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Chapter 10

Anglo-French Cooperation vis-à-vis the African Union

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12 In launching the Saint-Malo process at the December 1998 Franco-British 12
13 summit, the UK and French governments declared their intention to set aside a 13
14 century of rivalry and ‘pursue joint cooperation’ on the ground in Africa (Saint- 14
15 Malo Declaration 1998). In so doing, they signalled their readiness to move away 15
16 from their traditional spheres of influence in their former African empires and 16
17 towards a continent-wide focus on Africa, including as a central tenet building 17
18 up the capacity of regional and sub-regional organisations. London and Paris 18
19 were helped in this latter goal by the winding up of the Organisation of African 19
20 Unity (OAU) in 1999 and its replacement by the African Union (AU) in July 20
21 2002. This chapter therefore examines British and French policy towards the AU. 21
22 It begins by noting the UK and French neglect of the OAU, and then reviews 22
23 the key developments and contextual changes that pushed for and facilitated a 23
24 more coordinated stance on the AU. It then seeks to explain the recent evolution 24
25 towards a more cooperative approach by examining the key drivers behind 25
26 this enhanced collaboration and it ends by evaluating the extent and nature of 26
27 Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU. Within a neoclassical framework, it 27
28 shows how concerns in both the UK and France over their relative power on the 28
29 international stage have pushed both countries to work more closely together with 29
30 African regional and sub-regional organisations. However, divergent interests and 30
31 foreign policy priorities, institutional and resource constraints, and the views of 31
32 the wider domestic polity on state preference have impinged on policy-making 32
33 and ultimately limited the extent of cooperation. 33

34 Before proceeding, it is important to emphasise that this is not a chapter about 34
35 the AU *per se*. A number of recent works have examined the history and structure 35
36 of the organisation and its emerging peace and security architecture (Akokpari 36
37 *et al.* 2008; Besada 2010; Engel and Porto 2010; Makinda and Okumu 2008). 37
38 Second, and related to this, AU perceptions of Anglo-French cooperation are not 38
39 a central feature of this article, although they cannot of course be entirely ignored. 39
40 In this context it is worth noting that such cooperation has hitherto been broadly 40
41 welcomed by the AU but, as I argue later, this should not be taken for granted. 41
42 Finally, the chapter focuses largely on security cooperation, as this represents 42
43 90 per cent of the European Union’s (EU) engagement with the AU (personal 43
44 communication, EU official, Addis Ababa, 2009) and, in the French case, almost 44

1 its exclusive area of engagement. 'Peace and security' is one of the priority areas 1
 2 of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, although the AU's strategic plan 2009– 2
 3 12 has three other thematic priorities (*Le Monde Diplomatique* 2009), and the 3
 4 Africa-EU Strategic Partnership has seven other priority action areas.¹ The lack 4
 5 of cooperation in these areas will be touched upon where relevant, as it is a useful 5
 6 indicator of the nature and limits of Anglo-French collaboration with the AU. 6

9 **From the OAU to the AU: A New Context for Cooperation** 9

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 11 Anglo-French relations in Africa have then been characterised by rivalry since 11
 12 the beginning of the colonial period. Following the end of the Cold War there was 12
 13 a shift to a more multilateral approach (see Chapter 11) but this did not extend 13
 14 to working with the OAU, which continued to be perceived as a dictators' club 14
 15 (Makinda and Okumu 2008: 30). However, French and British neglect of the OAU 15
 16 was soon replaced by a more supportive, and in some cases more coordinated, 16
 17 approach following the emergence of the AU in 2002. The latter set out to be a 17
 18 quite different type of organisation from the OAU; more outward-looking than its 18
 19 predecessor, its ambition being to create an integrated, prosperous and peaceful 19
 20 Africa, able to play its rightful role on the international stage (AU 2000, art. 3). 20
 21 The launch of the AU was also a significant moment because it signalled the 21
 22 abandonment of one of the OAU's founding principles, the commitment to non- 22
 23 intervention in the internal affairs of member states (*Africa News*, 11 February 23
 24 2002; Mwanasali 2008: 42–5). This reflected the desire of African leaders to take 24
 25 greater responsibility for peace and security on the continent.² More generally, it 25
 26 was born of a desire by African leaders to address the marginalisation of Africa in 26
 27 the context of accelerating globalisation, and put the continent 'on track towards 27
 28 sustainable growth and development' (Mathews 2008: 25). The creation of the AU 28
 29 thus marked the emergence of a new and credible African multilateral organisation 29
 30 that appeared to share the ambition of donor countries to address the challenges of 30
 31 governance and security on the continent. (Porteous 2008: 54–6). 31

32 At the same time, the UN did not have the resources to respond to the growing 32
 33 number and increased complexity of peacekeeping and security operations on the 33
 34 continent. Moreover, the US was reluctant to undertake military interventions in 34
 35 Africa following its humiliation in Somalia, while the EU for its part was making 35

37
 38 1 The others are: Democratic Governance and Human Rights; Trade, Regional 38
 39 Integration and Infrastructure; Millennium Development Goals; Energy; Climate Change; 39
 40 Migration, Mobility and Employment; Science, Information Society and Space. 40

41 2 Article 4 of the AU's Constitutive Act asserted 'the right of the Union to intervene 41
 42 in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances', 42
 43 including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The 'responsibility to protect' is the idea 43
 44 of transnational responsibility for human welfare, see <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org> (accessed 17 June 2010). 44

1 limited progress on its rapid reaction force prior to Saint-Malo. Both the UK and 1
2 France thus had a shared interest in supporting Africans to peacekeep themselves 2
3 by promoting the notion of ‘African solutions to African problems’. Against this 3
4 background, the launch of the RECAMP (Renforcement des Capacités Africaines 4
5 de Maintien de la Paix) programme represented a watershed in French policy, 5
6 marking a move away from its traditional approach of direct, unilateral, military 6
7 intervention towards a policy of supporting Africans to peacekeep themselves. The 7
8 parallel launch of the UK’s African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme in 8
9 1997 had the same objective. 9

10 The final catalyst for improved Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU 10
11 was the shift in the way that the EU engaged with the continent. EU African 11
12 policy, through the successive Yaoundé and Lomé conventions, was largely 12
13 driven by the European Commission (EC); its partner was the African-Caribbean- 13
14 Pacific (ACP) group of countries, and its focus was trade and development. 14
15 The political dimension of the relationship was left to member states and their 15
16 bilateral relations with the ACP states. This began to change in the 1990s with the 16
17 introduction of economic and political conditionalities under Lomé IV, which in 17
18 2000 were integrated into the successor Cotonou accords as one of the pillars of 18
19 the new agreement linking the EU and the ACP. In the same year, at a summit held 19
20 in Cairo, African and European leaders launched a new political dialogue outside 20
21 the Lomé/Cotonou framework. Building on this and following the launch of the 21
22 AU, in 2005 the EU developed an Africa strategy for the first time, for which its 22
23 privileged interlocutor was the AU. At the same time, the EU was developing the 23
24 European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), for which Africa rapidly emerged 24
25 as a key theatre, and responsibility for which fell to the European Council. These 25
26 developments were crucially important for three reasons. First, they marked 26
27 a move away from an essentially ‘technical’ relationship between the EU and 27
28 Africa (as part of the ACP group of countries), in which the EC took the policy 28
29 lead, towards a much more overtly political, and indeed military, relationship. 29
30 Second, reflecting the growing importance of the EU as a foreign policy actor, 30
31 the European Council now took an increasingly important role in driving African 31
32 policy. This shift towards intergovernmentalism thrust the UK and France, as the 32
33 two member states with the largest residual responsibilities and interests south of 33
34 the Sahara, to the centre of EU policy-making on Africa. Third, the AU, not the 34
35 ACP group of countries, now emerged as the EU’s key strategic partner in Africa, 35
36 a development that was confirmed by the signature of the Africa-EU Strategic 36
37 Partnership at the AU-EU summit in Lisbon in 2007. These developments were 37
38 crucially important in opening the door to increased Anglo-French cooperation 38
39 within the EU vis-à-vis the AU. They transformed the context for UK and French 39
40 policy-making on Africa, pushing them to coordinate policy and also to engage 40
41 with the whole continent, through their partnership with the AU, in a way that 41
42 they had not done in the past. 42

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1 The AU and the Saint-Malo Process: Towards Enhanced Cooperation?

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 3 With the 1998 Saint-Malo summit promising ‘joint cooperation to promote
 4 sub-regional integration, in particular between networks of Anglophone and
 5 Francophone countries’ (Saint-Malo Declaration 1998³), the period 1998–2002
 6 thus marked an important moment in UK and French relations with African
 7 regional organisations. As we have seen, neither country had sought to engage
 8 with the OAU in any systematic way. This changed with the foundation of the
 9 AU. Indeed, the pledge to work jointly with the AU, specifically in the field of
 10 peace and security, was made explicit in the communiqué issued at the 2004
 11 Lancaster House summit and renewed at subsequent summits in 2006 and 2008
 12 (Franco-British Summit 2006; Saint-Malo Ten Years After 2008). However, while
 13 both countries publicly welcomed its creation, the UK has generally engaged
 14 more enthusiastically with the AU, reflecting the strategic priority attached by
 15 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to engaging with international
 16 organisations, whereas France has focused more of its efforts on working with
 17 Africa’s sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS and has adopted a more
 18 guarded approach to the AU, focusing on the area of security. In the light of this,
 19 the question to be addressed here is: how far has Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-
 20 vis the AU been taken? In order to do this, we need to understand what has been
 21 driving French and British approaches to the AU, and examine the obstacles to
 22 more systematic cooperation.

23 The first driver towards cooperation was the election in 1997 of new French
 24 and British governments that wanted to overhaul their two countries’ approaches
 25 to Africa. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin was a moderniser in terms of African
 26 policy (see Chapters 4 and 5) and, following the debacle of France’s involvement
 27 in Rwanda and DRC (then Zaire) in the mid-1990s (Chafer 2005: 17), wanted to
 28 move away from France’s traditional unilateral approach to Africa, which in the
 29 military field had earned it the reputation of the ‘gendarme’ of Africa, towards a
 30 new focus on Africans peacekeeping themselves. His election coincided with the
 31 election of a New Labour government in the UK that sought to re-engage with
 32 Africa, in particular by promoting an ambitious development agenda through the
 33 newly created Department for International Development (DfID). After decades
 34 during which Africa appeared largely marginal to British foreign relations, Tony
 35 Blair’s government was set to make Africa an explicit policy priority (Porteous
 36 2008: 1), though not in the military field (the small and time-limited, albeit
 37 effective, intervention in Sierra Leone in 2001 was the exception in this respect),
 38 where the UK was keen for Africans to take a much greater role. For both countries
 39 this new approach implied moving beyond the traditional Anglo-French ‘division

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 42 3 Full summit declaration obtained from the FCO. The ‘Saint-Malo Declaration’ is
 43 published on several websites but the text is incomplete, even on the FCO website, as it
 44 omits the part of the declaration referring to Africa, see: [www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=10435411)
[news/?view=PressS&id=10435411](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=10435411), accessed 26 March 2010.

1 of labour' in Africa, whereby France focused its attention on its Francophone 'pré 1
 2 carré' (sphere of influence), with which it maintained privileged and exclusive 2
 3 relations, and the UK concentrated on maintaining good bilateral relations with 3
 4 key countries, such as Nigeria in the west and Kenya in the east, that had been 4
 5 British colonies (Chafer 2005: 7–23; Cumming 2005: 56–7; Porteous 2008: 7). 5
 6 At the same time, both the Jospin and Blair governments were all too aware that 6
 7 their countries were suffering from resource constraints that prevented them from 7
 8 undertaking all the tasks on the continent that they once had done. 8

9 As a result, both governments now perceived it as in their interest to cooperate 9
 10 on African issues. This new approach was not driven solely by a concern for 10
 11 Africa, however. On the French side, relations between President Chirac, Prime 11
 12 Minister Jospin and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder were difficult, so 12
 13 that Chirac and his foreign affairs minister Hubert Védrine were looking for EU 13
 14 policy areas where they could work more closely with the UK. At the same time, 14
 15 the UK having opted against joining the euro, Prime Minister Blair nonetheless 15
 16 wanted to 'put the UK at the heart of Europe', and was looking for policy areas in 16
 17 which the UK could play a leading role within the EU. 17

18 A further driver of Anglo-French cooperation is that the AU has become an 18
 19 important actor in relation to the UNSC in recent years since it, or more precisely 19
 20 its Peace and Security Council (PSC), is responsible for establishing the AU's 20
 21 position on matters concerning Africa, including Security Council resolutions, 21
 22 that come before the United Nations. This is significant for two reasons. First, 22
 23 some two-thirds of the UNSC's business has in recent years been related to 23
 24 Africa and Anglo-French coordination vis-à-vis the PSC is therefore vital if they 24
 25 are to influence the AU's position on issues coming before the UNSC (personal 25
 26 communication, French official, Addis Ababa, 2009). Second, and even more 26
 27 important, two of the other permanent members of the UNSC, Russia and China, 27
 28 are unlikely to support any Security Council resolution on Africa that does not 28
 29 have AU support (personal communication, French official, Addis Ababa, 2009). 29
 30 The PSC's position can therefore have a determining influence over the fate of 30
 31 resolutions relating to Africa at the UN. 31

32 Finally, the growing activism of powerful new external actors in Africa, such 32
 33 as China and India, has led to a significant reduction in the importance of the UK 33
 34 and France in Africa's foreign relations since the early 2000s. This has reduced 34
 35 their power to do things in Africa, and the resulting decline in leverage provides 35
 36 a further incentive for them to cooperate on African issues. The UK and France 36
 37 thus have complementary interests pushing them towards closer – and mutually 37
 38 beneficial – cooperation vis-à-vis the AU. 38

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1 Types of Cooperation with the AU

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3 It is possible to discern four different types, or levels, of cooperation with the AU.⁴

4 First, there is ‘natural’ cooperation, where France and the UK seek to promote

5 essentially the same agenda and priorities, and coordination of positions is relatively

6 straightforward. Since 2002, the two countries have shared broadly similar

7 concerns about Africa, relating to such issues as migration, terrorism, transnational

8 crime, conflict, instability and governance. As a result they have rarely been at

9 daggers drawn over Africa. Second, there is ‘coincident cooperation’, where the

10 two countries want a similar outcome but seek to reach it in different ways, either

11 because their motivations are not the same, or because they provide support to

12 the AU in distinct ways as the instruments at their disposal are quite different.

13 Third, ‘disinterested cooperation’ occurs where cooperation is the product of

14 shared liberal norms and values, but working together brings no immediate

15 material benefit to the other party.⁵ The fourth type, ‘deconflictualisation’, is in

16 many instances a pre-requisite for the other three. This involves as a minimum the

17 two countries pursuing their own initiatives independently, but making efforts to

18 ensure that their actions are complementary and do not involve any unnecessary

19 duplication of effort. In political terms it means that they are careful not to ‘trip

20 each other up’.

21 To be sure, these forms of cooperation cannot be entirely separated. For

22 example, although the two countries share broadly the same agenda in relation

23 to Africans taking greater responsibility for security on the continent, they come

24 to the problem from quite different perspectives, so that careful negotiation is

25 needed in order to achieve the desired outcome. The result may be different forms

26 of cooperation situated anywhere on a continuum from actively working together

27 with shared agendas on joint projects at one end to simple deconflictualisation at

28 the other. Moreover, this typology does not fully take account of the different fora

29 and contexts in which cooperation takes place. In particular, a distinction needs

30 to be made between bilateral Anglo-French cooperation that involves just the

31 French and UK governments working together, and ‘bi-multi’ cooperation that

32 involves them working together within multilateral organisations such as the EU

33 and the UNSC, in an effort to bring others round to their view. These different

34 forms of cooperation often take place in parallel, leading in practice to what can

35 perhaps best be described as ‘messy multilateralism’. Nevertheless, while there is

36 some overlap between the different types, the analytical distinctions remain useful

37 indicators of the nature of cooperation and are useful for drawing a distinction

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40 4 For a discussion of cooperation problems in international relations, see Martin
41 1992: 768–83.

42 5 The term ‘disinterested cooperation’ does not imply that the two countries have no
43 interest in cooperating: from the point of view of diffusing certain norms and values, they
44 clearly have such an interest.

1 between areas of collaboration and other areas where non-cooperation or limited 1
2 cooperation have been the norm. 2

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4 *'Natural' Cooperation* 4

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6 Taking 'natural' cooperation first, it should be reiterated that since 2002, France 6
7 and the UK have rarely had major differences over Africa. As Western liberal 7
8 democracies, permanent members of the UNSC, key players in the EU and the 8
9 only major Western powers with significant residual responsibilities and interests 9
10 south of the Sahara, they share a broad set of common values rooted in notions 10
11 of human rights, democratisation, good governance and human security. A good 11
12 example of 'natural' cooperation is in relation to support for the AU's African 12
13 Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).⁶ Both governments want to avoid the 13
14 costs and risks – in terms of both casualties and potential political damage – 14
15 of direct military involvement, and therefore prefer to pay others to undertake 15
16 peacekeeping operations on the continent. Both also agree that peace and security 16
17 are the prerequisite for development. As the two major EU military powers with the 17
18 capacity to intervene in Africa, their cooperation on the peace and security agenda 18
19 was therefore natural, especially as this was an agenda that they shared with both 19
20 the AU and its emerging APSA. It was therefore to be expected that both countries 20
21 would play a key role within the EU in obtaining the support of EU member 21
22 states for ESDP missions in Africa and for capacity-building, peacekeeping and 22
23 peace support operations under the ESDP, notably in the Democratic Republic of 23
24 Congo (DRC) and Chad/CAR (see Chapter 5).⁷ Both have also played lead roles 24
25 in generating EU support for the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Union 25
26 peacekeeping missions in Sudan (AMIS) and Somalia (AMISOM) and, with other 26
27 partners, the development of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). 27
28 They have also jointly provided backing for map training exercises and support 28
29 for the MIVAC initiative, an interactive watch and anticipation mechanism that 29
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33 6 The AU established the APSA as 'an operational structure for the effective 33
34 implementation of ... conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations and 34
35 intervention, as well as peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction' (Engel and Porto 35
36 2010: 3). The centrepiece of the APSA is the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the role of 36
37 which is to oversee the establishment of the Continental Early-Warning System (CEWS) 37
38 and the African Standby Force (ASF). The PSC is supported by a Panel of the Wise, whose 38
39 role is to advise the PSC on peace and security issues and help in the peaceful settlement 39
40 of disputes. 40

41 7 Although ESDP missions, apart from EU support to AMIS which was provided at 41
42 the request of the AU, do not directly involve the AU, they cannot be entirely ignored here 42
43 as the UK and French governments have played a key role in gaining EU member states' 43
44 support for these missions, which have in turn been a significant factor shaping EU policy 44
44 towards the AU. 44

1 has been developed to help the AU build up its early warning capability.⁸ Crucially 1
 2 too, they played a key role, with Portugal, in developing the Africa-EU Strategic 2
 3 Partnership, which was signed at the first joint AU-EU summit in Lisbon in 2007, 3
 4 and in ensuring that this had a strong security focus (Elowson 2009: 27). 4

5 6 *'Coincident' Cooperation* 6

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8 *'Coincident cooperation'* frequently takes place on the ground in Africa, at the 8
 9 level of implementation. Thus the principle of Anglo-French support for the APSA 9
 10 or cooperation to improve UN peacekeeping mandates is 'natural', insofar as both 10
 11 countries share the objective of enabling Africans to take more responsibility for 11
 12 peace and security on the continent. However, if we look at specific instances 12
 13 of cooperation, the two countries often come at an issue from quite different 13
 14 perspectives. With regard to the Sudan/Darfur crisis, for example, the UK has 14
 15 long been interested in stabilising the Sudan and was one of the three countries 15
 16 (with the USA and Norway) that helped to deliver the 2005 Comprehensive Peace 16
 17 Agreement (CPA). France has never managed to exert any meaningful influence 17
 18 over the CPA process and only became involved much later, largely because of 18
 19 its concerns about the destabilising impact of the Darfur crisis on two of its key 19
 20 allies in the region, Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) (personal 20
 21 communication, Foreign Affairs Ministry official, Paris, 2009). 21

22 This is an example of what I have called 'messy multilateralism'. There was no 22
 23 formal agreement to work together on this issue. Rather, France effectively deferred 23
 24 to the UK and accepted that, for historical and other reasons, the UK should take 24
 25 the lead on Sudan, while the UK supported France on Chad/CAR. This mutual 25
 26 recognition of the comparative advantage of the UK in Sudan and of France in 26
 27 Chad/CAR in turn facilitated a more coordinated approach to lobbying the AU. 27
 28 This makes sense, as a coordinated approach to lobbying members of the AU's 28
 29 PSC by two of the UNSC's permanent members is more likely to yield results than 29
 30 individual approaches, and because the UK has more influence in Sudan while 30
 31 France has more in Chad/CAR. This is therefore a useful means for both countries 31
 32 to maximise their leverage in pursuit of their shared objective of regional stability 32
 33 (personal communications, EU officials, Addis Ababa, 2009). 33

34 Perhaps the most striking example of 'coincident cooperation' is Anglo- 34
 35 French backing for the APSA, where the two countries provide support in quite 35
 36 different ways and using different instruments. After the Lisbon summit France 36
 37 and the UK took the lead in transforming the French RECAMP programme 37
 38 into an EU programme, EURORECAMP. Based in Paris, as France is the EU 38
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41 ⁸ The MIVAC (Mécanisme interactif de veille et d'anticipation conjoint) initiative 40
 42 forms part of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. Under it the UK and France sent two 41
 43 AU colleagues to the French Foreign Affairs Ministry's early warning centre and to the 42
 44 BBC monitoring service, Chatham House and the Royal United Services Institute (personal 43
 44 communications, British and French officials, Addis Ababa 2009). 44

1 ‘framework nation’, it has a French general as its director and a British officer as 1
 2 its deputy director. The EURORECAMP programme aims to strengthen African 2
 3 peacekeeping capacity through education and training, and is ‘guided by the 3
 4 principle of African ownership’, to enable the AU to contribute more effectively 4
 5 to regional security (Africa-EU Strategic Partnership 2007: 5). A good example of 5
 6 this is its first training cycle, Amani Africa (‘Amani’ means ‘peace’ in Swahili), 6
 7 which was launched in November 2008 at the AU-EU Ministerial Troika in Addis 7
 8 Ababa. The focus of the cycle (2008–10) is to assist the AU in its decision-making 8
 9 for crisis management at continental level and in its validation of the ASF. France 9
 10 takes the lead role in agenda-setting and implementation, while the UK is the 10
 11 largest financial contributor (Elowson 2009: 62–3). Anglo-French strategic-level 11
 12 planning for Amani Africa mainly takes place at HQ level in Paris, while the EU 12
 13 Special Representative’s Office (EUSR) in Addis Ababa has sought to coordinate 13
 14 EU and member states’ support for Amani Africa, notably within the African 14
 15 Union Partners Group (AUPG), which was chaired by the UK in 2008 and by the 15
 16 EUSR in 2009.⁹ 16

17 There have nonetheless been clear limits to this cooperation. Whilst these 17
 18 initiatives have helped ensure a degree of deconflictualisation between member 18
 19 states on the ground, the UK and France do not collaborate actively in Addis 19
 20 Ababa, either by working on joint projects or by working together within the 20
 21 AUPG, despite the fact that other member states acknowledge that they are the key 21
 22 players in the area of peace and security cooperation with the AU, and that without 22
 23 them little can be achieved (personal communications, Danish and EU officials, 23
 24 Addis Ababa, 2009). In practice both countries continue to provide a significant 24
 25 proportion of their support for the operationalisation of APSA on a bilateral 25
 26 basis (Bagayoko 2007: 2; Vines 2010: 1106). The UK channels its contributions 26
 27 (additional to those that it provides as a contributor to the European Development 27
 28 Fund) to supporting the APF on a bilateral basis through its Conflict Prevention 28
 29 Pool. It is one of the largest bilateral donors to APSA, and focuses on training 29
 30 African officers and providing funding for training exercises and peacekeeping 30
 31 operations. France, on the other hand, is one of the smallest financial contributors, 31
 32 but plays a much more prominent role than the UK in providing direct support for 32
 33 peacekeeping training exercises, thanks to its pre-positioned forces totalling some 33
 34 9,000 personnel on the continent. It usually undertakes these initiatives on its own, 34
 35 rather than jointly with other partners. 35

36 A further example of coincident cooperation is UK and French support for the 36
 37 AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where the two countries have separate and 37
 38 distinct approaches to supporting the AU force on the ground, largely because 38
 39 the instruments at their disposal are quite different. While both countries want 39
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41 9 The AUPG also includes China, India, the US, Canada, Russia, Norway and 41
 42 Turkey. With the creation in Addis Ababa in 2007 of the EU Special Representative’s office, 42
 43 representing the European Council and the Commission, the EU became potentially a key 43
 44 forum for Anglo-French policy coordination vis-à-vis the AU. 44

1 to avoid direct military involvement, supported the Djibouti peace accords and 1
 2 coordinate their positions on Somalia in Brussels, notably in relation to the ESDP 2
 3 anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR off the Somali coast, at the bilateral level the 3
 4 British have provided significant financial support to AMISOM, while the French 4
 5 launched a purely French initiative to train Somali troops in Djibouti. The UK 5
 6 put £10m into the UN-administered AMISOM Trust Fund in March 2009, and 6
 7 provided just under £1m in niche support to AMISOM in 2009–10. From May 7
 8 2008 to March 2009, the UK also gave \$16.7m to the AU for AMISOM to cover 8
 9 personnel costs (troop allowances, pre-deployment training and death and injury 9
 10 benefits).¹⁰ The Somali troop training programme, on the other hand, was a purely 10
 11 French initiative, although France did subsequently try, unsuccessfully, to turn 11
 12 this into an EU programme and obtain EU funding for it at a joint meeting of the 12
 13 EU's and AU's PSCs in Addis Ababa in 2009 (personal communications, French 13
 14 and Danish officials, Addis Ababa, 2009; see also *Le Monde*, 14 October 2009). 14
 15 These differences in approach reflect the fact that the UK government, through the 15
 16 Department for International Development (DfID) budget, has money available 16
 17 for bilateral support but no troops on the ground, whereas France has almost no 17
 18 money for bilateral initiatives but has a major garrison and training facilities in 18
 19 Djibouti.¹¹ 19

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21 *'Disinterested' Cooperation* 21

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23 'Disinterested cooperation' is distinct in nature from the first two forms of 23
 24 cooperation, in that the France and the UK do not in this case necessarily have 24
 25 a specific shared agenda or seek a specific outcome from cooperation. Rather, 25
 26 as Western liberal democracies that are permanent members of the UNSC and 26
 27 major players in the EU, they frequently engage with international issues from 27
 28 which they do not expect to derive a direct benefit or reward. This can happen 28
 29 in two ways. There can be a high-level decision at national government level to 29
 30 support the other country's position, even though this will bring the first country 30
 31 no immediate or obvious benefit, or it can happen as a result of personal initiatives 31
 32 by officials at local level. However, while the rhetoric may suggest that these 32
 33 helpful gestures are purely the result of shared Western values, there have been 33
 34 instances where realpolitik-type deals, from which both countries stand to benefit, 34
 35 have also been struck. One example of this was in 2008, when France, which at 35
 36 the time held the EU presidency, agreed to support the UK's stance on Zimbabwe 36
 37 at EU level and then lobbied the AU for support, while the UK supported France 37
 38 38

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39 10 Payment for these lines has now been taken on by the EU's APF. 39

40 11 This difference in approach is also noticeable in relation to the two countries' 40
 41 support for the AU's mission in Sudan, AMIS/UNAMID. The UK has given \$62m to the 41
 42 mission, while total French bilateral aid to the AU since 2005 has been only €20m (personal 42
 43 communication, UK official, Addis Ababa, 2009, http://www.ambafrance-et.org/France_ 43
 44 [Ethiopie/spip.php?article318](http://www.ambafrance-et.org/France_Ethiopie/spip.php?article318), accessed 17 June 2010. 44

1 on EUFOR Chad/CAR (personal communications, French and British officials, 1
 2 Paris, London and Addis Ababa, 2008–09). This made sense for both countries, 2
 3 as if the UK had lobbied the AU on Zimbabwe or France on Chad, their African 3
 4 interlocutors would likely have turned a deaf ear. 4

5 5
 6 *Deconflictualisation* 6
 7 7

8 The importance of deconflictualisation as a prerequisite for any form of 8
 9 cooperation cannot be over-emphasised. During the 1990s, before the creation of 9
 10 the AU, there were profound differences between the UK and France on Charles 10
 11 Taylor's Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda/DRC. As late as 2001, the UK saw 11
 12 France as undermining its position on Zimbabwe by inviting President Mugabe 12
 13 to Paris at a time when the UK was attempting to garner EU support for sanctions 13
 14 against his regime (see Chapter 4 for details). It was against this background that 14
 15 Saint-Malo was so significant, as France and the UK recognised that they had 15
 16 little to gain from adopting such conflictual positions and agreed that they would 16
 17 in future avoid such public disagreement on African issues. 17

18 These efforts to deconflictualise have extended to UK and French policy 18
 19 towards the AU. As we shall see below, this has been clear in the support that 19
 20 the two countries have provided to the AU's condemnation of unconstitutional 20
 21 changes of government on the continent. Deconflictualisation has also underpinned 21
 22 their approaches to supporting AMIS in Darfur (which was replaced by a UN/AU 22
 23 hybrid force, UNAMID, on 31 December 2007) and AMISOM in Somalia. 23

24 24
 25 *Non-cooperation* 25
 26 26

27 The creation of the AU provided a new arena for the UK and France to work 27
 28 together and, given their shared interest in cooperating, it may seem surprising that 28
 29 cooperation has not been taken further. Indeed, although considerable progress has 29
 30 been made, cooperation, and even deconflictualisation, is not systematic. At times 30
 31 the UK and France have failed to agree or had difficulty coordinating their stances. 31
 32 These cases are revelatory of their different approaches to the AU and a useful 32
 33 indicator of the constraints that have prevented more systematic cooperation. 33

34 Perhaps the most striking recent example of non-cooperation relating to the 34
 35 AU was the contrasting UK and French responses to the Prodi report (Prodi 35
 36 2008). Romano Prodi was commissioned by the UNSC in 2008 to draw up a 36
 37 report on how the UN could improve its support for peacekeeping in Africa, 37
 38 with a view to providing more predictable, flexible and sustainable funding 38
 39 for AU peacekeeping operations. With the growing demand for peacekeeping 39
 40 operations on the continent, funding was a growing issue as, once an operation 40
 41 was authorised, contributions then had to be sought from member states whose 41
 42 contributions were entirely voluntary. The report's key recommendation was the 42
 43 creation of a dual system of financial support for the AU's peacekeeping efforts, 43
 44 involving voluntary contributions by member states to support AU capacity- 44

1 building efforts, and obligatory contributions to establish a UN fund that would 1
 2 be available to support UN-authorized peacekeeping operations undertaken by the 2
 3 AU. The UK supported the report's key recommendation, whereas France, along 3
 4 with the US and Russia, opposed mandatory financing and supported instead a 4
 5 voluntary system of multi-donor transfers. This difference was consistent with 5
 6 the UK's greater enthusiasm for working with the UN and France's preference 6
 7 for working through the EU in support of African peacekeeping efforts (Matlary 7
 8 2009: 101–2, Vines 2010: 1106–7). In the end, the UK brokered a compromise 8
 9 in the Africa Working Group in Brussels, whereby EU member states agreed 9
 10 to 'keep all options under consideration' (personal communication, EU official, 10
 11 Addis Ababa, 2009), and this was the position eventually adopted by the UNSC 11
 12 on 26 October 2009. However, the question of funding for AU peacekeeping 12
 13 operations remains unresolved, with the UK preferring a reliable UN mechanism 13
 14 and France preferring to focus on developing the EU's support capacity (personal 14
 15 communications, French officials, Brussels and Addis Ababa, 2009). 15

16 Moreover, while the UK and France have usually been able to deconflictualise, 16
 17 their positions vis-à-vis the AU, this has not always been straightforward. For 17
 18 example, following the 2008 coup in Madagascar, the British Minister for Africa, 18
 19 Lord Malloch-Brown, publicly condemned the coup, whereas France took a 19
 20 more conciliatory line even than the AU itself (personal communications, AU 20
 21 official, Addis Ababa, 2009; former minister, London, 2009). Although the two 21
 22 governments did eventually align their stances, their different public positions in 22
 23 the immediate aftermath of the coup were symptomatic of deeper differences in 23
 24 reaction to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. One reason for this 24
 25 is that the French stance on such changes is not always clear. This can lead to a 25
 26 gap between the public discourse of support for human rights and condemnation 26
 27 of unconstitutional changes of government on the one hand, and the actions of 27
 28 individuals close to the government on the other, that suggest a more qualified 28
 29 position. This happened, for example, in the case of the coup d'état that followed 29
 30 the death of Guinean president Lansana Conté in 2008 (Survie 2009). It can also 30
 31 be the result of differences between government representatives, as happened 31
 32 in the case of the 2009 coup in Mauritania when President Sarkozy appeared to 32
 33 contradict France's official position of condemnation of the coup (*Libération*, 33
 34 8 April, 17 July 2009). The consequence is that British diplomats sometimes 34
 35 wonder who is articulating the French government's real position on such issues. 35
 36 This uncertainty undermines trust and affects the ability of the two countries to 36
 37 cooperate effectively vis-à-vis the AU. 37

38
 39

40 **Constraints on Cooperation** 40 41 41

42 The UK and French foreign policy-making establishments have divergent 42
 43 perceptions of Africa in general, and of the AU in particular, in the context of 43
 44 their countries' broader foreign policy priorities and interests, and in designing 44

1 policy they are constrained by other factors, notably institutional constraints and 1
 2 the views of the wider domestic polity, on state preferences. These three factors 2
 3 are considered in turn. 3

4 4

5 *Divergent Interests* 5

6 6

7 Despite the common ground between them identified above, Paris and London 7
 8 attach different relative importance to African multilateral organisations at the 8
 9 continental and sub-regional levels. For France, Africa plays a crucial role in 9
 10 enhancing its rank in the international pecking order, with the result that political, 10
 11 diplomatic and military considerations are to the forefront in shaping policy. 11
 12 There is a strong element of defending Francophonie, particularly in west and 12
 13 central Africa, and thus a perception that French influence and power can best 13
 14 be projected by working with African sub-regional organisations, notably the 14
 15 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic 15
 16 Community of Central African States (personal communications, British official, 16
 17 Addis Ababa, 2009; French official, Dakar, 2010), and by working closely with 17
 18 key allies in these regions where France has interests or good relations with the 18
 19 government, such as Burkina Faso and Gabon. Moreover, France is sceptical 19
 20 about the AU's capacity to speak on behalf of the whole continent, and believes 20
 21 that international expectations of it are too ambitious, considering that it is an 21
 22 organisation that is still in its infancy (personal communications, French officials, 22
 23 Addis Ababa, 2009). 23

24 For UK policy-makers, on the other hand, Africa is primarily a development 24
 25 issue and policy has a continent-wide purview. This is reflected in the rise to 25
 26 prominence of DfID, which has played a major role in shaping UK policy on 26
 27 Africa since 1997. DfID was a product of New Labour's internationalism, with 27
 28 its strong focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged people on the planet. 28
 29 This ethical dimension to African policy was supported at the highest levels of 29
 30 government: Tony Blair's Christian approach (he once described Africa as a 'scar 30
 31 on the conscience of the world') and Gordon Brown's 'moral compass' were key 31
 32 drivers behind the UK approach to the continent (Gallagher 2009: 449–51). New 32
 33 Labour's internationalism was also manifest in the priority it attached to working 33
 34 with international organisations such as the G7/G8/G20, the UN and the AU. 34

35 Not only do France and the UK attach different priority to Africa, they also 35
 36 adopt a different approach, with France's focus essentially 'sub-regional' and the 36
 37 UK's continent-wide. France has historically had a strong interest in west and 37
 38 central Africa and has invested significantly in ECOWAS in recent years. The 38
 39 French government therefore favours engagement with Africa's sub-regional 39
 40 organisations. Although much has been made of French military retrenchment in 40
 41 Africa, what has happened is, rather, a reconfiguration of French pre-positioned 41
 42 forces so as to maintain a presence in the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa that 42
 43 correspond to the four brigades of the ASF: Dakar (West Africa: 1,200 troops), 43
 44 Libreville (Central Africa: 800 troops), Djibouti (East Africa: 2,700 troops), and 44

1 La Réunion (Southern Africa: 4,200 troops).¹² The mission of these forces is to 1
 2 cooperate with, and provide peacekeeping support for, the regional brigades of 2
 3 the ASF. In this role they sometimes coordinate with the British, as we have seen, 3
 4 but this is not their sole purpose. They are also there to defend French national 4
 5 interests and support French citizens in each of the major regions of Africa. These 5
 6 twin missions reinforce the ‘sub-regional’ rather than continent-wide nature of 6
 7 French engagement with Africa, which helps to explain why French engagement 7
 8 with Africa has tended to concentrate on working with the regional brigades of the 8
 9 ASF, such as the ECOWAS standby force. In contrast, the UK has invested less 9
 10 heavily in ECOWAS, has a continent-wide perspective and interests, and is more 10
 11 enthusiastic about the AU. 11

12

13 *Institutional Constraints* 13

14

15 While both countries have stated their wish to move beyond their traditional 15
 16 spheres of influence on the continent, the fact remains that the UK has a depth 16
 17 of knowledge about Anglophone Africa and France a wealth of expertise about 17
 18 Francophone Africa that means that in practice they generally focus their 18
 19 engagement with the AU on the countries they know best. The result is often 19
 20 a *de facto* ‘division of labour’, in which France continues to take the political 20
 21 lead on certain countries and the UK on others. The creation of the AU has not 21
 22 overturned this fundamental dynamic, which makes active cooperation on joint 22
 23 projects difficult to achieve as their efforts are simply focused either in different 23
 24 policy areas or on different countries (personal communication, DfID official, 24
 25 London, 2010). 25

26 These differences in approach are also reflected in the work of the UK and 26
 27 French ambassadors in Addis Ababa. Both are ‘double-hatted’, in the sense that 27
 28 they are accredited to Ethiopia as well as the AU, and both also deal with regional 28
 29 issues, as neither the UK nor France has embassies in all the countries of the 29
 30 region. France has significant interests in Djibouti and good links with the Eritrean 30
 31 government, so that a key focus of the work of the French ambassador is regional 31
 32 issues in the Horn of Africa, insofar as they affect French interests in these 32
 33 countries. The French embassy in Addis Ababa has also been heavily involved 33
 34 in crisis management because of the many recent crises in its ‘*pré carré*’. This 34
 35 priority attached to engaging with regional political and military issues inevitably 35
 36 means that it has less time for engagement with the AU (personal communications, 36
 37 French, British and Danish officials, Addis Ababa, 2009). In contrast, the UK 37
 38 ambassador, for whom long-term capacity-building in cooperation with the AU 38
 39 39

40
 41 12 La Réunion is an overseas department of France and troops stationed there are 40
 42 therefore charged with defending French sovereign territory as well as providing support 41
 43 to the ASF. In addition, French forces numbering some 2,450 were deployed on specific 42
 44 operations in Chad, Côte d’Ivoire and CAR at the end of 2009. The Dakar base is currently 43
 44 scheduled to close (*Jeune Afrique* 2010: 27 February). 44

1 is a priority, can devote more time to this. The UK embassy in Addis had by 2009 1
 2 increased to five the number of staff working on the AU, whereas the French 2
 3 embassy only had two such staff. 3

4 A more fundamental institutional constraint is that France has no equivalent 4
 5 to the UK's DfID. Not only this, but with the former Development directorate 5
 6 in the Foreign Affairs Ministry subsumed since 2009 within the much larger 6
 7 Globalisation directorate, French engagement with the AU is inevitably mainly 7
 8 political, diplomatic and military. This sidelining of development issues is reflected 8
 9 in the staff present in the embassy in Addis Ababa, whose focus is political and 9
 10 military issues and not long-term capacity-building and development work. In 10
 11 contrast, alongside its defence attaché and diplomatic personnel, the UK has a 11
 12 significant DfID presence within its embassy. As a result, the development agenda 12
 13 is to the forefront in British engagement with the AU. Moreover, with no obvious 13
 14 counterparts in the French embassy with whom they can cooperate on development 14
 15 issues, DfID staff inevitably look to other partners, notably the 'Nordic +' group, 15
 16 with which to work on such issues. 16

17 17

18 *Civil Society and Resource Constraints* 18

19 19

20 Parliamentary and civil society constraints also play a role in shaping UK and 20
 21 French policy towards the AU. The British government faces a powerful and 21
 22 vocal NGO lobby on development and humanitarian issues in Africa, which 22
 23 Labour governments in particular simply cannot afford, politically, to ignore. The 23
 24 French government, in contrast, while it has a prominent lobby for humanitarian 24
 25 intervention, led notably by Médecins sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde, 25
 26 does not face any significant NGO lobby in the development field (Cumming 2009). 26

27 Just as importantly, reductions in public expenditure, exacerbated by the 27
 28 2008–09 global financial crisis, have limited the scope of cooperation. In the case 28
 29 of the UK, this prompted a review of priorities in Africa that led, for example, 29
 30 to cuts in the Conflict Prevention Pool budget and the downgrading of the 30
 31 strategic priority attached to west and central Africa (personal communications, 31
 32 British officials, London, 2009). These ongoing cutbacks, together with the fact 32
 33 that France has troops on the ground in Africa and has cultivated good links 33
 34 with ECOWAS with the result that it is less dependent on the AU than the UK, 34
 35 accentuate the trend towards the sub-regional (French) versus continent-wide 35
 36 (UK) approach. Moreover, the French government's capacity to maintain troops 36
 37 on the ground in Africa is facilitated by the fact that such deployments are not 37
 38 subject to parliamentary approval in the way that they are in the UK. 38

39 39

40 40

41 **Conclusion** 41

42 42

43 In sum, no formal partnership has been established between the UK and France to 43
 44 work together with the AU. While the two countries now enjoy more constructive 44

1 ties with regard to Africa than in the past, joint Anglo-French working vis-à-vis 1
 2 the AU remains limited in scope. To be sure, they have sought to deconflictualise 2
 3 their approaches to Africa, and recognised that they benefit from working together 3
 4 with the AU on certain issues, as this enhances their influence in a context in which 4
 5 their traditional spheres of influence are increasingly under challenge from new 5
 6 external actors. It also plays well in the international arena for them to be seen to 6
 7 be working together to support the AU in managing and resolving crises. At the 7
 8 same time, both countries want to avoid direct military involvement, so it makes 8
 9 sense for them to train and support Africans to take greater responsibility for 9
 10 guaranteeing peace and security on the continent. In these respects the emergence 10
 11 of the AU as a credible interlocutor has opened up new opportunities for Anglo- 11
 12 French cooperation. Yet, at capital level and on the ground in Addis Ababa, there is 12
 13 no systematic effort at joint working. Rather, Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis 13
 14 the AU is often ad hoc, driven by personalities on the ground who see the benefits 14
 15 of cooperation and who happen to get on well, or the product of coinciding agendas 15
 16 that are not directly related to African policy *per se*. 16

17 The uneven nature of cooperation is also the product of the two countries' 17
 18 different forms and level of engagement with the AU. Although both the UK 18
 19 and France stand to benefit from enhanced cooperation, the neoclassical realist 19
 20 framework of analysis adopted here has helped to explain how divergent foreign 20
 21 policy priorities, institutional and resource constraints have placed limits on the 21
 22 extent of cooperation. Moreover, there is a dialectical relationship between decision- 22
 23 makers' perceptions and the policy choices that flow from them, on the one hand, 23
 24 and the institutional structures that deliver African policy on the other. The former 24
 25 shape the latter and the latter in turn feed back into and reinforce the perceptions 25
 26 and priorities of policy-makers. Both have played a role in shaping the contrasting 26
 27 French and British approaches to the AU. Thus, New Labour's commitment to a 27
 28 new form of internationalism that sought to be morally superior and go beyond the 28
 29 pursuit of naked self-interest in foreign policy shaped the UK government's more 29
 30 value-driven approach to the world's poorest continent between 1997 and 2010. 30
 31 Against this background development and poverty reduction, alongside peace and 31
 32 security, have been the key drivers of policy towards the AU, with DfID playing 32
 33 a lead role in setting the agenda for policy, whereas on the French side, political, 33
 34 diplomatic and military concerns are the key policy motors. This is reflected in 34
 35 the deployment of resources, both material and human, to support the AU: the 35
 36 UK is, through DfID, a significant development aid donor and takes the lead on 36
 37 the MDGs in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, whereas France takes the lead 37
 38 on military and security cooperation through the EURORECAMP programme. 38
 39 Cooperation is thus most advanced in the area in which the UK and France have a 39
 40 shared agenda – peace and security – but very limited in other fields. 40

41 Furthermore, the whole 'Saint-Malo 2' process relating to cooperation in 41
 42 Africa and with the AU was in large part the product of factors that had nothing 42
 43 intrinsically to do with Africa or the AU, such as the coincidence of wider foreign 43
 44 policy objectives in relation to European policy. Personalities also played a key 44

1 role with, for example, foreign ministers Cook and Védrine, who personally got 1
2 on well, playing a key role at the outset and Sarkozy and Brown subsequently 2
3 renewing the two countries' commitment to cooperate on Africa at the 2008 3
4 Franco-British summit. This raises the question: how compatible is the bilateral 4
5 UK-French approach to cooperation with the AU with the 'bi-multi' approach to 5
6 Africa in multilateral fora such as the EU and UNSC? The analysis presented 6
7 here suggests that these processes of cooperation are compatible, at least on 7
8 the security front, despite differences of emphasis between the UK and France. 8
9 Crucially though, long-term sustainability also depends on continuing AU support 9
10 for the process. Thus, if security continues to be the virtually exclusive focus 10
11 for cooperation with the AU and this comes to be seen as driven, ultimately, by 11
12 European security interests, this will undermine AU member states' support for 12
13 the process and could lead to the AU withdrawing its support for the Africa-EU 13
14 Strategic Partnership. 14
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