# Macron and Starmer relaunch UK-France defence pact with missile boost and nuclear cooperation



French President Emmanuel Macron’s three-day state visit to Britain concluded with a landmark summit aimed at revitalising the long-standing defence partnership between France and the UK. The talks, held on Thursday, focused heavily on joint military capabilities, including the development and replenishment of long-range missile systems, nuclear cooperation, and shared strategic defence initiatives.

Central to the summit’s outcomes was the agreement to order additional Storm Shadow cruise missiles, a sophisticated air-launched weapon that has played a significant role in Ukraine’s defence against Russian aggression since 2022. Both nations also committed to accelerate the development of a next-generation missile system to replace the existing arsenal. These moves form part of a broader refreshed Lancaster House agreement, originally signed in 2010, which now repositions defence collaboration as a driver of industrial growth and an enabler of advanced military innovation. The UK government highlighted that this commitment is expected to sustain around 1,300 high-skilled jobs domestically, reflecting an economic dimension alongside strategic security benefits.

A major development in the summit was the unprecedented announcement regarding nuclear deterrence. While affirming that their nuclear forces would remain independently managed, Britain and France agreed to coordinate responses to what they described as "extreme threats" to European security. This marked a significant shift in European defence dynamics, underscored by heightened concerns over Russian aggression and growing uncertainties about US security guarantees. The updated Lancaster House 2.0 agreement envisions enhanced collaboration not only on missile systems but also on artificial intelligence-integrated strike capabilities and other high-tech weaponry, heralding an era of remarkably close Franco-British military integration.

Addressing the wider geopolitical context, the summit also focused on ongoing support for Ukraine amid its conflict with Russia. Macron and Prime Minister Keir Starmer were scheduled to take part in a meeting of the "coalition of the willing," which consists of 30 nations discussing how to sustain efforts towards a potential ceasefire in Ukraine, including the controversial prospect of deploying peacekeeping forces. Both leaders emphasised the importance of maintaining strong pressure on Russia while continuing to provide military and diplomatic support to Kyiv.

The visit also tackled one of the most politically sensitive bilateral issues — undocumented migration across the Channel. With migrant crossings reaching concerning levels, both leaders acknowledged the urgency of tackling the “business model” of people smugglers. Starmer has been advocating a "one in, one out" policy involving returns to France balanced by accepting legitimate asylum seekers. Macron insisted that the UK must reduce incentives for undocumented migrants, including by curbing access to employment. Despite some differences in approach, both sides agreed to explore innovative deterrents, building on existing cooperation including enhanced border patrols and intelligence sharing. These measures come against a backdrop of rising Channel crossings, with 37,000 migrants attempting the perilous journey in 2024 and over 20,000 detected in the first half of 2025.

Macron’s state visit also carried symbolic significance, being the first by a European Union head of state since Brexit. The French president was warmly received by King Charles III and Queen Camilla in a display of Anglo-French camaraderie and mutual respect. The cultural exchange announced during the visit, involving the loan of the Bayeux Tapestry to the British Museum and reciprocal loans of Anglo-Saxon artefacts to France, further underscored the enduring ties between the two nations beyond defence and politics.

In summing up the cooperation, Starmer reflected on the increasingly complex threat environment: “From war in Europe, to new nuclear risks and daily cyber-attacks — the threats we face are multiplying.” He emphasised the need for deepened collaboration, stating, “We stand ready to use our shared might to advance our joint capabilities — equipping us for the decades to come while supporting thousands of UK jobs and keeping our people safe.” Macron echoed this sentiment at a financial community event in London, declaring that France and the UK are “stronger together” in facing global challenges.

This renewed Anglo-French entente marks a robust pivot towards greater defence integration and regional stability efforts, signalling a joint resolve to confront evolving security threats with innovation, industrial cooperation, and shared strategic vision.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/8ffb448b0fabe1c913d63329efb3cc6a)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-storm-shadow-and-missile-cooperation-to-boost-jobs-as-uk-and-france-reboot-defence-relationship)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/eb83c4f9-2f47-4a61-b499-5a53a6dbc378), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-storm-shadow-and-missile-cooperation-to-boost-jobs-as-uk-and-france-reboot-defence-relationship)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[7]](https://www.defenceleaders.com/news/uk-france-commit-greater-defence-cooperation-paris-summit)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-starmer-hopes-migration-win-at-summit-with-macron-2025-07-09/), [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/33d17944840acdfbd991d13eea7ef854)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[6]](https://apnews.com/article/8ffb448b0fabe1c913d63329efb3cc6a)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-starmer-hopes-migration-win-at-summit-with-macron-2025-07-09/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-storm-shadow-and-missile-cooperation-to-boost-jobs-as-uk-and-france-reboot-defence-relationship)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bssnews.net/news/290814> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-storm-shadow-and-missile-cooperation-to-boost-jobs-as-uk-and-france-reboot-defence-relationship> - The UK and France have agreed to order more Storm Shadow cruise missiles and collaborate on developing a replacement system. This partnership aims to sustain 1,300 high-skilled jobs in the UK and bolster the economy. The agreement also includes deepening nuclear cooperation, with both nations' deterrents remaining independent but coordinated in response to extreme threats to Europe. The initiative is part of a refreshed Lancaster House agreement, emphasizing defense as an engine for growth and enhancing joint capabilities to address evolving security challenges.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/eb83c4f9-2f47-4a61-b499-5a53a6dbc378> - The UK and France have agreed to coordinate the use of their nuclear arsenals in response to extreme threats against Europe. This declaration signifies a major step in collaborative European security amidst rising threats from Russia and increasing uncertainty about the US security commitment. Both nations will also sign the updated Lancaster House 2.0 agreement, expanding collaboration on advanced missile systems, AI-integrated strike capabilities, and high-tech weaponry, marking an unprecedented degree of coordination between the two countries.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-starmer-hopes-migration-win-at-summit-with-macron-2025-07-09/> - During a three-day state visit, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer aims to secure an agreement with French President Emmanuel Macron on curbing migration, particularly the increasing number of asylum seekers arriving via small boats. Starmer seeks a 'one in, one out' deal to return migrants to France in exchange for accepting an equal number of legitimate asylum seekers. Macron emphasizes the need for the UK to reduce incentives for undocumented migrants to stay, particularly by limiting access to work. Both leaders pledge to explore innovative solutions.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/33d17944840acdfbd991d13eea7ef854> - During a UK-France summit concluding President Emmanuel Macron's state visit, Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Macron have prioritized tackling the persistent challenge of illegal migrant crossings in the English Channel. Approximately 37,000 people made the dangerous crossing in 2024, with over 20,000 already detected in the first half of 2025. While both nations agree on the urgency of the issue, their approaches differ. The UK has paid France to bolster coastal patrols and intelligence-sharing, including the establishment of a specialist unit in Dunkirk.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/8ffb448b0fabe1c913d63329efb3cc6a> - During a symbolic state visit to the UK, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized the importance of continued Franco-British collaboration in addressing global challenges despite Brexit. Macron, welcomed with royal pageantry by King Charles III, underscored shared commitments to democracy, territorial integrity, and economic and defense autonomy from the US and China. He urged Britain to remain engaged in European affairs, particularly in areas of defense, security, and democracy. The trip included bilateral talks with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on key issues such as migration, investment, and the Ukraine conflict.
7. <https://www.defenceleaders.com/news/uk-france-commit-greater-defence-cooperation-paris-summit> - During the Paris summit, the UK and France agreed to coordinate deployments of aircraft carriers to provide a complementary and more persistent European presence in regions of shared interest. They also committed to strengthening Ukraine's ability to fight against Russia, including working together on providing Ukraine with weapons and continuing the training of Ukrainian personnel in the UK. Over the next decade, the two countries have committed to a vision to enable seamless operations and draw on common intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance data.