be inclined to develop significantly closer relations:

- Saint-Malo was less about the needs of Africa (which according to some interlocutors was chosen 'by default') and more about bringing Britain and France closer and, in the process, enabling them to exert greater influence over European African policy.
- Given its anti-European credentials and Atlanticist tendencies, the new Conservative-dominated government is likely to be less interested in such a European agenda and to be less attracted to a strong partnership with France, particularly if this is going to involve an increase in the number of autonomous ESDP missions.⁶⁸
- The Conservative-led administration appears committed to a results-based and trade-oriented approach to aid.⁶⁹ While this might offer scope for strategic collaboration with France on ways of reducing duplication, it is unlikely to encourage more direct programmatic forms of cooperation with the French government.⁷⁰
- Governments of both countries will in the next few years, in the context of the continuing economic downturn, be focused primarily on domestic economic and political issues. Africa may well slip down the political agenda as a result, with the result that policy-makers devote less time and energy to maintaining and strengthening the Anglo-French 'entente' on Africa.
- Reductions in public spending mean that there will be less resources available for foreign and defence policy cooperation in future. There is likely therefore to be less money available in future for ESDP missions and indeed for other Anglo-French joint initiatives and actions on African issues.

At the same time, however, there are – and will continue to be – many pressures on the UK and French governments to collaborate more actively on African issues.

- The creation of the European External Action Service will increase pressure for policy coordination as its role increases and member states seek to cut the costs of individual diplomatic missions.
- The fact that Africa is changing rapidly will, as a recent Chatham House report has observed, oblige the UK, France and other G8 countries to adapt to these new realities, to move away from 'an emotive and humanitarian conception of Africa' and recognise the benefits of approaches, possibly even joint policies, to encourage 'private sector engagement'.⁷¹
- Fiscal and resource constraints mean that neither country can any longer afford to bear the costs and risks of intervening on their own on key issues in Africa, such as peace and security, migration, development, promotion of good governance and climate change.
- As the EU powers with the strongest continuing interest in Africa, the UK and France do not have many other credible alternative partners, particularly in the security field. (Britain's preferred ally in most

foreign policy situations, the US, was too ‘unpredictable’ on Africa and too uninterested in its development,⁷² while France’s ideal partner, Germany, was too reluctant to intervene militarily and too quick to block funding for European missions).

8. RISK FACTORS

While a number of interlocutors expressed frustration at the working practices of their counterparts in the UK or French administration, **the consensus was that Anglo-French cooperation was important and that cooperation should therefore be taken further.** While it was acknowledged that there were risks associated with closer cooperation, the risks associated with not cooperating were seen as greater.

8.1. Risks Inherent in Closer Cooperation

The potential pitfalls associated with closer Anglo-French cooperation include the following:

- the risk that the UK and France might be tying themselves into closer collaboration in a part of the world, sub-Saharan Africa, that is unlikely to bring the same immediate or obvious financial or geo-strategic benefits as for example the emerging economies of Asia and the Gulf States;
- the danger that the UK or France could be tempted to set aside their immediate national interest in particular African countries in order to be seen to be working together in partnership;
- the risk of imposing meetings and additional reporting requirements on British and French officials and thereby increasing transaction costs, at a time of strained budgetary circumstances and planned cutbacks;
- the possibility that such cooperation might be perceived internally (ie, in certain government departments) or externally (e.g. by other states, particularly within the EU) as an exclusive partnership that precludes the development of other partnerships, for example with the ‘likeminded countries’ on promoting poverty reduction;
- the risk that one side does not keep its side of the bargain and that one state seeks to enhance its relative power within the international system at the expense of the other.

8.2. Risks Associated with Failing to Cooperate

While the above dangers cannot be ignored, nor should they be overstated, as the UK and France have been building up trust for over a decade now and as there are checks and balances in place – notably the linkages between elite officials and the ongoing exchange programmes – to ensure that the relationship does not, over time, work to the advantage of only one of the two states.

Indeed, interviews with officials and politicians suggest strongly that the above dangers are outweighed greatly by the risks associated with failing to cooperate:

- **the risk that UK and French claims to ‘great power status’ and to permanent seats on the UNSC will be further undermined**, as their limited individual capacity to exert influence south of the Sahara is cruelly exposed;
- **the risk that the UK and France will see their influence in Europe diminished**, particularly if they cease to be the motor behind the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and thereby open up the prospect of other EU powers that are not intrinsically interested in Africa directing Europe’s focus more towards the east, particularly the European Neighbourhood;
- the risk that the UK and France **will lose influence in, as well as missing the opportunities represented by, Africa.**

In this context, it was recognised by interviewees that:

- Britain and France should not ignore Africa’s strategic importance in the world, which can only continue to grow in future decades. Indeed, as Tom Cargill has recently pointed out: ‘Africa is the foundation of the global supply chain with 40 per cent of global mineral reserves, strategically located between hemispheres and time zones, with a population of a billion people and over a quarter of UN member states (and therefore votes) gathered together’.⁷³
- the UK and France share a broad set of common values (human rights, democratisation, governance and human security) that they are more likely to promote effectively by working together than in isolation, particularly when it is considered that many of the emerging G20 economies do not share this agenda and are, in some cases, seen as actively undermining it.
- Britain and France have a common interest in tackling poverty, promoting accountable governments, addressing the problem of climate change and building peace south of the Sahara, especially as these two former colonial powers will inevitably face media and public scrutiny for any failure to act and are likely to be high up on the list of targets should parts of Africa (e.g., Sudan, Somalia) become breeding grounds for terrorism, The UK and France are moreover likely to remain first-choice destinations for African asylum seekers and immigrants seeking to escape from problems such as chronic insecurity, economic under-development and grinding poverty, not to mention the additional challenges posed by climate change, desertification and so-called ‘land grabs’..
- The UK and France share an interest in increasing private sector involvement in Africa if they are to provide a real and effective counterweight to Chinese influence on the continent;
- the UK and France are the only two countries that can undertake significant military deployments in Africa and that can therefore ensure that future EU foreign policy is more than just soft power or words.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the backdrop outlined above, most officials and politicians interviewed recognise that the UK and France need to cooperate in order to maximise their impact in Africa. One former UK Minister has stressed the need for cooperation, arguing that the British and French **need to ‘use our history cleverly’ so that ‘one plus one equals three’ even if that is ‘still in a world where you need ten to score on a lot of problems’**.⁷⁴

The recommendations below build upon suggestions by officials and politicians and caution against substantial cutbacks that will erode their expertise on, economic and political links to, and cultural affinities with, Africa. The bulk of these proposals should be adopted if policy-makers:

- are to adopt a strategic approach to Africa that takes account of the twenty-first century realities of the continent, such as the increasing threat to UK and French positions in Africa from new external actors;
- aim to develop a meaningful relationship at a bilateral and ‘bi-multi’ level which builds on existing gains in order to construct an effective partnership that is in the strategic self-interest of both countries.

If, however, officials and politicians are not seeking strategic approach but wish simply to deconflictualise UK and French approaches to Africa more systematically and encourage active cooperation only at moments of crisis, then the recommendations (indicated by a * in the text) would seem to be the most important.

i) Strengthening Resolve at the Centre

There has been some enthusiasm at the highest level to improve Anglo-French coordination. There is, however, a need for greater political resolve at all levels in following up on discourse. This could be achieved by:

- relaunching Saint-Malo on the basis of a clear set of mutually owned aims and objectives;
- accepting that Anglo-French cooperation is not merely a means to an ill-defined end but can also be a goal in itself, a way of improving UK/ French understanding and enhancing policy impact in Africa.
- ensuring that capitals take the lead on collaboration and regularly communicate the value of such cooperation to posts in Africa, Brussels and New York; the capitals might, for example, set specific targets for cooperation (e.g. regular meetings at ambassadorial level, development of joint projects, progress on specific issues);

- *not leaving cooperation solely or largely to individuals and their will to engage, which appears to decline markedly lower down the hierarchy.

ii) **‘Institutionalising’ Linkages**

There is no need to develop ‘a runaway bureaucracy’ to better coordinate positions but there would be mileage in moving away from the current personality-reliant approach by:

- instituting at least one annual meeting between the UK and French Foreign Ministers specifically to review progress on Anglo-French cooperation; this might be held at the mid-way point between annual Franco-British summits
- *creating a post of coordinator within the FCO and Quai d’Orsay with responsibility for improving communication on African initiatives (see below), and locating this person in the office of a senior official (Permanent Secretary, Private Office of Foreign Secretary, Office of Political Director);
- giving the coordinator the enhanced role of building institutional memory (see below); liaising with research analysts and specialists, notably within Chatham House and IFRI; highlighting possible synergies; and monitoring progress on targets for collaboration;
- co-locating some embassies as promised at Saint-Malo and moving towards joint embassies, as a prelude to the European External Action Service (EEAS);
- building bridges, notably in areas of common expertise (e.g. the promotion of democracy and human rights), between the Commonwealth and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, which often appear to enjoy a semi-competitive relationship, particularly in Africa;
- *expanding and tightening the focus of existing exchanges (discussed below).

iii) **Bolstering Exchange Programmes**

The current exchange programme has certainly increased mutual understanding but it has remained limited in scope, with some postings being unilaterally cancelled or delayed. There is much to be gained from:

- extending the number of exchanges along the lines of the model employed by France and Germany. Up to ten exchanges annually across the FCO, DFID, MOD might be a reasonable target;
- ensuring that all key parts of the administration are included in exchanges. This would mean bringing in the AFD which has not been involved, resuscitating MOD postings and bolstering the number of Foreign Ministry/ DFID-related exchanges;
- including within these exchanges some high-level positions, perhaps at Head or Assistant Head of Department level. This would be compatible with the logic of the emerging EEAS;
- *on completion of exchanges, participants writing and circulating a frank report outlining lessons learned and proffered; the report would be submitted to and disseminated by the coordinator.

iv) **Improving Communication**

Many communication problems are down to a lack of awareness of the names/ contact details of interlocutors in France or the UK. These issues could be addressed by:

- *the compilation (by the coordinators’ offices suggested above) of a sub-directory of the key contacts on Africa within the UK and French systems; this would include Foreign, Development and Defence officials in London and Paris as well as in posts in Africa, Brussels and New York;
- the subsequent expansion of this directory to include details of key specialists outside government and officials from other governments, the European Council and the European Commission with relevant expertise;
- reducing the linguistic barriers to exchanges: this would mean expanding French language training particularly for DFID staff and some enhancement of English language training within the AFD.

v) **Building Institutional Memory**

The FCO does have institutional memory in the form of research analysts and the internal matrix produced after the 2008 Franco-British summit. The Quai d’Orsay can also draw on the expertise of the Centre d’analyse et de prévision.

There is nonetheless the need to do more to build institutional memory, so that policy initiatives are not launched in isolation from or without reference to earlier initiatives and so that the experience of working on joint projects and the lessons learned from personnel exchanges are widely shared. At present, there is no mechanism for ensuring that this happens.

The current gaps in institutional memory have contributed to a tendency for home departments to see staff exchanges as an imposition that brings no benefit in terms of improved working or policy effectiveness and at worst they may be seen by participants as leading to a dead-end in career terms.

This issue can be addressed through the recommendations listed above and in sections (vi) and (vii) below, such as the appointment of a coordinator, the dissemination of reports by staff on exchanges, the wide distribution of reports from joint strategy meetings etc.

vi) Enhancing Policy Coherence

There is a need for greater clarity as to who is responsible for what within each system. Complaints about lack of ‘joined-up’ government were frequently expressed by interlocutors. While there are joint FCO/ DFID units and meetings attended by both the AFD and French Foreign Ministry, there appears to be a need to build stronger internal bridges within the UK and French systems.

- One step towards addressing this might be to create regional political aid advisers (perhaps secondees from the Foreign Ministries to the DFID/ AFD), who would serve a purpose that was somewhere between First Secretary (Chancery) and Social Development Adviser. This would also overcome a criticism that is regularly levelled at the current ‘technocratic approach’ to development, namely that it does not take adequate account of political realities in recipient countries.⁷⁵ These political analysts would feature prominently in the shared sub-directory (see (iv) above).

vi) Encouraging Strategic Thinking

The UK and French Foreign Ministry and DFID officials both see advantages in holding regular strategic meetings to compare goals, deconflictualise positions and decide where to invest time and influence. These gatherings should continue, with greater input from the AFD.

They should address, alongside short and medium term issues, long-term priorities for Africa and assess whether the means are there to achieve them by working jointly or with other partners. Such issues might include:

- What approach should be adopted from 2015 with respect to the MDGs?
- What relative influence will the UK and France have in Africa with the rise of other external powers, many of which do not share the same concerns with regard to democracy and human rights, and how can this influence be maximised?
- What will African infrastructure, the African economy, and the African Peace and Security architecture look like in 30 years’ time? And what mechanisms will produce what outcome?
- What can the two countries do together, in order to address effectively and in collaboration with African partners, the challenges of climate change?

The UK and France might also use these occasions to build up institutional learning capacity and secure agreement on which agency is appropriate to which task. Consideration should also be given to ways of encouraging greater cooperation between the Commonwealth and La Francophonie.

vii) Identifying Policy Synergies

Such meetings should also help to confirm what would appear to be possible synergies for cooperation in the following areas.

➤ Poverty Reduction

The UK sees the way forward in terms **not** of joint projects (which are time-consuming and labour-intensive to set up relative to impact) but of strategic collaboration and joint efforts to bring others on board behind important initiatives. This approach has been used successfully with the Africa Development Bank on debt sustainability.

The French appreciate strategic consultations but are also keen to develop **common projects** that afford visibility.

- There is clearly a case for joint projects/ programmes. However, in order to build up trust, UK-funded and French-financed projects would have to be undertaken more or less simultaneously rather than sequentially. Alternatively, the monies would have to be committed at the same time and, in effect, held ‘in escrow’. **Financial mix packages** could be created such as DFID grants combined with AFD loans.

The obvious areas for **silent partnerships and joint schemes** include:

- healthcare;
- private sector-led development and growth which has been highlighted by the UK’s Conservative-led government and which has long been a priority of the AFD.

*While education is not an obvious area for cooperation given the UK’s emphasis on primary education and France’s longstanding interest in tertiary education, there could be scope for synergies in the form of scholarships for joint Anglo-French postgraduate degree programmes and joint Anglo-French PhDs.

Above all, there is a need to move away from the current announcement-driven approach to cooperation on poverty reduction which involves the UK lobbying for vast sums of aid which the French are unable to deliver.

➤ **Promoting Democracy and Human Rights**

Much of the cooperation on democracy promotion takes place through the EU and this is likely to continue on a case-by-case basis, particularly as the current Conservative-led government appears to adapt a pragmatic approach to the promotion of democracy and human rights and the current French administration follows a politically expedient approach in many instances.

A more propitious area for enhanced collaboration might be **governance**, particularly at the local level where France has extensive experience.

Another field in which collaboration has remained weak is the **civilian dimension of SSR** (policing, justice, army reform). This is an area where UK/ DFID has considerable expertise and where France could benefit from closer cooperation, particularly given its growing interest in the concept of ‘fragile states’ and conflict prevention.

➤ **Security Cooperation**

This is the most propitious area for continued and enhanced cooperation. Since Saint-Malo, France and Britain have built new institutional bridges and cooperated in ESDP missions/ training African peacekeepers and developed a more unified understanding of the problems confronting Africa and of the link between security and development. Given the emergence of major new actors in Africa and the heightened perception of the threats posed by Africa, France and Britain have felt the need to align their agendas, either bilaterally or, more usually, bi-multilaterally, as was the case with the development of the Africa-EU strategy in advance of the Lisbon summit.⁷⁶ However, there remains a strong sense of ‘division of labour’ between France and the UK with the former focusing its operations in francophone Africa and the latter in anglophone Africa.

In order to improve the effectiveness of cooperation and address the problem of ‘fragile states’ in Africa there is a need:

- to develop a joint dialogue, in the context of the ‘International Dialogue on Peace-Building and State-Building’, with African partners, in order to understand better the problems of insecurity and instability in Africa and the measures needed to address these problems.⁷⁷

- to agree a sustainable and reliable **funding mechanism** for supporting AU peacekeeping forces;
- for the UK and French governments to work together to improve their ability to **find out what the AU and Africa’s sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS want** – rather than setting their own agenda and proposing solutions – and then draw up plans over a realistic timescale (e.g. 3-5 years) and establish a reliable funding stream to achieve this;
- for the two governments to coordinate in a systematic way, both bilaterally and through the APF, their **support for the training of African peace-keepers** by the AU and by African sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS.

References

- ¹ The FCO press release, ‘Saint-Malo ten years after’, contains a link to the ‘full text’ of the declaration that actually omits Saint-Malo II; see www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=10435411 (accessed 20.10.09).
- ² Douglas Webber (ed.), *The Franco-German Relationship* (London : Routledge, 1999), p. 2.
- ³ John Baylis (ed.), *Anglo-American Relations since 1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.155.
- ⁴ In addition to this report, the research project will lead to the publication of an edited book, *From Rivalry to Partnership? New Approaches to the Challenges of Africa* (Ashgate 2011) and six academic articles.
- ⁵ At the 2004 Anglo-French summit, the communiqué stressed that: ‘Our joint aim is to reduce poverty in Africa [and] ... to help build lasting peace and democracy; <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/Franco-British-summit-conclusions.html>
- ⁶ This exchange has led to seminars involving UK and French Foreign Ministry staff to discuss, for example, policy towards Sudan and the Sahel.
- ⁷ Personal communication, FCO, 2008.
- ⁸ Personal communication, FCO, 2009.
- ⁹ See the unpublished reports by Niagalé Bagayoko (L’appareil de sécurité de la République centrafricaine and Cameroon’s Security Apparatus) and by Niagalé Bagayoko and Jeffrey Isima (Security Systems in Francophone and Anglophone Africa).
- ¹⁰ Gordon Cumming, *Aid to Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 64.
- ¹¹ Neil Fenton, *Understanding the Security Council* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.140.
- ¹² Richard Youngs ‘A New Approach in the Great Lakes?’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 22, 3 (2004), p. 306.
- ¹³ David Styan, ‘Does Britain have an African Policy?’ in *Centre d’Etudes d’Afrique Noire, Afrique Politique* (Paris: Karthala, 1996), pp. 261-86.
- ¹⁴ The UK actually opposed its operationalisation up to the European Council in Laeken in December 2001. Loisel, ‘Entente’, p. 54.
- ¹⁵ Krause, A., ‘The European Union’s Africa Policy: the Commission as Policy Entrepreneur in the CFSP’, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 8, 2003, pp. 221-37.
- ¹⁶ Personal communication, former UK official in New York, 2008; *Lettre du Continent*, no. 1429, 23.10.09.
- ¹⁷ A coordinated UK-French approach to lobbying the AU is now seen as vital to securing Russian and Chinese support for UNSC resolutions on Africa; personal communication, Addis Ababa, 2009.
- ¹⁸ Personal communications, UK and French officials in New York, London and Paris, 2008.
- ¹⁹ *The Observer*, 9.1.05.
- ²⁰ www.ambafrance-uk.org/Political-cooperation.html, retrieved 23.6.10.
- ²¹ Such statements were repeated and refined at subsequent summits, notably in 2001, 2004 and 2008.
- ²² Attendance by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is, however, sporadic; personal communication, DFID, 2009.
- ²³ See www.nytimes.com/auth/login?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/20/world/europe/20iht-france.4.6757003.html (retrieved 20.7.07). Brown and Sarkozy subsequently wrote a joint article published in *The Times* and *Le Monde* on 31.8.07.
- ²⁴ Personal communication, FCO official, 2009.
- ²⁵ Britain leads on the MDGs and France on Climate Change. While headed up by the EU, the Peace and Security panel is chaired by a French general and heavily influenced by the UK.
- ²⁶ Personal communications, FCO official, 2009.
- ²⁷ Personal communications, former UK official in New York, 2008.
- ²⁸ Personal communications, UK and French officials in New York and Paris, 2008-09.
- ²⁹ Personal communication, FCO official, 2008.
- ³⁰ Personal communication, Whitehall insider, 2009.
- ³¹ Personal communication, FCO, London, 2009.
- ³² See Alex Vines and Thomas Cargill, ‘Le monde doit nous juger sur l’Afrique’, *Politique Africaine*, 2006, 101, pp. 132-148.
- ³³ Most decisions are by qualified majority voting, with votes being a function of country contributions to the European Development Fund. France, Germany and Britain have contributed 24.3 per cent, 23.4 per cent and 12.7 per cent respectively; *European Report*, 23 February 2005.
- ³⁴ Initially conceived by the French and Brazilian Presidents in 2003, UNITAID was subsequently launched by France, Britain, Brazil, Chile and Norway; www.ambafrance-uk.org/UNAIDS-UNITAID.html (retrieved 2.2.10).

- ³⁵ OECD, Peer Review: France (Paris: OECD, 2008), p. 40.
- ³⁶ www.guardian.co.uk/news/2008/mar/27/sarkozy.brown.france.statevisit.
- ³⁷ The French administration has retained policies that sit uncomfortably with the MDGs, not least aid tying and the allocation of a decreasing share of aid to LLDCs. OECD, Peer Review: France, p. 15. The MFA for its part has continued to prioritise French cultural projects, while the AFD, which has taken over many of the overseas development functions of the MFA, has retained a banking culture and a strong emphasis on hard loans, the productive sector and profitable investments.
- ³⁸ Personal communications, MFA and DFID officials, 2009.
- ³⁹ DFID, Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2008-09, Volume I (London: DFID, 2009), p. 9.
- ⁴⁰ At the 2002 Monterrey Conference, France promised to increase aid to 0.5 per cent of GNP in 2007 and 0.7 per cent by 2012. However, France did not meet its 2007 target and has postponed the 0.7 per cent commitment to 2015; see OECD, Peer Review: France, p. 39.
- ⁴¹ Personal communications, FCO (2009) and MFA (2008).
- ⁴² www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/DRC-countryplan08-10%5B1%5D.pdf (retrieved 12.2.10).
- ⁴³ Personal communication, MFA official, 2009.
- ⁴⁴ Personal communication, former UK official in New York, 2009.
- ⁴⁵ France was not one of the four European countries (Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Germany) to publicly condemn the Zimbabwean regime at Lisbon; European Report, 11.12.07.
- ⁴⁶ Richard Youngs, *Is European Democracy Promotion on the Wane?*, CEPS Working Document No. 292, 2008.
- ⁴⁷ Personal communication, former UK Minister, 2009.
- ⁴⁸ Porteous, 'British government ...', p. 286.
- ⁴⁹ See 'Entre Paris et Dakar, la "Françafrique" reste active', *Le Monde*, 12.6.10; 'Trois ans après sa mort annoncée ...', *Agence France-Presse*, 28.5.10; Tony Chafer, 'Chirac and la Françafrique: no longer a family affair', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 13:1, 2005, pp. 7-24. Sometimes this can lead to gaps between official discourse, which condemns unconstitutional changes of government, and the stances of other French government spokesmen, who adopt a more nuanced position. On this 'para-diplomacy', see for example articles in *Libération*, 8.4.09, 17.7.09 on French reactions to the coup in Mauritania.
- ⁵⁰ For detailed analysis of UK-French security cooperation, see Tony Chafer and Gordon D. Cumming, 'Beyond Fashoda: Anglo-French Security Cooperation in Africa since Saint-Malo', *International Affairs* (forthcoming).
- ⁵¹ This proposal ran into problems over whether the force should be autonomous from or complementary to NATO. Full agreement was only reached, with German support, in 2001.
- ⁵² Niagalé Bagayoko, 'Les politiques européennes de prévention', *Les Champs de Mars*, second semester 2004, p. 103.
- ⁵³ *Le Figaro*, 6.3.06.
- ⁵⁴ Personal communication, FCO official, 2009.
- ⁵⁵ France nonetheless offered diplomatic support to the British intervention in Sierra Leone. The UK also backed France's request for UN peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire; see Loisel, 'Entente cordiale', p. 52.
- ⁵⁶ The UK replaced its initial training programme with a joined-up (FCO-DFID-MOD) mechanism, the CPP, which, until 2008, included one fund for Africa and another for the rest of the world. This scheme has continued to function unilaterally and without any mechanism for linking up with other powers on conflict management.
- ⁵⁷ Loisel, 'Entente' p. 56 and www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf5/beu_ukfr_nov03_defence (retrieved 5.12.09).
- ⁵⁸ Tom Dyson, 'Convergence and Divergence in Post-Cold War British, French, and German Military Reforms', *Security Studies* 17 (4), 2008, pp. 725-74.
- ⁵⁹ Vines and Cargill, 'Le monde....', p. 135.
- ⁶⁰ Personal communication, 2009.
- ⁶¹ See Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, *Comment la France a Perdu l'Afrique* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2005).
- ⁶² Personal communications, AFD, Paris, 2009.
- ⁶³ Personal communication, former UK Minister, 2009.
- ⁶⁴ To illustrate, in 2006, France allocated 151 million US dollars to basic schooling compared to 1.2 billion dollars for tertiary education; OECD, Peer Review: France, p. 15.
- ⁶⁵ The UK government has also faced budgetary restrictions, particularly since the 2008-09 global financial crisis. Moreover, its long-term commitment to SSR is in doubt: in August 2008, the UK's two conflict prevention pools were combined, and, in March 2009, the conflict prevention budget, which had never allocated more than £65m per year to Africa, was merged with the Stabilisation Aid Fund and the peacekeeping budget (which pays for the UK's peacekeeping responsibilities at the UN). In the process, the overall amount of funding for these activities was cut and the budget for Africa reduced to £43 million.
- ⁶⁶ Federal News Service, 27.3.08.
- ⁶⁷ In Guinea-Bissau, too, there were constructive discussions between the UK and France before the deployment of the ESDP mission in February 2008.
- ⁶⁸ 'Le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Bernard Kouchner, a jugé mercredi que les conservateurs britanniques étaient prêts à collaborer largement avec la France sur le plan bilatéral, mais peu disposés à des initiatives dans un cadre européen', *Agence France-Presse*, 7.4.10.
- ⁶⁹ Conservative Party, *One World Conservatism: A Conservative Agenda for International Development*, Green Paper no. 11, London, 2009.

⁷⁰ <http://survie.org/francafrique/article/indignation-des-ong-suite-aux> (retrieved 20.2.10).

⁷¹ Tom Cargill recognises that Africa's new partners, such as China, Brazil, Turkey and South Korea, 'have brought new entrepreneurialism, energy and recognition of mutual benefits'; see 'Our Common Strategic Interests: Africa's Role in the Post-G8 World, Chatham House Report, London, 2010, vii.

⁷² Porteous 'British government...', p. 293.

⁷³ www.chathamhouse.org.uk/media/comment/g8_g20/-/1117/ (retrieved 27.6.10)

⁷⁴ Personal communication, former UK Minister, 2009.

⁷⁵ Tom Porteous, *Britain in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2008), pp. 23-4.

⁷⁶ Elowson, 'The joint Africa-EU strategy', p. 27, n. 48.

⁷⁷ This initiative was launched under the joint aegis of the OECD and UN in April 2010 in East Timor.