



Ambassador's Activities

2013

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58 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7JT London
E-Mail: press@ambafrance-uk.org
Web: www.ambafrance-uk.org

Speech by HE Bernard Emié,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

at the reception prior to the
Franco-British Council Defence Conference

15 May 2013

Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, Philip Dunne,

Madam Chairman of the National Assembly Defence and Armed Forces Committee, Patricia Adam,

Mr Chairman of the Senate Defence and Armed Forces Committee, Jean-Louis Carrère,

Monsieur le Délégué Général pour l'Armement, *cher* Laurent Collet-Billon,

Chère Baroness Blackstone,

Cher Christian de Boissieu,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

On the eve of the Franco-British Council's third Defence Conference, I'm particularly pleased to welcome you to the Residence to spend some time meeting and mingling.

Tomorrow morning many of us are scheduled to begin a day of work as part of the implementation of the Lancaster House agreements of November 2010. This annual FBC conference really has become an essential meeting, a key stage in our defence relations.

It's a major event which enables us – by involving representatives of the state, Parliament, industry and the worlds of research and the media – to discuss everything our bilateral defence cooperation can contribute... and which encourages us always to do more! How far we've come and what progress we've made since last year! Our Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, will take stock of it tomorrow: the British support for our intervention in Mali; the growing importance of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force concept, with the excellent progress of the "Corsican Lion" manoeuvres; the continuation of our cooperation programmes on tactical UAVs, future combat aircraft and missiles; and the publication of

our White Paper, which takes full account of the Lancaster House treaties and their possible development.

In any case, M. Le Drian's presence today and tomorrow and Mr Hammond's tomorrow is a reminder of the priority our countries give to this joint work and our discussion of defence issues.

This conference is one of a substantial series of high-level bilateral exchanges including – to cite only the most recent ones – the visits to the UK by Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius for the G8 summit, and by Economy and Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici in the framework of the G7 summit on 10 and 11 May... And a high point in this series of meetings will be David Cameron's forthcoming scheduled visit to Paris for a meeting with President Hollande, for the first time at the Elysée. The President will be going to Northern Ireland on 17 and 18 June for the G8 summit in Lough Erne, and we're working closely with London on the three priorities defined by David Cameron: Tax, Transparency and Trade.

Thank you, once again, for being here. I wish you a most enjoyable evening and it gives me pleasure to hand over to Philip Dunne, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology (who has also been called to vote at Westminster!) and Laurent Collet-Billon, our Délégué Général pour l'Armement./.