

# ***The AU: a new arena for Anglo-French cooperation in Africa?\****

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## ABSTRACT

At their 1998 Saint-Malo summit, the UK and French governments promised to set aside a century of rivalry and cooperate more closely on Africa. They also signalled their intention to develop a continent-wide focus on Africa, which would include building up the capacity of regional organisations. They were helped in this latter goal by the winding up of the OAU and its replacement by the AU in 2002. This article therefore examines the extent and nature of Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU. It sets out briefly the history of UK and French neglect of the OAU, reviews the key developments that pushed for a more coordinated stance on the AU, and then – drawing on extensive interviews in London, Paris, Brussels, Addis Ababa and Dakar – evaluates the extent of Anglo-French cooperation. It concludes by noting the uneven nature of Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU and assesses the reasons for this.

## INTRODUCTION

In launching the Saint-Malo process at the December 1998 Franco-British summit, the UK and French governments declared their intention to set aside a century of rivalry and ‘pursue joint cooperation’ on the ground in Africa (Saint-Malo Declaration 1998). In so doing, they signalled their readiness to move away from their traditional spheres of influence in their former African empires and towards a continent-wide focus on Africa, including as a central tenet building up the capacity of regional and

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sub-regional organisations. London and Paris were helped in this latter goal by the winding up of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1999 and its replacement by the African Union (AU) in July 2002. This article therefore examines British and French policy towards the AU, and the extent of Anglo-French cooperation. It begins by noting the UK and French neglect of the OAU, and then reviews the key developments and contextual changes that pushed for and facilitated a more coordinated stance on the AU. Drawing on more than 150 interviews with French, British, EU and African officials in London, Paris, Brussels, Addis Ababa and Dakar, it examines the key drivers behind enhanced cooperation, and evaluates the extent and nature of Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU. In particular, it shows how concerns in both the UK and France over their relative power on the international stage have pushed the UK and France to work more closely together with African regional and sub-regional organisations, but that divergent interests and foreign policy priorities, institutional and resource constraints, and also the views of the wider domestic polity on state preference, have impinged on policy making and ultimately limited the extent of cooperation. The article ends by assessing the wider implications of such cooperation.

Before proceeding, it is important to sharpen the focus of the present study. First, this is not an article about the AU per se. A number of recent works have examined the history and structure of the organisation and its emerging peace and security architecture (Akopari *et al.* 2008; Besada 2010; Engel & Porto 2010; Makinda & Okumu 2008). Second, and related to this, AU perceptions of Anglo-French cooperation are not a central feature of this article, although they cannot be entirely ignored. In this context it is worth noting that such cooperation has hitherto been broadly welcomed by the AU but, as I argue later, this attitude should not be taken for granted. Third, for reasons of space, the article focuses on the AU, which represents all African states (except Morocco), rather than on Africa's sub-regional organisations.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, in looking at Anglo-French cooperation, it concentrates on formal state-to-state interactions, although more informal, semi-official examples of cooperation that are the result of individual initiatives cannot be entirely ignored, as these are revelatory of the often ad hoc nature of Anglo-French cooperation with the AU. For example, the British and French diplomats in Addis Ababa who are responsible for liaison with the AU personally took the initiative in 2009 to invite the representatives of Anglophone and Francophone countries on the AU's Peace and Security Committee (PSC) to dinner. This gave the Anglophones the opportunity to meet the French diplomat responsible for relations with the AU and the Francophones the opportunity to meet the

British counterpart. Fifth, the article focuses largely on security cooperation, as this represents 90% of the EU's engagement with the AU (personal communication, EU official, Addis Ababa, 2009) and, in the French case, almost its exclusive area of engagement. 'Peace and security' is one of the priority areas of the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership, although the AU's strategic plan 2009–12 has three other thematic priorities (*Le Monde Diplomatique* 2009), and the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership has seven other priority action areas.<sup>2</sup> The lack of cooperation in these areas will be touched upon briefly where relevant, as it indicates the nature and limits of Anglo-French cooperation with the AU.

#### GOING IT ALONE IN AFRICA

Anglo-French relations in Africa have been characterised by rivalry since the beginning of the colonial period. This rivalry came to a head following the stand-off between Kitchener and Marchand at Fashoda in 1898. The latter was forced to withdraw, and Fashoda became shorthand in French for Anglo-French rivalry in Africa. This was attenuated somewhat by the Entente Cordiale, but Anglo-French relations continued to be characterised by competition rather than cooperation well into the post-colonial period. Indeed, the UK and France were on opposite sides over the Nigerian civil war in Biafra (1967–70). Until 1998 France adopted a unilateral approach to Africa. It stationed some 10,000 soldiers in its former colonies, pursued a policy of substitution rather than support for African initiatives, and undertook some thirty major unilateral military interventions on the continent between 1960 and 1990 (Charbonneau 2008: 68–72; Cumming 2001: 410). UK policy towards Africa, on the other hand, was characterised by benign neglect (Styan 1996: 261–86). The British had no bases and undertook virtually no interventions (except Kenya 1963–4), although they did have British Military Advisors working with the armed forces in their former colonies. The UK and France operated independently, pursuing bilateral relations with countries in their traditional African spheres of influence. This left no room or role for cooperation with the OAU, which in any case had little capacity or ambition.

Following the end of the Cold War there was a shift to a more multi-lateral approach: both France and the UK initially seemed prepared for multilateral military interventions as the issue of sovereignty became less predominant. However, events in Somalia discouraged most Western countries, with the initial exception of France, from undertaking such interventions, as became clear when the UK and USA led the international

community in its refusal to intervene in Rwanda (Fenton 2004: 132–3). In any case the move to a more multilateral approach did not extend to working with the OAU, which continued to be perceived as a dictators' club (Makinda & Okumu 2008: 30).

#### A FAVOURABLE WIND OF CHANGE

French and British neglect of African multilateral organisations such as the OAU was soon replaced by more supportive, and in some cases more coordinated, approaches. This section focuses on three key developments that cleared the way for a more coordinated Anglo-French approach. The first and most important was the emergence of the AU. At the end of the last century, a new generation of African leaders, such as Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo, subsequently joined by Abdoulaye Wade, espoused the idea of an African renaissance.<sup>3</sup> These leaders took a prominent role in pushing for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), launched in Abuja in October 2001, and the subsequent G8 Africa Action Plan, which was agreed in Kananaskis in 2002. The AU, which formally came into being in Durban in July 2002, set out to be a type of organisation quite different from the OAU that it replaced. More outward-looking than its predecessor, its ambition was to create an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, able to play its rightful role on the international stage (AU 2000, art. 3). The launch of the AU was also a significant moment because it signalled the abandonment of one of the OAU's founding principles, the commitment to non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states (*Africa News* 11.2.2002; Mwanasali 2008: 42–5). This willingness to set aside concerns about sovereignty and the new responsiveness to the 'responsibility to protect', to which its leaders signed up, reflected the desire of African leaders to take greater responsibility for peace and security on the continent.<sup>4</sup> More generally, these initiatives were born of a desire by African leaders to address the marginalisation of Africa in the context of accelerating globalisation, and put the continent 'on track towards sustainable growth and development' (Mathews 2008: 25). The creation of the AU thus marked the emergence of a new and credible African multilateral organisation that appeared to share the ambition of donor countries to address the challenges of governance and security on the continent (Porteous 2008: 54–6).

The second development was the overstretch of international and other organisations involved in peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War. Foreseeing what was to become a growing problem, UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in a 1995 report: 'It is increasingly apparent

that the United Nations cannot address every potential and actual conflict troubling the world' (UN 1995: para. 4). The UN simply did not have the resources to respond to the growing number and increased complexity of peacekeeping and security operations (including election monitoring, humanitarian relief and peacemaking missions). Moreover, the USA was reluctant to undertake military interventions in Africa following its humiliation in Somalia, while the EU for its part was making limited progress on its rapid reaction force prior to Saint-Malo. Against this background, the need for Africans to peacekeep themselves – and suffer the casualties that their lack of preparation was bound to involve – was overwhelming. In this context the launch of the RECAMP (*Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix*) programme represented a watershed in French policy, marking a move away from its traditional approach of direct, unilateral, military intervention towards a policy of supporting Africans to peacekeep themselves. The launch of the UK's African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme in 1997 had the same objective. Thus, both the UK and France subscribed to the notion of 'African solutions to African problems', although, as we shall see, their understanding of how this should work in practice was rather different.

The third development that served as a catalyst for improved Anglo-French cooperation on Africa was the shift in the way that the EU engaged with the continent. EU African policy, through the successive Yaoundé and Lomé conventions, was largely driven by the European Commission (EC); its partner was the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) group of countries, and its focus was trade and development. The political dimension of the relationship was left to member states and their bilateral relations with the ACP states. This began to change in the 1990s with the introduction of economic and political conditionalities under Lomé IV, which in 2000 were integrated into the successor Cotonou accords as one of the pillars of the new agreement linking the EU and the ACP. In the same year, at a summit held in Cairo, African and European leaders launched a new political dialogue outside the Lomé/Cotonou framework. Building on this and following the launch of the AU, in 2005 the EU developed an Africa strategy for the first time, for which its privileged interlocutor was the AU. At the same time, the EU was developing the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), for which Africa rapidly emerged as a key theatre, and responsibility for which fell to the European Council. These developments were crucially important for three reasons. First, they marked a move away from an essentially 'technical' relationship between the EU and Africa (as part of the ACP group of countries), in which the EC took the policy lead, towards a much more overtly political,

and indeed military, relationship. Second, reflecting the growing importance of the EU as a foreign policy actor, the European Council now took an increasingly important role in driving African policy. This shift towards intergovernmentalism thrust the UK and France, as the two member states with the largest residual responsibilities and interests south of the Sahara, to the centre of EU policy making on Africa. Third, the AU, not the ACP group of countries, now emerged as the EU's key strategic partner in Africa, a development that was confirmed by the signature of the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership at the AU–EU summit in Lisbon in 2007. These developments were, as we shall see, crucially important in opening the door to increased Anglo-French cooperation within the EU vis-à-vis the AU. They transformed the context for UK and French policy making on Africa, pushing them to coordinate policy and also to engage with the whole continent, through their partnership with the AU, in a way that they had not done in the past.

THE SAINT-MALO PROCESS: TOWARDS A NEW APPRECIATION OF  
THE AU

The Saint-Malo Franco-British summit of December 1998 promised greater collaboration between the UK and France in the defence and security field, enhanced cooperation on Africa and, crucially, 'joint cooperation to promote sub-regional integration, in particular between networks of anglophone and francophone countries' (Saint-Malo Declaration 1998).<sup>5</sup> This commitment represented a step-change in both French and British African policy because it signalled their intention to break away from their traditional unilateral, country-to-country relationships towards a more cooperative approach that would involve working with Africa's multilateral organisations. The intention to work jointly with the AU, specifically in the field of peace and security, was made explicit in the communiqué issued at the 2004 Lancaster House summit. This pledge was renewed at subsequent summits in 2006 and 2008 (Franco-British Summit 2006; Saint-Malo Ten Years After 2008).

The period 1998–2002 thus marked an important moment in UK and French relations with Africa. In the light of this, the question to be addressed here is: how far has Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU been taken? In order to do this, we need to understand what has been driving French and British approaches to the AU, and examine the obstacles to more systematic cooperation. As we have seen, neither country had sought to engage with the OAU in any systematic way. It is argued that this changed with the foundation of the AU and that, while

both countries publicly welcomed its creation, the UK has generally engaged more enthusiastically with the AU, reflecting the strategic priority attached by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to engaging with international organisations, whereas France has focused more of its efforts on working with Africa's sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS, and has adopted a more guarded approach to the AU, focusing on the area of security. Indeed the French government particularly welcomed the establishment of the AU's PSC as indicating a new willingness on the part of African governments to address the issues of conflict prevention and resolution, and at the same time also announced the establishment of the EU's African Peace Facility (APF), a funding scheme to support the peacekeeping efforts of the AU (*Xinhua News Agency* 26.5.2004). The creation of the APF provided an opportunity for France to share the costs, and risks, of its military operations in Africa (Utley 2005: 31), and security has since emerged as a key area for Anglo-French cooperation with the AU.

#### FRANCE, THE UK AND THE AU: A TYPOLOGY OF COOPERATION

It is possible to discern four different types, or levels, of cooperation with the AU.<sup>6</sup> First, there is 'natural' cooperation, where France and the UK seek to promote essentially the same agenda and priorities, and coordination of positions is relatively straightforward. Since 2002, the two countries have shared broadly similar concerns about Africa, relating to such issues as migration, terrorism, transnational crime, conflict, instability and governance. As a result they have rarely been at daggers drawn over Africa. Second, there is 'coincident cooperation', where the two countries want a similar outcome but seek to reach it in different ways, either because their motivations are not the same, or because they provide support to the AU in distinct ways as the instruments at their disposal are quite different. Third, 'disinterested cooperation' occurs where cooperation is the product of shared liberal norms and values, but working together brings no immediate material benefit to the other party.<sup>7</sup> The fourth type, 'deconflictualisation', is in many instances a prerequisite for the other three. This involves as a minimum the two countries pursuing their own initiatives independently, but making efforts to ensure that their actions are complementary and do not involve any unnecessary duplication of effort. In political terms it means that they are careful not to 'trip each other up'.

To be sure, these forms of cooperation cannot be entirely separated. For example, although the two countries share broadly the same agenda in

relation to Africans taking greater responsibility for security on the continent, they come to the problem from quite different perspectives, so that careful negotiation is needed in order to achieve the desired outcome. The result may be different forms of cooperation situated anywhere on a continuum from actively working together with shared agendas on joint projects at one end to simple deconflictualisation at the other. Moreover, this typology does not fully take account of the different fora and contexts in which cooperation takes place. In particular, a distinction needs to be made between bilateral Anglo-French cooperation that involves just the French and UK governments working together, and ‘bi-multi’ cooperation that involves them working together within multilateral organisations such as the EU and the UNSC, in an effort to bring others round to their view. These different forms of cooperation often take place in parallel, leading in practice to what can perhaps best be described as ‘messy multilateralism’. Nevertheless, while there is some overlap between the different types, the analytical distinctions remain useful indicators of the nature of cooperation and are helpful for drawing a distinction between areas of collaboration and other areas where non-cooperation, limited cooperation or cooperation without the AU have been the norm.

#### *‘Natural’ cooperation*

Taking ‘natural’ cooperation first, it should be reiterated that since 2002, France and the UK have rarely had major differences over Africa. As Western liberal democracies, permanent members of the UNSC, key players in the EU and the only major Western powers with significant residual responsibilities and interests south of the Sahara, they share a broad set of common values rooted in notions of human rights, democratisation, good governance and human security. A good example of ‘natural’ cooperation involves support for the AU’s African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).<sup>8</sup> Both governments want to avoid the costs and risks – in terms of both casualties and potential political damage – of direct military involvement, and therefore prefer to pay others to undertake peacekeeping operations on the continent. Both also agree that peace and security are the prerequisite for development. As the two major EU military powers with the capacity to intervene in Africa, their cooperation on the peace and security agenda was therefore natural, especially as this was an agenda that they shared with both the AU and its emerging APSA. It was therefore to be expected that both countries would play a key role within the EU in obtaining the support of EU member states for ESDP missions in Africa and for capacity-building, peacekeeping and peace



support operations under the ESDP, notably in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad/CAR (Chafer & Cumming 2010: 1134–7). Both have also played lead roles in generating EU support for the African Standby Force (ASF), the African Union peacekeeping missions in Sudan (AMIS) and Somalia (AMISOM) and, with other partners, the development of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS).<sup>9</sup> They have also jointly provided backing for map training exercises and support for the MIVAC initiative, an interactive watch and anticipation mechanism that has been developed to help the AU build up its early warning capability.<sup>10</sup> Crucially too, they played a key role, with Portugal, in developing the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership, which was signed at the first joint AU–EU summit in Lisbon in 2007, and in ensuring that this had a strong security focus (Elowson 2009: 27 n. 48).

*‘Coincident’ cooperation*

‘Coincident cooperation’ frequently takes place on the ground in Africa, at the level of implementation. Thus the principle of Anglo-French support for the APSA or cooperation to improve UN peacekeeping mandates is ‘natural’, insofar as both countries share the objective of enabling Africans to take more responsibility for peace and security on the continent. However, if we look at specific instances of cooperation, the two countries often come at an issue from quite different perspectives. With regard to the Sudan/Darfur crisis, for example, the UK has long been interested in stabilising Sudan and was one of the three countries (with the USA and Norway) that helped to deliver the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). France has never managed to exert any meaningful influence over the CPA process and only became involved much later, largely because of its concerns about the destabilising impact of the Darfur crisis on two of its key allies in the region, Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) (personal communication, Foreign Affairs Ministry official, Paris, 2009). Thus France was instrumental in gaining EU, including UK, support for the ESDP operation EUFOR Chad/CAR in 2008. At the same time it saw this operation as a way of further demonstrating the autonomous military capability of the EU (Olsen 2009: 18), and involving other European powers more fully in burden-sharing in the region, whereas for the UK the focus was more narrowly on Darfur and the danger that events there could spark a truly regional crisis. Indeed the FCO began planning for this eventuality ahead of any mission and, with help from the British High Commission in Cameroon, developed Whitehall’s understanding of the Chad/Sudan situation and held a joint

meeting with France on both countries. Yet Britain's Ministry of Defence (MoD) remained cautious, refusing to participate in the mission and initially blocking funding for it. It was only after a high-level exchange between President Sarkozy and Prime Minister Gordon Brown that the UK sent two staff officers to operational HQ in Paris and two to the field HQ in Chad, as well as later unblocking the money and even co-sponsoring the UN resolution that authorised the EU deployment (personal communication, UK official, London, 2009). This latter decision was no doubt prompted by the fact that the British public and the US administration were exercised over the situation in Sudan/Darfur and that British NGOs were pressing for 'humanitarian intervention'.

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

Perhaps the most striking example of 'coincident cooperation' is Anglo-French backing for the APSA, where the two countries provide support in quite different ways and using different instruments. After the Lisbon summit France and the UK took the lead in transforming the French RECAMP programme into an EU programme, EURORECAMP. Based in Paris, as France is the EU 'framework nation', it has a French general as its director and a British officer as its deputy director. The EURORECAMP programme aims to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity through education and training, and is 'guided by the principle of African ownership', to enable the AU to contribute more effectively to regional security (Africa–EU Strategic Partnership 2007: 5). A good example of this is its first training cycle, Amani Africa (amani means 'peace' in Swahili), which was launched in November 2008 at the AU–EU Ministerial Troika in Addis Ababa. The focus of the cycle (2008–10) is to assist the AU in its decision-making for crisis management at continental level and in its validation of the ASF. France takes the lead role in

agenda-setting and implementation, while the UK is the largest financial contributor (Elowson 2009: 62–3). Anglo-French strategic-level planning for Amani Africa mainly takes place at HQ level in Paris, while the EU Special Representative's Office (EUSR) in Addis Ababa has sought to coordinate EU and member states' support for Amani Africa, notably within the African Union Partners Group (AUPG), which was chaired by the UK in 2008 and by the EUSR in 2009.<sup>11</sup>

There have nonetheless been clear limits to this cooperation. Whilst these initiatives have helped ensure a degree of deconflictualisation between member states on the ground, the UK and France do not collaborate actively in Addis Ababa, either by working on joint projects or by working together within the AUPG, despite the fact that other member states acknowledge that they are the key players in the area of peace and security cooperation with the AU, and that without them little can be achieved (personal communications, Danish and EU officials, Addis Ababa, 2009). In practice both countries continue to provide a significant proportion of their support for the operationalisation of APSA on a bilateral basis (Bagayoko 2007: 2, Vines 2010: 1106). The UK channels its contributions (additional to those that it provides as a contributor to the European Development Fund)<sup>12</sup> to supporting the APF on a bilateral basis through its Conflict Prevention Pool.<sup>13</sup> It is one of the largest bilateral donors to APSA, and focuses on training African officers and providing funding for training exercises and peacekeeping operations. France, on the other hand, is one of the smallest financial contributors, but plays a much more prominent role than the UK in providing direct support for peacekeeping training exercises, thanks to its prepositioned forces totalling some 9,000 personnel in Dakar, Libreville, Djibouti and La Réunion. It usually undertakes these initiatives on its own, rather than jointly with other partners.

A further example of coincident cooperation is UK and French support for the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where the two countries have separate and distinct approaches to supporting the AU force on the ground, largely because the instruments at their disposal are quite different. While both countries want to avoid direct military involvement, supported the Djibouti peace accords, and coordinate their positions on Somalia in Brussels, notably in relation to the ESDP anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR off the Somali coast, at the bilateral level the British have provided significant financial support to AMISOM, while the French launched a purely French initiative to train Somali troops in Djibouti. The UK put £10 million into the UN-administered AMISOM Trust Fund in March 2009, and provided just under £1 million in niche support to

AMISOM in 2009–10. From May 2008 to March 2009, the UK also gave US\$16.7 million to the AU for AMISOM to cover personnel costs (troop allowances, pre-deployment training, and death and injury benefits).<sup>14</sup> The Somali troop training programme, on the other hand, was a purely French initiative, although France did subsequently try, unsuccessfully, to turn this into an EU programme and obtain EU funding for it at a joint meeting of the EU's and AU's PSCs in Addis Ababa in 2009 (personal communications, French and Danish officials, Addis Ababa, 2009; see also *Le Monde* 14.10.2009). These differences in approach reflect the fact that the UK government, through the Department for International Development (DfID) budget, has money available for bilateral support but no troops on the ground, whereas France has almost no money for bilateral initiatives but has a major garrison and training facilities in Djibouti.<sup>15</sup>

*'Disinterested' cooperation*

'Disinterested cooperation' is distinct in nature from the first two forms of cooperation, in that France and the UK do not in this case necessarily have a specific shared agenda or seek a specific outcome from cooperation. Rather, as Western liberal democracies that are permanent members of the UNSC and major players in the EU, they frequently engage with international issues from which they do not expect to derive a direct benefit or reward. This can happen in two ways. There can be a high-level decision at national government level to support the other country's position, even though this will bring the first country no immediate or obvious benefit, or it can happen as a result of personal initiatives by officials at local level. However, while the rhetoric may suggest that these helpful gestures are purely the result of shared Western values, there have been instances where realpolitik-type deals, from which both countries stand to benefit, have also been struck. One example of this was in 2008, when France, which at the time held the EU presidency, agreed to support the UK's stance on Zimbabwe at EU level and then lobbied the AU for support, while the UK supported France on EUFOR Chad/CAR (personal communications, French and British officials, Paris, London and Addis Ababa 2008–9). This made sense for both countries, as, if the UK had lobbied the AU on Zimbabwe or France on Chad, their African interlocutors would likely have turned a deaf ear. The potential problem with 'disinterested' cooperation resulting from shared liberal norms is that it can be perceived by AU members as an attempt to impose Western values. We return to this point below.

*Deconflictualisation*

The importance of deconflictualisation as a prerequisite for any form of cooperation cannot be overemphasised. During the 1990s, before the creation of the AU, there were profound differences between the UK and France on Charles Taylor's Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda/DRC. As late as 2001, the UK saw France as undermining its position on Zimbabwe by inviting President Mugabe to Paris at a time when the UK was attempting to garner EU support for sanctions against his regime. It was against this background that Saint-Malo was so significant, as France and the UK recognised that they had nothing to gain from adopting such conflictual positions and agreed that they would in future avoid such public disagreement on African issues.

These efforts to deconflictualise have extended to UK and French policy towards the AU. As we shall see below, this has been clear in the support that the two countries have provided to the AU's condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent. Deconflictualisation has also underpinned their approaches to supporting AMIS in Darfur (which was replaced by a UN/AU hybrid force, UNAMID, on 31 December 2007) and AMISOM in Somalia. Deconflictualisation of a different kind has taken place in the launch of a programme to combat the impact of climate change in Africa. Coordinated by the DfID office in Addis Ababa, this seeks to bring the AU, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa together with a donor 'coalition of the willing' to develop a coherent climate change programme and deliver funding for it by 2012. Climate change is one of the eight priority actions in the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership. However, the most prominent supporters of the initiative are the 'Nordic+' group; France, despite being the EU-designated framework nation for this priority action, has hitherto played only a minor role.<sup>16</sup> Thus the UK has taken the lead in a policy area where France was nominally the lead nation, without any objection from France. Indeed it was largely the frustration of DfID officials in Addis Ababa at the slow rate of progress that led to the launch of the initiative (personal communications, British and EU officials, Addis Ababa, 2009).

## COOPERATION FAILURES

Although considerable progress has been made, cooperation, and even deconflictualisation, is not systematic. At times the UK and France have

failed to agree or had difficulty coordinating their stances. These cases reveal their different approaches to the AU.

### *Non-cooperation*

Perhaps the most striking recent example of non-cooperation relating to the AU was the contrasting UK and French responses to the Prodi report (Prodi 2008). Romano Prodi was commissioned by the UNSC in 2008 to draw up a report on how the UN could improve its support for peacekeeping in Africa, with a view to providing more predictable, flexible and sustainable funding for AU peacekeeping operations. With the increasing demand for peacekeeping operations on the continent, funding was a growing issue as, once an operation was authorised, contributions then had to be sought from member states whose contributions were entirely voluntary. The report's key recommendation was the creation of a dual system of financial support for the AU's peacekeeping efforts, involving voluntary contributions by member states to support AU capacity-building efforts, and obligatory contributions to establish a UN fund that would be available to support UN-authorised peacekeeping operations undertaken by the AU. The UK supported the report's key recommendation, whereas France, along with the USA and Russia, opposed mandatory financing and supported instead a voluntary system of multi-donor transfers. This difference was consistent with the UK's greater enthusiasm for working with the UN and France's preference for working through the EU in support of African peacekeeping efforts (Matlary 2009: 101–2, Vines 2010: 1106–7). In the end, the UK brokered a compromise in the Africa Working Group in Brussels, whereby EU member states agreed to 'keep all options under consideration' (personal communication, EU official, Addis Ababa, 2009), and this was the position eventually adopted by the UNSC on 26 October 2009. However, the question of funding for AU peacekeeping operations remains unresolved, with the UK preferring a reliable UN mechanism and France preferring to focus on developing the EU's support capacity (personal communications, French officials, Brussels and Addis Ababa, 2009).

### *Limited cooperation*

Although the UK and France have, as we have seen, usually been able to align, or at least deconflictualise, their positions vis-à-vis the AU, this has not always been straightforward. For example, following the 2008 coup in Madagascar, the British minister for Africa, Lord Malloch-Brown,

publicly condemned the coup, whereas France took a more conciliatory line even than the AU itself (personal communications, AU official, Addis Ababa, 2009; former minister, London, 2009). Although the two governments did eventually align their stances, their different public positions in the immediate aftermath of the coup were symptomatic of deeper differences in reaction to unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. One reason for this is that the French stance on such changes is not always clear. This can lead to a gap between the public discourse of support for human rights and condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government on the one hand, and the actions of individuals close to the government, on the other, that suggest a more qualified position, as happened in the case of the *coup d'état* that followed the death of Guinean president Lansana Conté in 2008 (Survie 2009); or it can result from differences between government representatives, as happened in the case of the 2009 coup in Mauritania when President Sarkozy appeared to contradict France's official position of condemnation of the coup (*Libération* 8.4.2009, 17.7.2009). One consequence is that British diplomats sometimes wonder who is articulating the French government's real position on such issues. This uncertainty undermines trust and constitutes an obstacle to cooperation.

#### *Cooperation outside the AU*

Anglo-French coordination sometimes takes place without reference to the AU. In some cases, such as aid coordination in the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, this is not necessarily problematic as the donors have, through the AUPG, agreed to align their aid efforts to supporting the AU's own strategic plan. Indeed, African officials welcome such cooperation as the multiplicity of donors with their different practices and reporting mechanisms and their lack of coordination was stretching the absorptive capacity of the AU to breaking point (personal communication, AU official, Addis Ababa, 2009). AU officials also welcomed greater Anglo-French cooperation in support of the APSA as, until 2006, the differences between the UK and French military traditions were seen as an obstacle to establishing the ASF (personal communication, Pretoria, 2010).

However, such cooperation is potentially problematic when coordination initiatives are launched without the AU, as sometimes happens in the peace and security field. The failure to agree a stable funding mechanism for AU peacekeeping operations was an example of this. Another was the French decision to call a regional coordination meeting

in October 2008 without inviting the AU, after both the USA and France built radar systems for the Djibouti government (personal communications, UK and French officials, Addis Ababa, 2009). Yet the discussions were of interest to the AU as they had implications for the APSA.

The problem here is twofold. First, both the UK and France tend to see security cooperation with the AU in terms of avoiding direct military engagement and European troop losses, because of the domestic political risks and costs involved. It therefore suits them to develop Africans' capacity to peacekeep themselves, and pay Africans to undertake peacekeeping operations where they prefer not to send their own troops. To be sure, the importance that both countries attach to developing the APSA coincides with the AU's objective to develop Africans' peacekeeping capacity. However, given the level and wide-ranging nature of dependence of the APSA on EU support (Gänzle & Grimm 2010: 78–86) and the AU's lack of institutional capacity, there is a real danger that it is the EU that decides when, where and how 'African solutions to African problems' are applied.

This 'Europeanisation' of African security efforts risks eroding African support for APSA as 'African states (and organisations) have no choice but to bow to the strategic, operational and tactical demands of their "benefactors"' (Franke 2009: 261).<sup>17</sup> This is a particular risk for the UK and France, as they are both the major EU member states driving EU Africa policy and also permanent members of the UNSC. The risk of Anglo-French cooperation undermining African support for the AU is even greater when they simply ignore the view of the AU, as happened when the UK and France, along with the USA, refused to defer President Bashir's referral to the International Criminal Court for a year, then lobbied other members of the UNSC to support them, despite the fact that this was opposed by the AU (personal communications, UK and French officials, New York and Paris, 2008–9). Such episodes increase the danger that Africans will come to see the AU as being instrumentalised by its Western partners, who only lobby it, consult it and involve it when it suits them. Moreover, with 90% of the EU's current engagement with the AU in the peace and security field, despite the fact that there are supposed to be seven other priority action areas in the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership, these other areas of cooperation are inevitably neglected. This priority accorded to security over other priority action areas of central concern to Africans, such as human rights, trade, the millennium development goals, energy and climate change, reinforce the perception that the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership is driven by concerns about



European security, rather than for Africans and their security (Franke 2009: 260).

#### POLICY DRIVERS FOR COOPERATION

How then are we to account for the uneven nature of Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU? In order to answer this question I will examine first the drivers towards cooperation, then the constraints on enhanced cooperation.

##### *New governments in France and the UK*

The first driver towards cooperation was the election in 1997 of new French and British governments that wanted to overhaul their two countries' approaches to Africa. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin was a moderniser in terms of African policy and, under the slogan 'Not to do less but to do better', he was concerned to restore France's image in Africa, following the debacle of its involvement in Rwanda and DRC (then Zaïre) in the mid 1990s (Chafer 2005: 17). He wanted to move away from France's traditional unilateral approach to Africa, which in the military field had earned it the reputation of the 'gendarme' of Africa, towards a new focus on Africans peacekeeping themselves. Jospin also wanted to shift aid policy away from its traditional exclusive focus on France's former colonies to a new *Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire* that included for the first time former British colonies such as Nigeria and Kenya (Cumming 2001: 409). His election coincided with the election of a New Labour government in the UK that sought to re-engage with Africa, in particular by promoting an ambitious development agenda through the newly created Department for International Development. After decades during which Africa appeared largely marginal to British foreign relations, Tony Blair's government was set to make Africa an explicit policy priority (Porteous 2008:1), though not in the military field (the small and time-limited, albeit effective, intervention in Sierra Leone in 2001 was the exception in this respect), where the UK was keen for Africans to take a much greater role. For both countries this new approach implied moving beyond the traditional Anglo-French 'division of labour' in Africa, whereby France focused its attention on its Francophone *pré carré* ('sphere of influence'), with which it maintained privileged and exclusive relations, and the UK concentrated on maintaining good bilateral relations with key countries, such as Nigeria in the west and Kenya in the east, that had been British colonies (Chafer 2005: 7–23; Cumming 2005: 56–7; Porteous 2008: 7). At the same

time, both the Jospin and Blair governments were all too aware that their countries were suffering from resource constraints which prevented them from undertaking all the tasks on the continent that they once had done.

As a result, both governments now perceived it as in their interest to cooperate on African issues. This new approach was not driven solely by a concern for Africa. On the French side, as we have seen, there was a perceived need to renew African policy after the debacle of Rwanda, but this was also a moment when relations between President Chirac, Prime Minister Jospin and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder were difficult, so that Chirac and his foreign affairs minister Hubert Védrine were looking for EU policy areas where they could work more closely with the UK. At the same time, the UK having opted against joining the euro, Prime Minister Blair nonetheless wanted to 'put the UK at the heart of Europe', and was looking for policy areas in which the UK could play a leading role within the EU. Thus French and British leaders at the time saw collaboration on Africa policy as presenting an opportunity to enhance their position within Europe. At the same time, Védrine and his UK counterpart, Robin Cook, personally got on well and this facilitated the new cooperative approach on African issues (personal communication, Hubert Védrine, Paris, 2009). Both the extent to which Anglo-French policy cooperation on Africa, and more specifically vis-à-vis the AU, is driven by factors that are extraneous to Africa policy per se, and the importance of personalities in sustaining the momentum for collaboration, are significant factors in explaining the uneven nature of Anglo-French cooperation in this field.

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

Finally, the growing activism of powerful new external actors in Africa, such as China and India, has led to a significant reduction in the importance of the UK and France in Africa's foreign relations since the early 2000s. This has reduced their power to do things in Africa, and the resulting decline in leverage provides a further incentive for them to cooperate on African issues. The UK and France thus have complementary interests pushing them towards closer – and mutually beneficial – cooperation on African issues. The creation of the AU provided a new arena for them to work together and, given these complementary interests, it may seem surprising that cooperation has not been taken further. What are the constraints that have prevented this?

#### CONSTRAINTS ON COOPERATION

The constraints on enhanced cooperation may be explained by reference to three main factors: divergent interests, institutional constraints, and resource constraints emerging out of the views of the wider polity. The UK and French foreign policy-making establishments have divergent perceptions of Africa in general, and of the AU in particular, in the context of their countries' broader foreign policy priorities and interests, and in designing policy they are constrained by other factors, notably institutional constraints and the views of the wider domestic polity, on state preferences. These three factors will be considered in turn.

##### *Divergent interests*

Despite the common ground between them identified above, Paris and London attach different relative importance to African multilateral organisations at the continental and sub-regional levels. For France, Africa plays a crucial role in enhancing its rank in the international pecking order, with the result that political, diplomatic and military considerations are to the forefront in shaping policy. There is a strong element of defending *francophonie*, particularly in west and central Africa, and thus a perception that French influence and power can best be projected by working with African sub-regional organisations, notably ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (personal communications, British official, Addis Ababa, 2009; French official, Dakar, 2010), and by working closely with key allies in these regions where France has interests or good relations with the government, such as Burkina Faso and Gabon. Moreover, France is sceptical about the AU's capacity

to speak on behalf the whole continent, and believes that international expectations of it are too ambitious, considering that it is an organisation that is still in its infancy (personal communications, French officials, Addis Ababa, 2009).

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

Not only do France and the UK attach different priority to Africa, they also adopt a different approach, with France's focus essentially sub-regional and the UK's continent-wide. France has historically had a strong interest in west and central Africa and has invested significantly in ECOWAS in recent years. The French government therefore favours engagement with Africa's sub-regional organisations. Although much has been made of French military retrenchment in Africa, what has happened is, rather, a reconfiguration of French prepositioned forces so as to maintain a presence in the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa that correspond to the four brigades of the ASF: Dakar (West Africa: 1,200 troops), Libreville (Central Africa: 800 troops), Djibouti (East Africa: 2,700 troops) and La Réunion (Southern Africa: 4,200 troops).<sup>18</sup> The mission of these forces is to cooperate with, and provide peacekeeping support for, the regional brigades of the ASF. In this role they sometimes coordinate with the British, as we have seen, but this is not their sole purpose. They are also there to defend French national interests and support French citizens in each of the major regions of Africa. These twin missions reinforce the sub-regional rather than continent-wide nature of French engagement with Africa, which helps to explain why French engagement with Africa has tended to concentrate on working with the regional brigades of the ASF, such as the ECOWAS standby force. In contrast, the UK has invested less heavily in ECOWAS, has a continent-wide perspective and interests, and is more enthusiastic about the AU.

*Institutional constraints*

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

These differences in approach are also reflected in the work of the UK and French ambassadors in Addis Ababa. Both are ‘double-hatted’, in the sense that they are accredited to Ethiopia as well as the AU, and both also deal with regional issues, as neither the UK nor France has embassies in all the countries of the region. France has significant interests in Djibouti and good links with the Eritrean government, so that a key focus of the work of the French ambassador is regional issues in the Horn of Africa, insofar as they affect French interests in these countries. The French embassy in Addis Ababa has also been heavily involved in crisis management because of the many recent crises in its *pré carré*. This priority attached to engaging with regional political and military issues inevitably means that it has less time for engagement with the AU (personal communications, French, British and Danish officials, Addis Ababa, 2009).<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the UK ambassador, for whom long-term capacity-building in cooperation with the AU is a priority, can devote more time to this. The UK embassy in Addis Ababa had by 2009 increased to five the number of staff working on the AU, whereas the French embassy only had two such staff.

A more fundamental institutional constraint is that France has no equivalent to the UK’s DfID. Not only this, but with the former Development directorate in the Foreign Affairs Ministry subsumed since 2009 within the much larger Globalisation directorate, French engagement with the AU is inevitably mainly political, diplomatic and military. This sidelining of development issues is reflected in the staff present in the embassy in Addis Ababa, whose focus is political and military issues and not long-term capacity-building and development work. In contrast, alongside its defence attaché and diplomatic personnel, the UK has a significant DfID presence within its embassy. As a result, the development

agenda is to the forefront in British engagement with the AU. Moreover, with no obvious counterparts in the French embassy with whom they can cooperate on development issues, DfID staff inevitably look to other partners, notably the 'Nordic+' group, with which to work on such issues.

*Civil society and resource constraints*

Parliamentary and civil society constraints also play a role in shaping UK and French policy towards the AU. The British government faces a powerful and vocal NGO lobby (Oxfam, Christian Aid, Save the Children, etc.) on development and humanitarian issues in Africa, which Labour governments in particular simply cannot afford, politically, to ignore. The French government, in contrast, while it has had a 'très human rights' foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, and a prominent lobby for humanitarian intervention, led notably by *Médecins sans Frontières* and *Médecins du Monde*, does not face any significant NGO lobby in the development field (Cumming 2009).

Just as importantly, reductions in public expenditure, exacerbated by the 2008–9 global financial crisis, have limited the scope of cooperation. In the case of the UK, this prompted a review of priorities in Africa that led, for example, to cuts in the Conflict Prevention Pool budget and the downgrading of the strategic priority attached to west and central Africa (personal communications, British officials, London, 2009). These ongoing cutbacks, together with the fact that France has troops on the ground in Africa and has cultivated good links with ECOWAS with the result that it is less dependent on the AU than the UK, accentuate the trend towards the sub-regional (French) versus continent-wide (UK) approach. Moreover, the French government's capacity to maintain troops on the ground in Africa is facilitated by the fact that such deployments are not subject to parliamentary approval in the way that they are in the UK and also, no doubt, by the fact that it is less fearful than the UK government of high-profile media coverage of casualties being repatriated to France. It is also worth noting that staff exchanges, particularly on the British side, have tended to be one of the first areas in which cuts are made when resources become scarce. Yet such exchanges have a vital role to play in laying the foundation for a shared understanding of African policy issues and thus represent a false economy if enhanced cooperation is the objective.



In sum, the Saint-Malo declaration notwithstanding, no formal partnership has been established between the UK and France to work together with the AU. While the two countries now enjoy more constructive ties with regard to Africa than in the past, joint Anglo-French working vis-à-vis the AU remains limited in scope.

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

The uneven nature of cooperation is also the product of the two countries' different forms and level of engagement with the AU. Although both the UK and France stand to benefit from enhanced cooperation, divergent foreign policy priorities, institutional and resource constraints have placed limits on the extent of cooperation. Moreover, there is a dialectical relationship between decision-makers' perceptions and the policy choices that flow from them, on the one hand, and the institutional structures that deliver African policy on the other. The former shape the latter and the latter in turn feed back into and reinforce the perceptions and priorities of policy makers. Both have played a role in shaping the contrasting French and British approaches to the AU. Thus, New Labour's commitment to a new form of internationalism that sought to be morally superior and go beyond the pursuit of naked self-interest in foreign policy shaped the UK government's more value-driven approach to the world's poorest continent between 1997 and 2010. Against this background development and poverty reduction, alongside peace and security, have been the key drivers of policy towards the AU, with DfID playing a lead role in setting the agenda for policy, whereas on the French side, political, diplomatic and military concerns are the key policy motors. This is reflected in the

deployment of resources, both material and human, to support the AU: the UK is, through DfID, a significant development aid donor and takes the lead on the MDGs in the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership, whereas France takes the lead on military and security cooperation through the EURORECAMP programme. Cooperation is thus most advanced in the area in which the UK and France have a shared agenda – peace and security – but very limited in other fields.

The whole ‘Saint-Malo 2’ process relating to cooperation in Africa and with the AU was in large part the product of factors that had nothing intrinsically to do with Africa or the AU, such as the coincidence of wider foreign policy objectives in relation to European policy. Personalities also played a key role, with Prime Minister Blair driving the process forward at its outset and foreign ministers Cook and Védérine, who personally got on well, playing a key role in sustaining its momentum. Sarkozy and Brown subsequently renewed the two countries’ commitment to cooperate on Africa at the 2008 Franco-British summit. This raises two questions. First, how compatible is the bilateral UK–French approach to cooperation with the AU with the ‘bi-multi’ approach to Africa in multilateral fora such as the EU and UNSC? Second, is such cooperation, at both the bilateral and ‘bi-multi’ level, sustainable? In response to the first of these questions, the analysis presented here suggests that these processes of cooperation are compatible, at least on the security front, despite differences of emphasis between the UK and France. With regard to the second question, the situation has evolved since the 1998 Saint-Malo summit and cooperation with the AU has taken on a logic of its own since the early 2000s, both at the bilateral level and at the level of the EU and UNSC. Crucially though, long-term sustainability also depends on continuing AU support for the process. We have seen that Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU sometimes happens without reference to the AU, which raises questions about how far both the UK and France are in practice prepared to espouse the notion of ‘African solutions to African problems’ (Franke 2009: 260–1). Moreover, if security continues to be the virtually exclusive focus for cooperation with the AU, and this comes to be seen as driven, ultimately, by European security interests, this will undermine AU member states’ support for the process and could lead to the AU withdrawing its support for the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership.

This leads to the question of the future of such cooperation. The UK and France are, jointly, the chief motor behind the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership. If the partnership is to be sustained and develop, the UK and France will need to remain committed to it. This cannot be taken for granted. Both countries face severe fiscal constraints and the UK,



following the 2010 general election, has a Conservative-dominated coalition government that may well, in a context of global recession and rising national debt, be less enthusiastic about support for Africa generally than its predecessor, and may also be less keen on working with France in an EU context. This, coupled with reduced levels of French enthusiasm for the AU and the failure to establish any formal mechanisms for Anglo-French cooperation vis-à-vis the AU, could cause the Anglo-French motor behind Europe's engagement with the AU to run out of steam. Since the EU is the AU's most important external backer, the AU might then lose its momentum and the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership could become more about words than deeds. In a context of on-going budget cuts, France might choose to intensify its sub-regional focus on west and central Africa and on key commercial partners such as Nigeria and South Africa, while the UK may retrench and focus its African policy on major countries in which it has significant interests and with which it has long-standing historical links, notably Nigeria in the west, Kenya in the east and South Africa. In this case it would not be surprising if other EU powers that are not intrinsically interested in sub-Saharan Africa were to direct Europe's focus more towards the Mediterranean and central Europe.

#### NOTES

1. The focus here is on the AU as a continent-wide organisation. There are five sub-regional organisations and the dynamic of Anglo-French cooperation is different in each. The author will be examining this question in a further article that explores Anglo-French engagement with ECOWAS.

2. The others are: democratic governance and human rights; trade, regional integration and infrastructure; millennium development goals; energy; climate change; migration, mobility and employment; science, information society and space.

3. Presidents Mbeki, Bouteflika and Obasanjo launched the idea of a 'New Africa Initiative' in 2000. President Wade subsequently put forward his 'Omega Plan' as an alternative recovery plan in the run-up to NEPAD's formalisation (at the time called the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP)). The Omega Plan was first presented at the Franco-African Summit in Yaoundé in January 2001 and was then showcased at the OAU's Extraordinary Summit in Sirte in March. Only hard bargaining managed to prevent Wade's plan from sabotaging African unity before it had even begun and, after an extraordinary meeting in Pretoria in July 2001, it was eventually agreed to combine Omega and MAP. Some insiders at the time suspected that Wade's Plan was supported, if not initiated, by the French out of frustration at 'Anglo-Saxon' dominance of the 'New African Initiative'. I am indebted to one of the anonymous referees for this information.

4. Article 4 of the AU's Constitutive Act asserted 'the right of the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances', including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The 'responsibility to protect' is the idea of transnational responsibility for human welfare, see <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org>, accessed 17.6.10.

5. Full summit declaration obtained from the FCO. The 'Saint-Malo Declaration' is published on several websites but the text is incomplete, even on the FCO website, as it omits the part of the declaration referring to Africa, see <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=10435411>, accessed 26.3.2010.

6. For a discussion of cooperation problems in international relations see Martin 1992: 768–83.

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

8. The AU established the APSA as ‘an operational structure for the effective implementation of ... conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations and intervention, as well as peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction’ (Engel & Porto 2010: 3). The centrepiece of the APSA is the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the role of which is to oversee the establishment of the Continental Early-Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF). The PSC is supported by a Panel of the Wise, whose role is to advise the PSC on peace and security issues and help in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

9. There have to date been four ESDP military missions in Africa: Operation Artemis, DRC, June–September 2003; EUFOR, DRC, July–November 2006; EUFOR, Chad/Central African Republic (CAR), January 2008–March 2009; and EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, December 2008–on-going. In addition, there have been three completed civil-military and civil ESDP missions in Africa (including EU support to the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS)) and a further three were on-going at the time of writing (June 2010). Although ESDP missions, apart from EU support to AMIS which was provided at the request of the AU, do not directly involve the AU, they cannot be ignored here as the UK and French governments have played a key role in gaining EU member states’ support for these missions, which have in turn been a significant factor shaping EU policy towards the AU.

10. The MIVAC (*Mécanisme interactif de veille et d’anticipation conjoint*) initiative forms part of the Africa–EU Strategic Partnership. Under it the UK and France sent two AU colleagues to the French Foreign Affairs Ministry’s early warning centre and to the BBC monitoring service, Chatham House and the Royal United Services Institute (personal communications, British and French officials, Addis Ababa 2009).

11. The AUPG also includes China, India, the USA, Canada, Russia, Norway and Turkey. With the creation in Addis Ababa in 2007 of the EU Special Representative’s office, representing the European Council and the Commission, the EU became potentially a key forum for Anglo-French policy coordination vis-à-vis the AU.

12. The European Development Fund is the main instrument for providing EU development aid.

13. The CPP is a UK Government funding mechanism that aims to reduce the number of people whose lives are affected by conflict and to develop effective conflict prevention measures.

14. Payment for these lines has now been taken on by the EU’s APF.

15. This difference in approach is also noticeable in relation to the two countries’ support for the AU’s mission in Sudan, AMIS/UNAMID. The UK has given US\$62 million to the mission, while total French bilateral aid to the AU since 2005 has been only €20 million (personal communication, UK official, Addis Ababa, 2009, <[http://www.ambafrance-et.org/France\\_Ethiopie/spip.php?article318](http://www.ambafrance-et.org/France_Ethiopie/spip.php?article318)>, accessed 17.6.10).

16. The ‘Nordic +’ group includes the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and sometimes also Germany.

17. Franke actually uses the term ‘Westernisation’ of African security efforts, as he points out that not only the EU but also US interventions have shaped the discussion about the meaning of ‘African security’. However, given the sheer size and range of support that the EU provides to the APSA, it seems more appropriate to use the term ‘Europeanisation’ here.

18. La Réunion is an overseas department of France and troops stationed there are therefore charged with defending French sovereign territory as well as providing support to the ASF. In addition, French forces numbering some 2,450 were deployed on specific operations in Chad, Côte d’Ivoire and CAR at the end of 2009. The French government announced recently that the Dakar base is to close (*Jeune Afrique* 27.2.2010), with possibly only 300 military personnel remaining in Senegal.

19. The UK recently sought to address this problem by appointing a fluent French speaker to its embassy in Addis Ababa, who has responsibility for coordinating UK policy towards the AU. He works closely with his French counterpart in Addis Ababa on AU matters (personal communication, UK official, Addis Ababa, 2009).

20. For example, France has had no presence in Somaliland, but with a French company interested in rebuilding the port of Berbera, the French ambassador is now working with his UK counterpart to obtain EU funding for a new road from Berbera to the Ethiopian border (personal communications, British and French ambassadors, Addis Ababa, 2009).

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