

UWMD: DRONES. UNMANNED DESTRUCTION: UK-France Military Cooperation Agreement on Drones

By [Global Research](#)

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At the UK-French summit in Paris today, David Cameron and President Sarkozy agree [a new Declaration on security and defence](#). The relevant section on drones (paragraph 16) reads:

Unmanned air systems are crucial to success in the battlefield, as the Libya and Afghanistan campaigns have shown. We have agreed today to take forward our planned cooperation on UAS within a long term strategic partnership framework aimed at building a sovereign capability shared by our two countries. This framework will encompass the different levels from tactical to MALE in the mid term and UCAS in the long term:

Medium Altitude Longue Endurance (MALE) Drone: The Joint Program Office was launched in 2011. We will shortly place with BAES and Dassault a jointly funded contract to study the technical risks associated with the MALE UAV. We look forward to taking further decisions jointly in the light of the outcomes of this risk reduction phase to ensure that our respective sovereign requirements will be met in a cost effective manner.

- Watchkeeper drone: France confirms its interest for the Watchkeeper system recognising the opportunities this would create for cooperation on technical, support, operational and development of doctrine and concepts. An evaluation of the system by France will begin in 2012, in the framework of its national procurement process, and conclude in 2013.

- We affirm our common will to undertake in 2013 a joint Future Combat Air System Demonstration Programme that will set up a co-operation of strategic importance for the future of the European Combat Air Sector. This work will provide a framework to mature the relevant technologies and operational concepts for a UCAS operating in a high threat environment. We will begin as soon as 2012 the specification of this demonstrator with a jointly funded contract under the industrial leadership of our national fighter aircraft industries (Dassault-Aviation in France and BAE Systems in the UK).

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