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The British Role in US-French Security Cooperation, 1978-1987

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[Abstract]

The threat of IRA terrorist attacks on French soil in the early 1980s necessitated the start of in-depth bilateral discussions between Britain and France concerning issues of counter-terrorism. France was initially reluctant to engage with Britain on these matters due to Paris' concern that Britain would exert pressure to expand cooperation with the United States, and refused to budge from the position of cooperation only within the EEC once bilateral dialogues began. As terrorist attacks increased in France throughout the summer of 1986, the French government decided to take drastic counter-terrorist measures which angered many of their European neighbours. However, Britain's firm support for French action had the effect of increasing British influence over France's rather ineffective counter-terrorism policy, which in turn allowed London to apply more pressure on Paris to agree to wider consultations with Washington. Unable to resist British pressure further – particularly after the faux-pas over the Hindawi Affair – the French government in May 1986 finally decided to conduct deeper consultations on counter-terrorism issues with the United States and the other G7 nations, which resulted in the Statement on Terrorism at the G7 Summit

in Venice in June 1987.

Key Words: Britain, France, United States, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Terrorism

I. Introduction

In the midst of the Israel-Hamas War in Gaza which began in October 2023 with the surprise attack launched by Hamas on southern Israel, the Israeli online newspaper *The Times of Israel* reported in January 2024 that the Israeli intelligence services had discovered that Hamas was running "a network of operatives in Europe commanded by terror leaders in Lebanon" and that "Hamas cells in Denmark, Germany and Holland were arrested in December [2023] on suspicion of plotting to attack Jewish targets in Europe" such as the Israeli embassy in Sweden (Berman 2024). This report coincided with a survey conducted in Germany in November 2023 in which terror attacks on German soil "with very high casualty figures were considered to be either very or highly likely by some 59% of respondents" as a consequence of the war in Gaza, and in which 25% of the respondents thought that "the possibility of terror attacks was the prime concern" in relation to the consequences of the Gaza war on Germany (Connor 2023).

To understand the devastating effects of long-term Middle Eastern terrorist activities on the Western world such as Europe and the United States, one needs to delve no further than the 1980s following the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. Lebanon "was to terrorism in the 1980s to what Berlin was to the Cold War in the 1960s [as] a central location for the conflicts, threats, incidents, and other dramas that unfolded" terrorism (Simon 172). A destabilised Lebanon, torn between

Muslim forces in the south and Christian forces in the north, “allowed Syria and Iran to infiltrate the country, created conditions for terrorist safe havens, fomented a Shia [Muslim] uprising, and forced Israel, the US and France to respond to these problems” (Pluchinsky 427). The Israeli intervention into Lebanon in 1982 prompted the creation of the Shia Muslim militant group Hezbollah, which proceeded to undertake various terrorist activities against the West such as capturing “nearly a dozen Americans living in Beirut in the 1980s” and holding them “to protest US policy in the Middle East, particularly Washington’s support for Israel” (Robertson 21). Throughout the Civil War period, a total of 104 individuals – mainly Europeans and Americans – were abducted and held hostage in Lebanon, of whom at least eight died whilst in captivity (Venter 333). Hezbollah, along with various other Islamic revolutionaries as well as Middle Eastern state governments, also orchestrated 365 terrorist campaigns in Western Europe – the most notorious of which was the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988 – which resulted in over 500 people being killed and nearly 2,000 injured (Rapoport 438).

Of course, it was not only the Islamic militant organisations that were causing turmoil and mayhem in Europe at that time. Northern Ireland in the 1980s was well in the midst of the bloody and brutal internal conflict between Protestants and Catholics that has been referred to as the ‘Troubles’, which had begun with the civil rights march in Londonderry in October 1968 (Won 301). The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), which had split from the original paramilitary organization in December 1969 in order to pursue a much more aggressive campaign of violence against the Protestants (Won 305), had begun a broad bombing campaign in London and in other parts of England from 1973 including attacks on the Harrods department store in December 1983 and the Grand Hotel in Brighton in October 1984 (Coaffee 82). The Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) was also heavily

involved in terrorist activities during the 1980s despite a new constitution in 1978 which "granted the Basque region being given limited autonomy, legitimised use of the Basque language, and restored local institutions": the ETA killed no less than 76 people in 1980 alone, and in 1987 was responsible for the deaths of 21 people in a Barcelona shopping mall (Mockaitis 26).

Such frequent and devastating terrorist attacks on Western targets naturally necessitated a firm and coordinated response from the Western world. For example, in 1976, the member states of the European Economic Community (EEC) created the TREVI (Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and political Violence) Group, which was formed by the member states' Ministers of Interior Affairs and which "periodically [met] in order to exchange information and take new measures" regarding counter-terrorism issues (Jimenez 121). In 1986, the Group decided to create a "red phone" system "for fast and efficient communication among the community capitals about activities of terrorist organisations," and also decided to "review the procedures in order to obtain visas and exclusion systems" so that the EEC would be "no longer a sanctuary for terrorists" (121). But in contrast to the relatively deep and wide-ranging coordination of counter-terrorism policies amongst the leading European nations during the 1980s, there was relatively few cases of close cooperation between the United States and Europe on counter-terrorism issues during the same period: for example, an American attempt to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran during the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-81 through "a common effort via the UN" with the Europeans was unsuccessful due to the obstruction of the Soviet Union (Bossong 31). Also, achieving a meaningful level of transatlantic coordination of counter-terrorism policies in the early 1980s was in part hindered by the hitherto rather unhelpful American position on the terrorist attacks in Europe, which was that the US "had limited experience to offer" in the field of counter-terrorism and therefore found it

awkward to provide cooperation to the European countries that were affected (Rees 61). But as the attacks – and the ensuing casualties – mounted throughout the 1980s, the West would become acutely aware of the necessity of putting up a stronger, concerted front in the struggle against global terrorism.

While there is an abundance of literature that delve into US-European interactions on counter-terrorism activities from the 1990s onwards – particularly concerning the transatlantic relationship in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks of 2001 – there is relatively little research which provides an in-depth analysis into the development of counter-terrorism cooperation between the United States and the European nations in the 1980s. Therefore this article, by consulting very recently opened British Foreign and Commonwealth Office papers, attempts to begin the process of filling this gap in the existing literature by looking in more detail at the role played by Britain – as the EEC's closest ally of the United States – in seeking to bring together these two major Western players for closer counter-terrorism coordination, with particular attention to the process through which Britain strove for a purposeful partnership between America and arguably the EEC's most influential and forceful member state at the time, France.

II. The Background of Anglo-French Bilateral Consultations on Security

The necessity for a deeper and wider dialogue between British and French authorities concerning the issues of security and terrorism arose in the late 1970s, when several attempts were made to "arouse support in France for extreme Republican causes" which included visits to France "by Provisional Sinn Fein and IRSP [Irish

Republican Socialist Party] representatives, the formation of a 'Committee for the Defence of Irish Political Prisoners,' the publication of a new monthly journal 'Irlande Libre' and several articles in [the left-wing daily] 'Liberation" (TNA, FCO 87/807, 3 Feb 1978). The British authorities at first did not take such actions too seriously, judging it "doubtful whether such activities [would] find any support outside the extreme left" (TNA, FCO 87/807, 3 Feb 1978): indeed, London seems to have been more worried about "what the general view is in France of the British Government's policies in Northern Ireland, particularly our efforts to portray the Province as a suitable area for foreign investment" (TNA, FCO 87/807, 2 Mar 1978).

However, the situation turned more sinister in August 1983, when the French Consulate in Belfast received a letter threatening "attacks on French territory if the French authorities continued to act against the IRA" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 24 Aug 1983). The British government, assessing the threat to be "genuine [and] a significant new development" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 26 Aug 1983), moved quickly to reassure the Consulate that local police in Belfast would be "stepping up patrols and plain-clothes surveillance" and that "security measures would be kept under close review [and would be] stepped up" if necessary (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 25 Aug 1983). However, a rift soon began to appear between the British authorities and the French diplomats over the issue of how to respond publicly should news of the threat leak to the press. The French consul had been instructed by the French Foreign Ministry "not to indicate that he had received any letter [from the IRA] and still less to comment on the substantive issues" should any questions on the matter were to be asked after a leak had occurred (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 24 Aug 1983). But on receiving a request from London to "deflect attention away from the IRA" should an answer become necessary, Paris replied that their response to such an inquiry would depend on "the circumstances and terms of a leak" and that they certainly would

"not 'play down' an IRA threat" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 31 Aug 1983). After this exchange, the French attitude towards British inquiries on the matter changed considerably. Upon hearing from the French embassy in London that a visitor had visited the French consulate in early September and had asked whether the consul had received such a letter from the IRA, the FCO asked permission for the police to visit the consul and discuss the incident (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 5 Sep 1983). However, the French embassy refused the request on the grounds that the embassy "had already asked the Consul for the necessary details" and that the embassy "would prefer the matter to be pursued through [them]" and not the consulate (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 5 Sep 1983). The FCO, finding this French attitude to be "curious" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 5 Sep 1983), nevertheless decided to ask the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to send a police officer to the consul in order to gather more information on the visitor in question (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 7 Sep 1983). However, the consul "denied stoutly" that such a visit ever occurred, which in turn led the FCO to protest to the French embassy in London that "it would be difficult for the police to do their job properly if communications were inadequate" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 7 Sep 1983). At the FCO's insistence that the French consul should "remain in close contact with the RUC [the Royal Ulster Constabulary] and to tell them everything about which he may be suspicious" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 8 Sep 1983), the French embassy explained their attitude by citing the consul's concern that "a direct approach to the RUC over the PIRA threat would have produced too obvious a result. He had chosen a more delicate route" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 15 Sep 1983). However, the FCO was more inclined to put the French behaviour down to "the normal French tendency to have an issue of any kind under centralised control. [The French embassy] probably judged it would risk complications if [the consul] were allowed a degree of local initiative" (TNA, FCO 33/6503, 7 Sep 1983).

Such confusion and wrangling between Britain and France concerning the heightened 'transchannel' security threat as seen above soon rendered policy-makers to ask whether it would not be better if the two European neighbours conducted regular bilateral talks on terrorism (TNA, FCO 178/61, 9 Jul 1984). To that end the British Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, and the French Interior Minister, Gaston Defferre, agreed in October 1982 that "more contact at senior level should made between the two countries to discuss [...] counter-terrorism" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 26 Jul 1984). To follow up this agreement the British Home Office suggested in the summer of 1984 that the new Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, visit Paris for talks on security issues with Defferre in late July of that year, and this proposal was accepted by the French Interior Ministry (TNA, FCO 178/61, 19 Jul 1984). Although Defferre was suddenly replaced in mid-July by Pierre Joxe (TNA, FCO 178/61, 19 Jul 1984), London still prepared for the talks as previously arranged mainly in order to attain Paris' clear affirmation that the international community's determination to combat terrorism – as seen for example in the London Declaration on International Terrorism of June 1984 issued by the G7 nations – "should not run out of steam" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 19 Jul 1984).

However, just 4 days before the two ministers were to meet on 30 July, the French Interior Ministry suddenly informed the British that the meeting would now not take place due to a "calendar problem" which made "postponement unavoidable" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 26 Jul 1984). This sudden announcement to cancel the meeting seemed to be line with previous "French reluctance to agree to any dates" for meetings which had frustrated British efforts to set up further bilateral consultations after the Whitelaw-Defferre agreement of October 1982 (TNA, FCO 178/61, 26 Jul 1984). A no doubt rather miffed British government now felt that the only possible occasions that the two ministers could meet at the earliest opportunity were French

President François Mitterrand's state visit to Britain at the end of October or British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's summit meeting with Mitterand in Paris at the end November (TNA, FCO 178/61, 30 Aug 1984), neither of which was particularly convenient due to the tight schedule of such high-profile visits (TNA, FCO 178/61, 30 Aug 1984). Although a meeting was eventually arranged between Brittan and Joxe for 24 October, the French government informed the British side one week before the President's arrival in London that Joxe would not be accompanying Mitterand after all (TNA, FCO 178/61, 17 October 1984). No doubt exasperated by these continuous French attempts to avoid having to give the British government Paris' unequivocal support at the highest level for international cooperation on terrorism, the FCO consequently expressed the opinion that "[given] the history of disappointments in trying to arrange such a meeting [...] there is no point in resurrecting the proposals for a ministerial meeting, at least for the New Year" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 17 Oct 1984).

But then a major diplomatic incident would occur during Mitterand's visit to Britain, which went on to completely change the dynamics of this Anglo-French tussle over security issues. A French security officer, who was connected to the President's visit, was found to have planted two bombs in the French ambassador's residence in London "apparently to test the efficacy of British security measures" (Bowcott 2014). The incident had occurred just days after the IRA's bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton – where the annual Conservative Party conference was being held – that resulted in 5 deaths and 31 injured (Chrisafis 2004). Although the Thatcher government's official position was that the occurrence "was a low-level incident involving a security officer [who] was doing his job and had his 'kit' with him [...] His actions [are therefore] best described as injudicious" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 25 October 1984), the British Prime Minister privately expressed her

astonishment at what the French had done and her government ministers found the debacle to be “inexplicable and unacceptable” (Bowcott 2014).

Although the French government refused to offer either an adequate explanation or an official apology for the incident (TNA, FCO 178/61, 27 Nov 1984), this highly embarrassing and potentially explosive affair did have the effect of the French finally making some positive noises towards the British overtures of bilateral talks. During discussions between high-ranking British and French diplomats in Paris right after the Mitterand visit, the French side suddenly “spoke of the importance of Islamic minorities as a political influence in Western Europe” citing the Turks in Germany, the Lebanese in France and the Pakistanis in Britain as “examples of groups which had at the very least to be taken into account in their respective host countries’ dealings with the ‘sending states’ concerned” (TNA, FCO 178/61, 7 Nov 1984). Advancing the logic that “[all] struggles in the Islamic world, whatever their true origin, necessarily took on a religious coloration and this gave them relevance for Islamic communities everywhere,” the French diplomats proposed that “since the problem was prima facie of interest to both Britain and France, [the two sides] might consider holding discreet bilateral talks on it in some context or other” (TNA, FCO 178/61, 7 Nov 1984). The British position on this French viewpoint was that there was “little scope for discussion with the French, if the focus is to be on the Islamic ‘common factor’” since while the “minority of Pakistani origin in the UK does indeed impact on [Britain’s] relations with Pakistan” (TNA, FCO 178/61, 13 Nov 1984), there was “no indication that the Muslim communities in the UK are. collectively or separately, collaborating or coordinating with Muslim communities elsewhere” outside Britain (TNA, FCO 178/61, 10 Dec 1984). However, with this French change of approach, a real and substantive opportunity for bilateral talks to occur between London and Paris had finally opened up.

III. The Beginning of Anglo-French Bilateral Consultations on Security

Now that the French government was open to a bilateral dialogue with the British concerning security issues, Paris gradually began to disclose to London the reasons for its reluctance to support an international effort to deal with terrorism. At the end of November, a very high-ranking French Foreign Ministry official informed a British diplomat about a meeting he had had with John Poindexter, the US Deputy National Security Advisor to President Ronald Reagan. During this meeting, the French official had told Poindexter that France was concerned "about the tendency of the [Reagan] administration to focus too sharply on particular terrorist groups [such as] the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organisation] or such groups as Abu Nidal [...] The French were worried that the sort of excessive rhetoric or, worse, pre-emptive action which the Americans had in mind could spark off a reaction among extremist terrorist groups, many of whom were linked with one another" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 30 Nov 1984). It was this official's belief that "terrorist groups were for the most part not indigenous. They were related to other countries' minorities," and that therefore America's inflammatory rhetoric towards a particular terrorist group might indeed provoke terrorist incidents in places where that terrorist group was not usually active (TNA, FCO 178/61, 30 Nov 1984). Having finally attained an "interesting insight into French reluctance" for global cooperation on dealing with terrorism, the FCO decided to formulate "a more structured way" to try and address French concerns on the matter that would assist with "thickening up the relationship with the French" (TNA, FCO 178/61, 30 Nov 1984) and perhaps help to "soften the French attitude" to discussions on counter-terrorism amongst the G7 nations (TNA, FCO 178/61, 20 Dec 1984). To that end, a preliminary meeting between top-level French

and British foreign ministry officials took place in Paris in early March 1985 in order to conduct a "general political and idealogical analysis of the problems posed by terrorism" and to discuss measures "taken by governments, either collectively or by mutual agreement, eg, the economic [G7] Summits, meetings of the Ten [members of the European Economic Community], Council of Europe, etc" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 3 Apr 1985). It was however during the lunch and coffee session after the formal meeting that the French side, upon receiving British inquiries, made their position of "refusal to budge from their block on institutionalising the dialogue with the Americans on counter terrorist themes" abundantly clear (TNA, FCO 178/77, 19 March 1985). Paris reiterated this position to London during the European Council meeting in Brussels later that same month (TNA, FCO 178/77, 1 Apr 1985). On this occasion, British officials tried to persuade the French to change their attitude on this matter since Margaret Thatcher "had endorsed President Reagan's keenness to have a substantial contribution from the [G7] Summit and [Britain was] already thinking about what a text might look like" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 12 Apr 1985). Although this exchange ended in what was in effect a stalemate, the British view was that "[s]trict doctrine can always be bent [...] to the requirements of real life" and that therefore the British should continue to "keep in touch with French thinking on what should emerge from the [G7] Summit on terrorism" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 12 Apr 1985).

Apart from Thatcher's personal keenness to accommodate the wishes of the American President, there were other reasons for the British government's desire to create and maintain a close tripartite relationship alongside the United States and France on terrorism-related matters. One was to ensure that Britain and America would "be exposed to fewer French surprises" on counter-terrorism policy which often occurred due to what the British government saw as traditional "selfishness of French policy [in the Middle East], which [...] inhibits trust and earns [the French

government] few points for understanding diplomacy on the ground (TNA, 178/640, 22 May 1987). But another, more significant reason was to make it easier for London to influence American foreign policy-making when the US government attempted to veer off-course from an agreed position and take up a unilateral approach: a close UK-US-France relationship would "provide [the British] with a stronger bolt-hole during the shakier moments of American policy" and allow London to try and steer Washington back on course (TNA, 178/640, 22 May 1987).

But in the meantime, eager to persuade the British of their position now that their reasoning had been made clear to London, the French government executed a complete U-turn on their previous reluctance to have bilateral talks on ministerial level and even demonstrated the audacity to argue that "the French Minister of the Interior was personally upset and puzzled by the difficulties he had been encountering over arranging a meeting with the [British] Home Secretary [and that it] was crucial that [a] meeting [between the two ministers which had been] arranged for mid-May was not postponed yet again" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 22 Apr 1985). At this somewhat brazen French complaint, the FCO advised the Home Office to issue a warning to Paris that the Home Secretary "remains willing to meet M Joxe but, in the light of repeated postponements at French request [and not at British request], is getting understandably less enthusiastic about the whole idea" in order to ensure that Joxe "does not cry off again" at the last minute (TNA, FCO 178/77, 24 Apr 1985). The warning seems to have done its magic: Joxe visited London as scheduled and finally had his meeting with Brittan on 13 May, during which the French Interior Minister "repeatedly stressed his preference for discreet bilateral contacts as the best means of dealing with many terrorist and other crime-related problems" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 15 May 1985) since such contacts were "less problematic, generally good and likely to be of more immediate practical benefit" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 30 May

1985). No doubt thinking that having this long-awaited meeting was in itself significant and therefore not wanting to ruin the "good rapport" that was developing between the two ministers (TNA, FCO 178/77, 15 May 1985), Brittan chose not to squabble about the issue at that point and accepted Joxe's invitation to undertake further talks in Paris (TNA, FCO 178/77, 30 May 1985).

But of course, given Thatcher's commitment to Reagan and the other reasons for Britain's desire for a close tripartite relationship on terrorism as mentioned above, British inaction towards French inflexibility could not go on indefinitely. Therefore, using the occasion of the Thatcher-Mitterand Summit in London in late November of that year, the British Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, held talks with the French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, in order to "[u]rge greater French flexibility on discussions of terrorism in Summit [of the] Seven" so as to deter the United States from "calling for alternative grouping of 'like-minded' countries" which would not include France (TNA, FCO 178/77, 8 Nov 1985). At this meeting, Howe stressed the British argument that "the importance of the [G7] was that it formed a bridge between the large European powers, the US and Japan. It was a forum with a global dimension" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 18 Nov 1985). However, Dumas retorted that "it would be unacceptable to spread the competence of the seven to non-economic areas. The French could not accept the creation of a super-directoire" which could not be led by Paris (TNA, FCO 178/77, 18 Nov 1985). On being asked whether the French "considered that a separate forum was needed to discuss terrorism," Dumas replied that France "favoured reinforcement of cooperation in the Ten [EEC countries] if need be; and if necessary this could be widened to include, for example Japan" but not the United States (TNA, FCO 178/77, 18 Nov 1985). When the British then changed tact and argued that "there was great value in a forum [such as the G7] where other Western countries could influence US thinking and help those in

Washington arguing for moderation," the French merely replied that this "need not be for the Seven - it could be done [...] in more restricted groupings" (TNA, FCO 178/77, 18 Nov 1985). Faced with such unwavering French resistance against any US involvement in counter-terrorism discussions, Howe had no choice but to abandon the subject for the time being and move onto other matters (TNA, FCO 178/77, 18 Nov 1985).

Ⅳ. The Beginning of Change in the French Attitude to Cooperation with the US

However, two major terrorists that occurred at the end of 1985 and in the beginning of 1986 would bring about a gradual change in this French stubbornness against cooperation on counter-terrorism with the Americans. On 27 December 1985, the Abu Nidal Organisation – a Palestinian militant group – carried out a series of terrorist attacks on airports in Rome and Vienna which killed 17 people and injured 116 (Jenkins 1985). Barely a month later, in early February 1986, four bombs exploded in different areas within Paris resulting in a number of wounded citizens (TNA, FCO 178/247, 14 Feb 1986). These attacks occurred just before the French legislative elections were due to take place on 16 March, which meant that the Mitterand's socialist government needed to show themselves as "enthusiastic about international co-operation against terrorism," especially as the United States had imposed sanctions on Libya in January 1986 for Muammar Gaddafi's support of the Abu Nidal Organisation's actions and "was lobbying European countries to join" them (TNA, FCO 178/247, 14 Feb 1986). The French government did their best to put up some resistance to American pressure by informing Washington that since

“Franco/Libyan economic exchanges were now running at one quarter the level of [what it was] four years ago [...] the economic blockades were rarely effective,” they grudgingly gave their assurances “that France would not seek to take advantage from US sanctions against Libya” (TNA, FCO 178/247, 14 Feb 1986). The British government saw this exchange between the US and France as “help[ing] to increase the understanding and co-operation which are so vital in this area [of terrorism]” (TNA, FCO 178/247, 14 Feb 1986).

This gradual turnabout of the French position towards cooperation with the United States took a much more significant step forward when Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac’s centre-right coalition won the March legislative elections and Mitterand was forced to choose Chirac as Prime Minister and thereby establish a ‘cohabitation’ government. Undoubtedly not wanting to waste this opportunity to bring about a substantial change in the French attitude, US Secretary of State George Shultz visited Paris as soon as the elections were over and met with both Mitterand and Chirac (TNA, FCO 178/247, 27 Mar 1986). Although Shultz was “rather disappointed” that both French leaders still had reservations about America’s confrontation with Gaddafi, Shultz was able to obtain agreement from the two Frenchmen that there was certainly a “need to cooperate on information-sharing and counter-terrorism measures” with the United States (TNA, FCO 178/247, 27 Mar 1986). This assurance was given as a result of Mitterand and Chirac “each trying to demonstrate [his] firmness against terrorism” (TNA, FCO 178/247, 28 Apr 1986). This was particularly important for the latter as he was greatly interested in “extending the Prime Minster’s role in such areas as foreign policy” because he was “keen to start off on a good footing with the Americans [and] agreed more with US [foreign] policy (presumably than Mitterand)” (TNA, FCO 178/247, 27 Mar 1986).

The British government was also anxious to try to change the French

government's position once and for all at this time as the appointment of Chirac's new administration provided "a good moment to inject British views on key issues, while the new government's foreign policy was relatively fluid, and while [the new French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard] Raimond himself is feeling his way [...] fro, ambassador to senior minister" (TNA, FCO 178/247, 11 Apr 1986). The FCO was certainly optimistic about such a prospect: their view was that the Chirac government "may be willing to adopt [a] more positive approach to [the] discussion of terrorism within [the] Summit Seven grouping" (TNA, FCO 178/247, 10 Apr 1986). This view was reinforced by Chirac's announcement of new government programmes to the French National Assembly on 9 April, where he reiterated his plans for "a more determined approach to countering terrorism and a much less welcoming climate for immigrants" (TNA, FCO 178/247, 10 Apr 1986). At a meeting with British diplomats at the French Prime Minister's official residence later that month, Chirac's senior diplomatic advisor stated that his boss was "very keen to reinforce cooperation among the Seven" in the field of international terrorism (TNA, FCO 178/247, 22 Apr 1986). When the British diplomats. no doubt galvanised by such a remark, pressed him on "whether this meant from now on acceptance by France of an enhanced role for a Seven group of experts on terrorism," the advisor replied that there was "perhaps here still <<un pas à franchir [a short step to be taken]>> before this could happen since the United States always wanted to over-institutionalise things and seize the leadership for herself" (TNA, FCO 178/247, 22 Apr 1986).

V. Getting to the Heart of French Concerns

Having now had irrefutable confirmation that the real reason for France's reluctance

in cooperating with America on counter-terrorism issues stemmed from Paris' fear of being unable to "retain freedom of national decision in anti-terrorist matters [and from their] desire to avoid having their hands tied by any new multilateral commitments, especially involving the US," Britain decided to hold off on "deciding [their] own tactics" for soliciting more French support for international cooperation until the Americans and the French had more opportunities to conduct bilateral talks on the matter (TNA, FCO 178/248, 17 Jun 1986). However, the FCO wanted to know as to whether there was a particular aspect of counter-terrorism-related activities for which the French government wanted to keep their freedom of manoeuvre, and after consulting with "secret sources" it soon transpired that Paris "may have been trying to do a deal" in order to secure the release of nine French hostages held in Lebanon as casualties of the Lebanese Civil War (TNA, FCO 178/248, 1 Jul 1986). The French government wanted to use the influence of either Iran or Syria on the Shia Muslim groups in Lebanon to bring about this release, and in addition to possibly releasing Shia prisoners in France and repaying Iran an outstanding 1 billion-dollar loan to make this happen, Paris was also suspected of considering the provision of "French support for the Iranian war effort [in the Iran-Iraq War]; French condemnation of Iraq's use of chemical warfare; a French guarantee to provide sanctuary to Iranian refugees and oppositionists in France; and a reduction in the supply of French arms to Iraq" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 1 Jul 1986). These French intentions could never be realised if France had to coordinate counter-terrorism measures with Britain and America: not only was it British policy to "resist firmly any suggestion of deal" when handling hostage situations, but the US, Britain and France were all supporting Iraq in Saddam Hussein's struggle against Ruhollah Khomeini (TNA, FCO 178/248, 1 Jul 1986). Washington would simply not allow Paris to do this turnabout and go over to the other side simply to get their

citizens back.

No doubt alarmed at the prospect that France would indeed strike a deal with the hostage-takers, the British government impressed upon Jacques Godfrain – a member of the French National Assembly and a close confidante of Jacques Chirac who was visiting London in early July – Britain's "determination not to do deals with terrorists" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 3 Jul 1986). Godfrain professed his ignorance about any sort of "understanding reached between the French Government and the hostage's captors" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 3 Jul 1986), but London's warning to Paris seemed to have brought about a sudden change in France's positive attitude towards bilateral cooperation with Britain. In the last few weeks of that July, the French government suddenly expelled five presumed members of ETA to Spain to demonstrate "the commitment [of France and Spain] to international cooperation against terrorism" and Chirac's ability in "sorting out long-term problems" and to "improve relations with governments which were not always on the best of terms with his predecessors," thus also indicating that France could consult closely on counter-terrorism matters with European countries other than Britain (TNA, FCO 178/248, 12 Aug 1986). In addition, Chirac issued a joint statement with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in early September calling for "increased European cooperation on terrorism" which was in effect designed to "imply that the UK is not doing all it might to lead from the front on this subject" by kowtowing to the demands of the Americans (TNA, FCO 178/248, 10 Sep 1986).

VI. French Limitations and the Growing Impetus for US-French Cooperation

However, if Paris had thought that the exclusion of the United States would allow the French to unilaterally impose their wishes concerning counter-terrorism matters on their European allies and receive unanimous support for them, they were to be sorely disappointed. With terrorist activities escalating in France during September 1986 which resulted in ten dead and over 200 injured (TNA, FCO 178/249, 19 Nov 1986) – including an attack on the City Hall in Paris itself on the 8th (TNA, FCO 178/248, 29 Sep 1986) - the French government announced on 15 September a series of new measures to "combat the present situation" which included "deployment of over 1000 additional troops to help police frontiers and reinforce security at ports and airports; over the next six months all foreigners except EC and Swiss nationals will require visas to visit France; close surveillance and more expulsions of sympathisers of terrorist organisations; closer coordination of work of counter terrorist agencies in France; greater efforts on international cooperation" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 29 Sep 1986). The announcement caused great dismay amongst countries such as Austria which, although not a member of the EEC at the time, was nevertheless an important European partner. The Austrian government expressed "astonishment and consternation at a regrettable. retrograde and discriminatory action taken without prior warning, far less consultation, which could only widen the gap between members of the European Community and those outside. Austria had always cooperated fully with the French authorities in action against terrorism and was playing a full part in the preparation of the ministerial conference on terrorism" and urged the French authorities to "reconsider measures for which there was no justification" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 17 Sep 1986). The Norwegian and Swedish governments also "expressed

regret at the measures and [would] take the question up with the French" at a later time (TNA, FCO 178/248, 17 Sep 1986). The awkwardness and heightened tension amongst the European friends brought on by the issue was compounded when the Turkish government pointed out that "Turks had been obliged for 6 years to produce visas to enter not only France but some countries now complaining about the French measures" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 17 Sep 1986). France's rather meek response to these complaints was simply to stress "the urgency of the measures adopted" by Paris (TNA, FCO 178/248, 17 Sep 1986).

In contrast to these objections by some of the European allies, however, Britain and the United States decided to express robust support for the new French initiatives. Washington, which as seen above had been irritated at Paris' reluctance to support strong American action against those suspected of supporting terrorism such as Gaddafi, put out a statement that the United States "supports all effective actions to counter terrorism, and we welcome this French action. The Government of France recognised [...] that democratic nations must be vigilant and tough-minded and willing to take strong action in fighting international terrorism. [...] As we have said many times, close cooperation is a key agreement in countering the terrorist threat. The US will continue to work closely with the Government of France, and with all civilised nations in this fight" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 15 Sep 1986). Not to miss this opportunity in bringing about a deeper level of cooperation between the US and France in the face of hostile European reactions against French policy, the British government also informed the French that they were "impressed by the measures which the French Government had responded. Their firm stance was exactly right" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 18 Sep 1986). London also did not forget to reiterate the point that "British Ministers were very keen to move ahead on both intra-EC cooperation and on cooperation between the Twelve [EEC members] and the US. The Americans

had very good programmes both on the identification of terrorist groups and on the development of appropriate responses" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 18 Sep 1986).

These statements of support from Britain and the United States were also of particular significance for the Chirac administration in relation to French domestic opinion on the government's counter-terrorism policy. Many major French newspapers were by now reporting a series of "leaks about contacts between emissaries of the Chirac government and members or backers of various terrorist organisations" despite the government's public stance that they were "ready and able to strike back when it had the necessary evidence" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 26 Sep 1986). Although both the French press and the people had normally accepted "complacently that governments lie about such matters and that raison d'état must prevail," there were nevertheless some voices which were now "being raised to ask what French policy really is in relation both to terrorism and to the Middle East. [Those] who have been persuaded by [Chirac] that Socialists had done everything wrong and had allowed terrorists to suppose that they could always blackmail and browbeat France, are beginning to wonder whether that supposition might not be confirmed by the new government's handling [of the] present crisis. Socialist Party spokemen are pointing to the contradiction and beginning to accuse Chirac of the failings of which he had been accusing them" (TNA, FCO 178/248, 26 Sep 1986). Under pressure both from the international community and from domestic voters to find "a clear long-term strategy" on how to deal with terrorism, it was clear that the French government needed to present an alternative course of direction in order to build up fresh momentum and thereby shore up public support (TNA, FCO 178/248, 26 Sep 1986).

VII. The British Squeeze over Hindawi, French Submission and the 1987 Venice Declaration

With France's heavier dependence on Britain for support of the former's counter-terrorism policy, London was now in a stronger position to press home to Paris the merits of wider cooperation with the United States on security matters. In a meeting between the top civil servants of the Foreign Ministries of the two countries in early October, the British delegation reiterated the position that there was "greater value in cooperation on terrorism within the Summit Seven [G7], if only to bring in the Japanese" rather than limiting cooperation to within the 12 members of the EEC, to which the French side did not offer a clear opinion (TNA, FCO 178/249, 2 Oct 1986). In addition, in a meeting between British and French officials responsible for diplomatic policy planning, the British side once again made it very clear that the British government "was firmly opposed to deals made behind the scenes [and] that there was a feeling in London that the French were prepared to treat with terrorists where as [the British] were not" (TNA, FCO 178/249, 29 Sep 1986). Obviously seeing the futility of issuing a flat denial of what was now clearly evident, the French side put forward what could only be regarded as a rather weak pretext of its duplicity by arguing that Paris "tended to vacillate between a hard and soft line," but then attempted to placate the British side by suggesting that better political concertation with London on counter-terrorism policy "could reinforce the hard line in France" (TNA, FCO 178/249, 29 Sep 1986).

However, not long after this exchange of views, the French government went on to cause a serious diplomatic rift with Britain, which would ultimately push the Chirac government into a corner and in effect force them to submit to British demands for cooperation with the US. At this time Nezar Nawwaf al-Mansur

al-Hindawi, a Jordanian citizen, was on trial in the UK for the so-called Hindawi Affair – an attempt by Hindawi to get his pregnant Irish girlfriend to carry a bomb aboard El Al Flight 016 from London to Tel Aviv on 17 April with 375 passengers and crew (DeYoung 1986). The British authorities had “conclusive evidence” that Hindawi was “paid, instructed and given the bomb by Syrian intelligence officials,” and on this evidence Hindawi was sentenced to 45 years in prison in October (DeYoung 1986). However, when presented with the evidence used in Hindawi’s trial. the French Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua, commented that the French authorities did not find the evidence of Syrian complicity with Hindawi “as convincing as they had wished” and that “the Germans took the same view” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 6 Nov 1986). Furthermore, Pasqua asserted that France needed “Syrian cooperation in providing information [on those] who posed a grave threat to French security” and “wished to do nothing to aggravate Syria’s difficult economic and international situation [...] or to destabilise the regime. [Instead France] wanted to sell 350,000 tons of grain to [Syria]” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 6 Nov 1986). But worst of all, Pasqua revealed that “if the Hindawi Affair had occurred in France, the French government would probably have taken the same measures against Syria as Britain had done” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 6 Nov 1986).

Britain’s reaction to Pasqua’s remarks was naturally one of indignation and disgust. To the FCO, Pasqua’s sentiments confirmed that “despite all protestations of Community solidarity, France is simply not prepared to treat an attack occurring in one member of the Community as an attack on all. Community solidarity is currently less important to this government than trying by national action to insulate France from terrorist attacks and to defend what remains of French interests in Lebanon” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 6 Nov 1986). Unwilling to tolerate French duplicity and self-serving objectives further for the sake of appeasing Paris for their agreement on

American involvement in counter-terrorism discussions, Britain decided play hardball in November by briefing the press at a meeting of EC representatives in Luxembourg that “France was supporting Syria against Britain” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 21 Nov 1986). This British slap on the face could not have come at a more inconvenient time for the French government: on 17 November the Chief Executive Officer of French automobile manufacturer Renault, Georges Besse, was shot dead outside his home in Paris by Action Directe, a French far-left militant group (TNA, FCO 178/249, 19 Nov 1986). The undoubtedly panic-stricken French Foreign Minister, Jean-Bernard Raimond, immediately protested to his British counterpart, Geoffrey Howe, arguing that such briefings “had dangerous implications for political cooperation and risked causing discussion to be less frank and merely the statement of prepared positions rather than real dialogue” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 21 Nov 1986). Howe, who was now fully aware of French chicanery, was having none of it: he referred to a news report that Charles Pasqua “had said that Britain was stupid to call for economic sanctions against Syria” and retorted that “if cooperation was to work against terrorism all must take care to avoid phrases or comments which damaged the common interest. It did not help to cast aspersions on one another’s judicial processes: today it might be a British court, but who could say where it might be tomorrow?” (TNA, FCO 178/249, 21 Nov 1986). By this last remark, to which the French gave no response (TNA, FCO 178/249, 21 Nov 1986), Howe was in effect warning the French government that Britain too could play this game and criticise any future French legal decisions involving their own terrorist incidents. The potential loss of British support at a very critical time for the French administration – which was under extreme pressure from both home and abroad to produce a more effective solution to prevent further terrorist attacks – would no doubt bring about grave political consequences for Chirac and his supporters.

Pushed into a corner by this British ‘gloved fist’ and desperate to ignite some new momentum into their counter-terrorism stance, the French government finally began to show signs that they would seek some level of cooperation with the United States. The first of these signs occurred during a meeting of the political directors of the British and French foreign ministries in early March 1987, when the French responded to British arguments for “more cooperation among the Seven” by stating that Paris “would not mind the Americans associating themselves with the principle [on terrorism] the Twelve [EEC members] had adopted” (TNA, 178/589, 4 Mar 1987). But much more significantly, Charles Pasqua “unexpectedly” called a meeting of Interior Ministers from the G7 nations and the Troika countries – the former, current and next holders of the Presidency of the Council of the European Communities – on 28 May which was regarded as “a useful symbolic gesture [that] provides a forum which links the EC and [G7] Summit mechanisms” (TNA, 178/589, July 1987). Although there was admittedly “little substantive discussions” related to counter-terrorism at the Paris talks of 28 May, the talks nevertheless allowed for the disagreement between the French and the US “over the future role of the Summit Seven in discussions of terrorism” to finally be “resolved” - that the G7 Summit will indeed be a forum for discussions on terrorism, as the Americans had always wanted (TNA, 178/640, 15 Jul 1987).

The agreement at the Paris talks finally paved the way for a “usefully firm” Statement on Terrorism which was issued at the G7 Summit in Venice on 9 June (TNA, 178/640, 15 Jul 1987). The G7 leaders confirmed “the commitment of each of us to the principle of making no concessions to terrorists of their sponsors,” resolved “to apply, in respect of any State clearly involved in sponsoring or supporting international terrorism, effective measures within the framework of international law and in our own jurisdiction,” reaffirmed “our determination to combat terrorism both

through national measures and through international co-operation among ourselves and with others, when appropriate, and therefore renew[ed] our appeal to all like-minded countries to consolidate and extend international co-operation in all appropriate forums," and committed "ourselves to support the rule of law in bringing terrorists to justice [by pledging] increased co-operation in the relevant forums and within the framework of domestic and international law on the investigation, apprehension and prosecution of terrorists" (TNA, 178/589, 9 Jun 1987). The G7 leaders also declared that "in cases where a country refuses extradition or prosecution of those who have committed offences described in the Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation and/or does not return the aircraft involved, the Heads of State or Government are jointly resolved that their Governments shall take immediate action to cease flights to that country [and] will initiate action to halt incoming flights from that country or from any country by the airline of the country concerned" (TNA, 178/589, 9 Jun 1987).

VIII. Conclusion

The joint declaration on terrorism at the G7 Summit in Venice in effect rendered the French government publicly beholden to British and American insistence that Paris should not deviate from the collective position and thereby present a united front with the wider global community on dealing with terrorism. France's rather humbled stance on the matter was made clear in a meeting between Chirac and Thatcher in Berlin in late September of 1987. At the meeting Thatcher remarked that she "had been very disturbed to learn that a ransom appeared to have been paid for the release of German hostages [from Lebanon in early September by the West German

government]. It was quite wrong to negotiate with kidnappers and only increased the danger to the hostages of other countries" (TNA, 178/589, 25 Sep 1987). Thatcher then proceeded to tighten the screws on Chirac by commenting that she "was sure that M. Chirac would agree with her that deals to secure the release of hostages were quite unacceptable" (TNA, 178/589, 25 Sep 1987). Chirac, "shifting a little uneasily" at being cornered in this way by Thatcher, replied that "France had rejected Iran's attempts to set conditions for the release of French hostages. There had been negotiations to end France's financial dispute with Iran [...] Some $330m had already been repaid, and France had admitted that another $1.5bn was due. But there was no connection between this and the hostages" (TNA, 178/589, 25 Sep 1987). At this reply, Thatcher warned Chirac that "she was sure that public opinion in France would reject any deal," which prompted a very discomforted Chirac to move the discussion onto a different topic (TNA, 178/589, 25 Sep 1987).

Of course, this did not mean that France and the United States became the best of partners in the fight against terrorism, nor did it mean that the major players held true to the principle of conducting no negotiations with terrorists. Shortly after the Berlin meeting between Thatcher and Chirac, the Reagan administration suffered its "most serious crisis" when congressional hearings concluded in November 1987 that prominent members of the US government had executed a policy – apparently without Reagan's full knowledge of what was going on – whereby "Israel would send weapons to Iran (the United States would restock the Israelis for the weapons sent to Iran), the Iranians would pay the Israelis for the weapons and [also] arrange for the release of the American hostages [held in Lebanon], and then part of the realised funds would be used to support arming and the activities of the [Nicaraguan] Contras [who were mounting an insurgency] against the Sandinistas [of the revolutionary Nicaraguan government]" (Walker 107). Perhaps emboldened by this

blatant American breach of their own laws and principles regarding counter-terrorism – commonly referred to as the Iran-Contra scandal – the French government apparently paid a ransom of almost 3 million dollars to secure the release of two French hostages in Lebanon in late November (Markham 1987). Media reports of these dealings prompted Margaret Thatcher to condemn the French action and to affirm that "treating" terrorists "is the way [Britain] will not do it [...] The best defense against terrorists is to make clear that you will never give in to their demands" (Meisler 1987). The Chirac administration vigorously denied these allegations, but nevertheless "passionately defended the right of [the French] Government to take whatever measures necessary" to ensure the safety of French citizens in the face of terrorism (Markham 1987).

Despite these diplomatic shenanigans and finger-pointing, however, there is little doubt that the British role in attaining French acquiesence for wider cooperation on counter-terrorism with the United States greatly contributed to the G7's evolution as an institution which moved "away from discussing only economic issues towards an approach that progressively included political and security matters as well" and which created "a bigger snowball effect that saw more and more institutions deal with terrorism" (Blumenau 333). The Venice Summit, which is regarded by observers as having marked "the inauguration of the era of global summits in relation to the inclusiveness of the agenda" (Penttila 41), was able to produce a Statement on Terrorism separate from the normal Summit Declaration – renamed the Economic Declaration – due to France's acceptance of working with the US and other non-European nations in attempting to combat global terrorism. The British contribution in the forging of closer Franco-American cooperation via the G7 in the counter-terrorism arena ensured that by "the mid-2010s, economic political and security matters have become tightly intertwined and have assumed a solid place on

G7/G8 agendas" and thus allowed the Group to become "a conscious actor in the field of antiterrorism policies" (Blumenau 334).

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국문초록

미불 안보협력 구축에서의 영국의 역할, 1978-1987

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1980년대 초반 아일랜드공화군(IRA)의 프랑스 테러 공격 위협이 고조되면서 영국과 프랑스 간의 대(對)테러 공조를 위한 양자협의가 불가피하게 되었다. 영국이 미국과의 공조를 강하게 주장할 것을 염려했던 프랑스는 처음에는 영국과의 협의에 대해 부정적인 입장이었고, 협의가 시작된 이후에도 대테러 관련 논의는 미국을 제외하고 유럽경제공동체(EEC) 회원국들 간에만 이루어져한다는 태도를 고수하였다. 이런 와중에 1986년 여름 동안 프랑스 내에서의 테러 공격이 급격히 증가하면서 프랑스 정부가 상당히 극단적인 대테러 정책을 채택하자 이는 프랑스의 이웃 유럽 국가들의 큰 반발을 샀다. 그러나 영국이 프랑스의 새 정책 방향을 강력하게 지지하고 나서면서 영국은 프랑스의 비교적 비효과적인 대테러 정책에 어느정도 영향력을 행사할 수 있게 되었고, 이는 프랑스가 미국과의 공조에 동의하도록 영국이 프랑스에게 압력을 가할 수 있는 기회를 제공해 주었다. 이 시기에 힌다위(Hindawi) 사건을 둘러싼 외교적 논란으로 인해 상당히 수세에 몰리게 된 프랑스는 영국의 압력에 더 이상 버티기 어렵게 되었고, 이로 인해 프랑스 정부는 1986년 5월에 미국을 비롯한 나머지 G7 국가들과 더욱 심도 있는 대테러 공조를 진행하기로 결정하였다. 이는 1987년 6월 베네치아에서 열린 G7 정상회의에서 '테러행위에 대한 성명서' 발표라는 성과로 이어졌다.

주제어: 영국, 프랑스, 미국, 레바논, 시리아, 이란, 테러

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