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# SOME REMARKS ON THE ANGLO-FRENCH DEFENCE TREATY

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# SOME REMARKS ON THE ANGLO-FRENCH DEFENCE TREATY

There is a well-known (though probably apocryphal) story told of Lord Raglan, the Commander of the British Expeditionary Force to the Crimea, concerning an incident a few days before the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854. Emerging from his tent in the early morning, he was plunged into panic that his encampment had been overrun by the enemy, because he saw a large number of French soldiers. It was only with difficulty that the senile veteran of Waterloo could be restored from his subsequent swoon with the reminder that these men were now our allies. Similar incomprehension and semi-consciousness seemed to overcome a large section of the British media at the news of the signing, in November of last year, of the Anglo-French Defence Treaty. 'The Sun', for instance, usually almost clinically obsessed with France and the military, confined itself to a restrained report just before the show-business section. And it has remained one of the least reported, and analysed, of this Government's policies, whilst being, without question, one of its most significant.

Since 1815, no other major country has been more consistently our ally than France. It is a curiosity of history that when the Entente Cordiale was being negotiated in the spring of 1904, the only extant British war plans against a great power were in the Admiralty, for a naval conflict with the United States. Naturally, Washington has loomed very large in the emergence of the Treaty. Its origins can be most directly traced back to President Sarkozy's visit to President Bush in the summer of 2008, that led to France re-joining the military structures of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in March 2009 (thereby ending a policy of detachment which had lasted since 1966). This is not to dismiss entirely the legacy of the 1998 St Malo accord. Prime Minister Blair did present that, to President Clinton, as encouraging a French rapprochement with NATO. But there is no indication this was in President Chirac's mind. And the total exclusion of the strategic dimension then is very striking. Moreover, it would be a mistake to underestimate the caesura caused by the Iraq War, which extended to all aspects of Britain's European diplomacy. President Sarkozy was at pains to make 'a fresh start' with the Americans; both he and Prime Minister Cameron used the same phrase at the lunch following the signature of the Treaty.

The United States has long pursued a general policy of encouraging greater European defence cooperation – and indeed integration – within NATO. The most dramatic example of this was the proposal in 1954, formulated by Ambassador Stassen and Minister Pleven, to create a European Army (the European Defence Community) as a means of avoiding West German national rearmament in response to the aggravated Soviet threat following the suppression of the East German uprisings the previous year. This included Britain (despite Churchill describing it as a ‘sludgy amalgam’). Its failure, as a result of its narrow rejection by the Assemblée Nationale (it would have passed at Westminster), directly precipitated the convening of the Messina Conference, 15 months later, which led to the Treaty of Rome. Such (often contrary) interplay between defence cooperation and wider European integration remains a critical theme. It is also a feature of the Treaty. One reason for British engagement is certainly the growing sense that defence, above all strategic defence, affords a ‘developing opportunity’ to exert real influence on European affairs, ‘to counter-balance the possible loss of influence through not participating in the Euro’.<sup>1</sup>

President Bush was not known for perceiving America’s weakness. He undoubtedly regarded the French return to the core of NATO as an American victory and the accompanying understanding with President Sarkozy that the United States would use its influence to persuade Britain towards more bilateral defence cooperation with France as essentially merely a revival of the St Malo agenda, in the light of the then still underestimated pressures for financial retrenchment. His successor has made a very different, and altogether more sober, assessment. Over recent months, both Robert Gates and Leon Panetta have been famously outspoken about the United States’ changing geopolitical priorities, in particular ‘away from Europe towards the Pacific’, and its determination to see ‘Europeans do more for their defence at every level’. Symbolic of this new strategy has been the supporting role upon which the United States has insisted in the conflict in Libya. The problem is obvious: precisely those pressures which are encouraging the United States to wish European NATO members to assume a greater share of the burden of their defence, are also causing them to be increasingly reluctant to make the expenditure necessary to do so. Far from raising, or even maintaining, their present military budgets, Europeans are everywhere decreasing them, sometimes quite dramatically. The European members of NATO together spend barely 40% of the United States defence budget and can deploy for expeditionary warfare only some 15% of the number of soldiers available to the Americans. Nevertheless, the 27 countries of the European Union have half a million more soldiers than the United States.

In October last year, then Secretary Fox announced defence cuts of nearly 8% out of a total of some £33 billion, or 2.7% of GDP, the second highest share of national income (after Greece at 2.9%!) in the European Union. These were the most stringent since the end of the Cold War. For several commentators, their actual scale was matched only by their apparent incoherence, symbolised by the decision to have two new carriers,

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1 Remarks made by Quentin Davies, former Labour Defence Minister, and formerly a pro-European Conservative, who is responsible for taking forward the negotiations on the Treaty prior to the 2010 General Election.

but without any fixed-wing aircraft to fly from them, for up to eight years. But easily the most significant economy was the allocation of the costs (currently estimated at around £25 billion for four boats, but excluding the price of the warheads) of the Trident nuclear deterrent renewal programme to the normal defence budget, rather than, as had hitherto always been the case, to a special central fund. Several experts, most notably Professor Chalmers,<sup>2</sup> have pointed out that the medium term (post 2016, when the decision to go ahead with the programme is now scheduled, known as 'High Gate') negative impact of this upon all other categories of military expenditure would be very considerable (a further reduction of the equipment budget of at least 10%), if no new money were to be forthcoming. For example, it might mean that one of the new carriers would have to be decommissioned without ever having deployed British fixed-wing aircraft: 'an incoherence that becomes an absurdity'.

France too, is in the process of undertaking cuts in defence spending. Almost simultaneously with his British counterpart, Minister Morin set out a reduction of 3% out of a total of some €44 billion, or 2% of GDP (the NATO 'guideline' level as a share of national wealth, the third highest in the European Union). These were across a range of capabilities but especially impacted the air force. This relatively modest exercise, which included some €2 billion to be recovered by disposals of property and other assets, seems likely to become more serious over the next few years. Some experts, like Doctor Tertrais,<sup>3</sup> have expressed the view that, even without a change of government following next year's elections, these could be at least a further 4-5% reduction. Larger numbers have been canvassed especially in Socialist circles, if the expenditure on the renewal of France's nuclear deterrent, which is covered by a separate budget, as was previously the case in Britain, is consolidated to any degree. The modernisation of the critical sea-launched portion of the Force de Frappe has been almost completed. The last of four submarines, 'Le Terrible', equipped with the latest M51 ballistic missile, entered service at the end of last year, whilst the remaining three boats will exchange their existing M45 missiles with the new system over the next 7 years. The costs of this have been broadly comparable to those now facing the British.

Obviously, one important objective of the Anglo-French Treaty has been to mitigate these stresses. Thus the new British aircraft-carriers are being modified to take French fixed-wing aircraft (as well as American machines). Similar modifications will be made to future French carriers to take British fixed-wing aircraft, as they become available. Again, the agreement to create a joint expeditionary force, will involve sharing training and other facilities and equipment, particularly with regard to the future A400M transport aircraft. But such initiatives all still, understandably, conform to the 'pooled but separable' model. They fall more into the category of making existing expenditure go further, rather than of allowing for substantial savings. These might arise over time, particularly if a real effort is made to consolidate the British and French defence industries: a process evidently fraught with difficulty, though the entry into force, in August, of the EU Defence Procurement Directive should help.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Chalmers, "Prospects for UK Defence after the SDSR", RUSI Future Defence Review Working Paper (2010)

<sup>3</sup> For example, in Bruno Tertrais, "L'apocalypse n'est pas pour demain", (2011).

Predictions by participants on the prospects vary greatly. If a true joint 'European prime contractor' were to emerge, the wider economic benefits for the two nations could also be considerable, notably in fast-growing third markets such as Saudi Arabia and India, where Europeans competing against each other lowers the overall economic benefits that are possible. But any significant impact on what looks like a looming military funding crisis in Europe over the next decade seems unlikely.

In the context of the Europeans in NATO being required by the Americans to do more for their own defence, the British and French determination to give priority to their strategic arsenals has a clear logic. Their unique contribution should increase the pressure on the purely conventionally-armed countries to, at the very least, maintain their capabilities. However, unsurprisingly perhaps, this is not happening. This year, only Denmark (to 1.4% of GDP), Slovenia (to 1.6%) and Turkey (to 2.4%) were increasing their military spending. Everywhere else, the rush to economize is accelerating. Germany's recent decision to cut a series of programmes (including orders for the Typhoon of, incidentally, some macro-economic significance, given the controversy over imbalances in the eurozone) came on top of the reductions of 20% over the next five years, to 1.4% of GDP (albeit with the end of conscription allowing, apparently, for a doubling of 'deployable forces') announced only last May. Italy is undertaking, or is committed to, cuts of 10%, to 1.5% of GDP (falling principally on the navy); Spain of 7%, to 1.1% of GDP (including the cancellation of a refit for one of its two carriers, the 'Principe de Asturias', which may render it nonoperational); the Netherlands of 8%, to 1.4% of GDP (including a significant reduction in the air force) and Poland of 9%, to 1.9% of GDP (again falling mostly on the air force). All this may be compared with what is happening in non-NATO EU members, such as Sweden, where spending has been frozen at just over 1% of GDP; or Austria, where there have been cuts of 20%, to 0.8% of GDP.<sup>4</sup>

It is generally recognised that Washington perceives the Anglo-French Defence Treaty as a potential catalyst for creating the greater cooperation on conventional capabilities in Europe they consider indispensable to securing the force levels necessary for maintaining the Alliance in broadly its present form: 'a new framework for an old objective'. It is hoped that, over time, other countries with a sufficient 'mutual confidence' and 'clarity of common purpose',<sup>5</sup> will associate themselves to particular programmes or projects. Certainly, commentators in both Paris and Berlin envisage, for example, the Franco-German joint brigade (some 6000 mechanised infantry established in 1987) being perhaps linked in some way with the Franco-British expeditionary force proposed in the Treaty. The Dutch too, might become involved through the amphibious warfare capability they already share with the British. They also share a rapid deployment land headquarters with the Germans. Former NATO Secretary-General Solana recently suggested Spain might become interested

<sup>4</sup> See, *inter alia*, "The Military Balance 2011", International Institute for Strategic Studies, (March 2011), and "European – United States defence expenditure in 2009, European Defence Agency, (December 2010)

<sup>5</sup> See, for example "Surviving Austerity: The case for a new approach to EU Military Collaboration", by Tomas Valasek, Centre for European Reform (August 2011).

through the comparable capability it shares with France and Italy. Spain and Italy have a joint (but non-permanent) amphibious force. Finally, Minister Sikorsky has expressed Poland's general interest in engaging with such evolving partnerships.

Will the existence of a strong avant-garde force by Britain and France really encourage the convergence onto their pattern of, for instance, 'risk-taking, loss-taking, expeditionary undertaking culture' without which any integration of capabilities cannot be sustained? The Franco-German brigade could not be used in Afghanistan, despite its excellent quality of equipment and high morale, because the two governments could not agree on where it should be deployed and what should be its rules of engagement with the enemy. Nor could the Anglo-Dutch force of marines, for similar reasons, notwithstanding a shared training program in mountain warfare which is, perhaps, the best in the Alliance. More recently, there has been the German abstention at the United Nations over Libya. All of this has led many observers to conclude that the Anglo-French Defence Treaty will remain a more or less strictly bilateral affair for the foreseeable future. But then the issue of the growing pressure on conventional capability will remain unresolved. Some observers in Washington have professed surprise at how great Britain's and France's dependence on American assets in the Libya conflict proved to be. The Europeans' weakness in drones, for example, was especially a cause for concern.

However, the differences between the belligerence of the governments of Britain and France on the one hand, and of Germany and the Netherlands on the other, are more dramatic than between their respective electorates. For example, British and German popular support for engagement in the Afghan conflict, over the last five years, have been surprisingly similar. The divergence comes in the British government's superior enthusiasm for being seen to support American policy and the British public's superior tolerance of this, and of the losses it inevitably entails. Much the same can be said of opinion towards the desirability of the intervention in Libya, which was almost equally sceptical directly before the start of the conflict, as Gaddafi unleashed his killers upon Benghazi, and almost equally positive once its successful conclusion became clear, following the fall of Tripoli. The only significant shift came in British public attitudes towards France, following President Sarkozy's and Prime Minister Cameron's visit to the country when the perception that this was a victory shared with the French, without American leadership, was greeted with (somewhat surprised) enthusiasm.

Naturally, neither London, nor Paris, view the desirability of other states becoming associated with their cooperation purely in military terms. President Sarkozy's decision to bring France fully back into NATO has drawn the firmest line imaginable under the specific, protracted campaign, initiated by General de Gaulle, to create a separate, purely European defence identity, as part of an assertion of wider geopolitical independence. Nevertheless, the substantive issue at stake, now expressed principally through debates, often on French initiative, over the role, if any, of the EU institutions in establishing a strong

'European pillar' within the Alliance, and binding non-NATO EU states to a shared security and foreign policy agenda, has definitely not gone away. It may be about to be matched by a comparable, but probably incompatible, campaign by the British to use the Anglo-French Defence Treaty as a template for a different type of Europe generally. One that builds on the progressive weakening of the European Commission, and a strengthening of the European Council, which has been such a signal feature of the current financial crisis, and endeavours to formalise an intergovernmental 'Europe des Patries'. Whatever entertainment might be derived from the irony that the British are the Gaullists now should not disguise the seriousness of such an ambition for the Conservative side of the London coalition administration, especially were the measures to stabilize the eurozone to falter in the medium term.

All this pales before the reality that the primary focus of implementing the Treaty will not be the preservation of defence capabilities in the face of cuts: in the jargon, 'defence led'. British and French officials may talk in these terms, but it is apparent that the strong aspiration will be to achieve a specific quantum of savings: 'money led'. The most recent proof of this in London has been the exceedingly dusty reception given to Professor Prins' proposals that the next defence spending review should initially be made without the participation of the Treasury.<sup>6</sup> But it has long been apparent in the staleness of discussions over possible conventional deployments, in Paris as well as London. Libya was an exception, justified by powerful economic and political, as well as humanitarian arguments. There is a general acceptance that future missions will, from now on, be increasingly tailored to the straightened means available. That might be discouraging for the Americans. But it is most encouraging for the prospects of the Treaty delivering real change. For if there is one constant in the conduct of defence policy, it is that, actual or imminent warfare apart, only financial restraint offers any chance of forcing radical enhancements in efficiency.

This is definitely not to say that there is no new thinking going on about actual defence needs. Interestingly, just as they are confronting the greater relative weight in their budgets of the strategic nuclear component, Paris and London are also reflecting, for the first time in many years, on the precise purpose of these forces and the threats they might be seeking to deter. Spending worldwide on nuclear weapons is currently estimated to be at the highest level since the end of the Cold War. The increasing activity of China is especially striking (both on land, where they are engaged in a dramatic hardening of their bunkers and, potentially, at sea, where they seem likely to bring into service at least one, and possibly two, missile-carrying submarines over the next seven years). But the list of nations now in the category of pre-capable, for whom the acquisition of a few warheads and basic delivery systems could be very rapid, has never been longer. The growing pressures of population growth and climate change on scarce resources are also, clearly, increasing the variety and plausibility of scenarios in which they might be used. In particular, the possibility of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, following on from Iran's acquisition of such weapons, that might draw in both Pakistan and India is, obviously, increasingly exercising British and

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6 Gwyn Prins, "The British Way of Strategy-Making: Vital Lessons For Our Times," RUSI, (October 2011)

French strategists, just as much as their equivalents in Washington, Moscow, and Beijing. One common thread in all this is the fact that the number of weapons which might be able to hit targets in Europe, but not the United States, could grow dramatically.<sup>7</sup> It would be unconscionable, therefore, not to at least make some effort towards a specifically European deterrent of some kind.

President Sarkozy has already indicated, in general terms, that the 'Force de Frappe' is available to protect all member states of the European Union. He has further specified the possibility of a single warhead strike to prevent, or retaliate to, sub-strategic threats and it is assumed that some of the missiles in the French submarines are routinely configured in this way (without, apparently, altering the total number of warheads deployed). Britain has so far covered the case of using its deterrent within the overall obligation for mutual defence of NATO, though it, too, has raised the necessity of being able to deliver a sub-strategic response to a 'rogue state' deploying or employing chemical and biological agents as well as atomic weapons, to explain the retention of its 'independent capability'. So speculation as to what the British would in fact do, in a scenario of asymmetry between European and American perceptions of any nuclear response requirement, is difficult to separate from the question of how 'independent' their capability truly is. Clearly, no such issue attaches to the French system. In terms of use, American capacity to curtail British intentions is confined to the accuracy of the targeting: important, particularly in some of the most common sub-strategic use scenarios, but by no means critical. However, the credibility of any eventual declared doctrine by the British of using nuclear forces to defend specifically European interests, by implication, however remote the contingency, if necessary in opposition to the policy of the United States, would clearly be diminished by the fact that the current Trident missiles are drawn from a shared American maintenance pool. This has to be a factor in any British thinking about the replacement of the Trident system.

In the latest, and perforce the last, delay in a decision for this, in October last year, the British Government announced a series of life-extension measures, across all elements of the system, which allowed the 'High Gate' commitment to be postponed until 2016. This would put it immediately after the anticipated date of the next General Election under the legislation ensuring fixed term Parliaments in 2015, which raises the possibility of it thus becoming politicised. The estimated decommissioning dates for the Vanguard Class submarines are now, therefore: 'HMS Vanguard' 2028, 'HMS Victorious' 2030, 'HMS Vigilant' 2032, and 'HMS Vengeance' 2034. One important element in the life-extension of the warheads was the need for laser testing and computer modelling to ensure viability. An agreement allowing for this to be undertaken in cooperation with France, which has recently renewed its facilities as part of its M51 programme, was attached to the Anglo-French Defence Treaty; significantly, also the first time that Britain has shared nuclear weapons secrets with any power other than the United States. Might this momentous step merely be the first of a series which could produce both very significant financial and political benefits for both nations?

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Bruno Tertrais "Nuclear Weapons in Europe – A Long Dormant Debate Brewing Again", *The European*, (automne-hiver 2009); and, "The 10 Reasons we know that Iran Wants the Bomb", *Realité EU*, (September 2011).



Britain's progressive postponements of the initiation of its system's renewal has led to a certain convergence of its timetable for its submarines with that of France. The latest estimates appear to be that 'Le Triomphant', the oldest French boat, which entered service in 1997, will (in the absence of costly life-extension measures) be decommissioned sometime around 2027, with 'Le Temeraire', 'Le Vigilant' and 'Le Terrible' following at roughly two year intervals. Paris took the initial decision to go ahead with building its present system in the autumn of 1981. Construction of 'Le Triomphant' began in 1986. On the face of it, therefore, there might be considerable scope for joint activity. There would undoubtedly be many difficulties, not least with regard to the United States goal of preserving their secrets, notably in the nuclear power plants, which they have made available to the British. But even making allowance for this, the potential economies from cooperation could be very great. The same might conceivably also be true for the warheads. The existing British devices will be viable and reliable until the mid 2020's, but the Ministry of Defence has indicated that amongst the options it is considering is merely to continue with the existing design. The French have a new device, which will start to be fitted to the M51 vehicle from 2015. Finally, there are the missiles themselves. Here, the divergence of renewal schedules is, on the face of it, widest. It is also, perhaps, difficult to imagine a British decision to, say, jointly develop an alternative vehicle with the French, being a more cost-effective option than the existing proposed purchase of Trident successors from the Americans. On the other hand, unless Britain is prepared to do this, all talk of independence of its deterrence from the United States will be eyewash.

The financial calculation on a new Anglo-French sea-launched missile also leaves out, of course, the broader economic benefits which might accrue for Britain from increased expenditure on the relevant research and manufacturing. It is extraordinarily difficult to quantify these, not least because those studies which have been conducted usually seek to justify actual, or projected, cost over-runs, or new categories of expenditure, in specific projects, rather than to encourage a coherent overall strategy. Greater integration specifically between Britain's and France's constructors supporting their deterrents might, in some respects, prove easier than between those supporting other systems. Conflicts of interest arising from competition for sales to, or joint ventures with, partners in third markets, especially outside Europe, would not apply. Some British commercial interests have suggested that any loosening of the Anglo-American strategic equipment relationship would jeopardise the continuation of the extensive sub-contracting agreements across a range of conventional equipment. But there is no reason to see why this should be the case if the overall policy of Washington remains, beyond next year's presidential elections, as it seems to be now tolerant, not to say supportive, of any measures which reduce European dependence on American military might.<sup>8</sup>

8 Of course, there is also the highly sensitive matter of Anglo-American intelligence cooperation, which far exceeds anything undertaken with any European ally, including France. An intelligence dimension to the Anglo-French Defence Treaty has been mooted in a very round-about way, but, if this were to come about, it would mark a far greater breach with previous British practise than anything currently contemplated in the field of nuclear weapons. Some observers have suggested that moves towards shared research capabilities on major powers, such as China, India and Russia, that could form part of the new External Action Service, might also be the embryo of some form of joint European intelligence effort, but all such ideas are, at the moment, to put it mildly, very speculative indeed.

This is, of course, the crucial point, at least from a British perspective. The French, however, seem, on occasion, to show some reluctance in entering into arrangements which would be too tightly bilateral with Britain alone. They have a clearer hope than the British that, for example in the next generation of submarines and missiles, European defence cooperation would have advanced to a point where 'other nations', such as Germany could also become involved. That would obviously make a significant impact upon the potential savings to both Britain and France. From a British and French, but also a European point of view, the best outcome would be for both nations to maintain, or even increase their nuclear (and conventional) capabilities, but have Germany, say, contribute to the cost, in return for some co-decision over deployment and engagement. This could include, but would not be exclusively, the gifting some of the components of the boats or delivery vehicles, of clear economic benefit to its industries, and perhaps the provision of some of the crews, either at the bases (where they would still be targets of possible pre-emptive or disarming strikes by an opponent) or on active operational patrols.

Such an approach would fit with the notion that European states should specialise on specific areas of capability, rather than have all the inefficiencies of seeking to reproduce, in miniature, all-round forces, which has long been canvassed in the conventional field. It is impossible to untangle judgements on the likelihood of this from the broader questions of the prospects for a more truly European nuclear deterrent force. No mainstream German commentators seem ready to explore these sorts of possibilities at the moment. But equally, none have ruled them out totally for the longer term. There is a tendency, understandable given the long planning, construction, and active life of the technologies involved, to see this aspect of the nuclear issue as equally slow and evolutionary. However, the accelerating pace of geopolitical change may give that the lie. For example, if the present euro crisis does lead to some major qualitative change in the degree of political integration amongst those states using the single currency, it would be surprising if this did not also have an impact upon foreign policy, security, and defence arrangements.

Some experts believe it is in the area of operational integration that the key to unlocking this sort of wider progress might lie. The 'main driver' of the Britain's renewal timetable for its Trident system has been the need to retain continuous at sea deterrence (CASD). London, like Paris, sees this as requiring four boats. If it could be countenanced that, to some degree, this capability were to be pooled, with, for instance, only one of the two nations on occasion having a submarine on patrol, whilst, perhaps, the other would hold a vessel capable, in extremis, of firing from the dockside. This might mean they would each have to build only three, or even two, new boats: not merely a very substantial saving, but the cornerstone of an unprecedented level of trust between two sovereign nations, with ramifications that would go far beyond the field of defence. Juristically, it would be on a par with the proposal of Anglo-French union advocated by Winston Churchill in 1940. At present, this seems not to be really on the agenda. Nevertheless, a clue as to its possible eventual acceptance may lie in the increasing evidence of a consensus between the British and the French on what they do not think worth exploring in the modernisation of their nuclear forces.

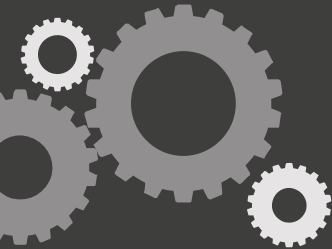
For example, there is a shared scepticism towards the savings available if each national force moved from a 'Straight' CASD to a CASD 'Capable' (that is to say, only being constantly at sea during periods of crisis) establishment. Again, both nations reject the sort of 'dual capable' force based upon fitting missile tubes to attack submarines (in the British case, to boats of the Astute Class) advocated by Professor Chalmers, not least because it would probably be more expensive than having specialised strategic vessels and the possible slight increase in survivability would not be worth it. Or again, neither country foresees any circumstances in which they would believe it correct to abandon sea-based deterrence in favour of land-based systems, even one that was actively deployed. (Most proponents of this option present it as a minimum, 'non-deployed but survivable' configuration). Finally, both nations share not just at a political, but also at a popular level, comparable majority support for remaining nuclear-armed powers: the ultimate sinews of this whole debate, even if such strong will is pressured, as never before, by limited finances. As Sherlock Holmes remarked in 'The Mystery of the Bruce-Partington Plans', a story about the theft of the design of a revolutionary submarine, 'When all other contingencies fail, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth'. ■

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The signing of Anglo-French Defence Treaty has been one of the least reported, and analysed, of the UK coalitions Government's policies, whilst being, without question, one of its most significant. In the context of defence cuts on both sides of the Atlantic and the Channel, and of a Libyan operation in which Britain and France's dependence on American assets surprised some observers in Washington, this paper assesses the consequences of the Treaty for Anglo-French defence cooperation.

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