

After independence? The challenges and benefits of Scottish–UK defence cooperation

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It will be in the interests of Scotland and the rest of the UK to continue to work closely together to ensure the security of both countries. The UK will have a serious security partner in Scotland with effective capabilities meeting Scotland's needs and playing its part within NATO.

Scottish government, 2013¹

As Charles Tilly famously argued, 'War made the state, and the state made war'.² This symbiosis between the state and its ability to wage war has long been synonymous with statehood itself, and what it means to be independent within the international state system. It is an idea that has underpinned realist accounts of international relations and remains widely accepted, despite changing norms and closer dependencies between states. Indeed, in the context of the Scottish independence debate Malcolm Chalmers has argued that: 'Having independent armed forces is at the heart of what it means to be a sovereign country.'³ This raises the question whether the Scottish government's favoured cooperative approach to defence would undermine Scotland's new-found sovereignty at the very time that it seeks its own independent voice in international affairs.

It has been the Scottish government that has advanced the case for defence cooperation, but would cooperation be as important to the remainder of the UK (rUK) as to an independent Scotland (iScotland)? Indeed, what form would defence cooperation between an iScotland and rUK take? A major part of the Scottish government and Scottish National Party's (SNP) defence narrative has been the assertion of an ability to think differently about defence. As a small state, iScotland would take on a regional role, and the Scottish government's proposed 'Triple Lock' is designed to prevent a future Scottish Defence Force (SDF) becoming involved in long-term stabilization operations such as the UK has undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴ This raises the issue of what impact a

¹ *Scotland's future: your guide to an independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government, Nov. 2013), p. 474.

² Charles Tilly, 'Reflections on the history of European state making', in Charles Tilly, ed., *The formation of national states in western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 42. See also Anthony Giddens, *The nation state and violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

³ Malcolm Chalmers, 'The end of an "auld sang": defence in an independent Scotland', RUSI briefing paper (London, April 2012).

⁴ The 'Triple Lock' would require that military action be (i) in accordance with principles of the UN Charter, (ii) agreed by the Scottish government, and (iii) approved by parliament.

lack of policy convergence in defence matters would have on defence cooperation between iScotland and rUK.

To answer these questions, this article draws on a range of comparative examples of defence cooperation across Europe. The Scottish government's determination to underpin its security as part of NATO and the EU, and through development of a close defence relationship with rUK, reflects and is in keeping with current patterns in international politics. Although the Scottish government (SG) has driven the independence agenda in Scotland, both the SG and the SNP have emphasized continuity (such as the continuation of the Union of the Crowns, and monetary union) as well as change (political independence) within its narrative on independence. Nevertheless, discourse about defence cooperation is an important factor in the debate that has been under-explored. As Andrew Dorman has emphasized, there is a policy need on both sides to think through the practicalities of what would follow a 'yes' vote in September.⁵ It is hoped that this article can contribute to that discussion.

In terms of the defence debate so far, the UK government has argued that Scotland is part of a UK-wide integrated defence structure and thus benefits accordingly.⁶ For its part, the Scottish government has claimed the opposite, arguing that it receives little reward for its £3 billion of taxpayers' money received by Whitehall. As the Scottish government white paper states: 'We [Scotland] have weapons that we do not need—like Trident—and lack assets that we do need—like maritime patrol aircraft.'⁷ These are arguments about the pros and cons of whether Scotland should become an independent state or remain within the current Union. As such they sit outside the purview of this article. Furthermore, although membership of NATO and the EU are important elements of the SG defence case, these have been extensively covered in other forums and also sit outside the scope of this article.⁸ While the article draws on NATO's Smart Defence Initiative and the EU's 'pooling and sharing' programme, it also highlights a range of other defence cooperation arrangements and these are used to provide context to the discussion of whether there is potential for defence cooperation between an iScotland and rUK if there is a 'yes' vote in September.

The article proceeds as follows. The first section draws on the experiences of different examples of defence cooperation, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and thus what might be transferable to the iScotland–rUK case. The following

⁵ Andrew Dorman, 'More than a storm in a teacup: the defence and security implications of Scottish independence', *International Affairs* 90: 3, May 2014, pp. 679–96.

⁶ *Scotland analysis: defence*, HM Government (London: The Stationery Office, 2013a).

⁷ *Scotland's future*, pp. 233–4.

⁸ While membership of both organizations is contested by the UK government, the SG has signalled that it will sign up to the alliance Strategic Concept and has removed the major barrier to membership. Additionally, while the EU debate rumbles on, Scotland already meets the criteria for membership and although some states (such as Spain) have reservations about Scottish membership, none have said they would actively block it. Moreover, on the principles set out in the Edinburgh Agreement (see below) it is unlikely that Scottish membership will be denied unless the rest of the United Kingdom found reason to delay or prevent accession. For discussion of the NATO question, see: Colin M. Fleming and Carmen Gebhard, 'Scotland, NATO, and transatlantic security', *European Security* 23: 3, 2014, pp. 307–25; For further information on the EU debate, see: Michael Keating, Evidence presented to the Europe and external affairs committee, Scottish parliament, 22nd meeting (session 4), 5 Dec. 2013.

section places the discussion in context by examining the Scottish government's thinking on this issue. The third section draws the preceding discussion together and assesses the potential for defence cooperation between Scotland and rUK should there be a 'yes' vote in the upcoming referendum on Scottish independence. It argues that defence cooperation between Scotland and rUK would bring benefits to both states. How much the two states cooperate following a 'yes' vote would hinge on a number of factors (Trident being the obvious example) and would require a sustained and strong relationship. However, given their geographical proximity and shared knowledge, and the similar, indeed intertwined, defence and security issues they face, cooperation would be in the interests of both states.

The normalization of defence cooperation and sharing

The scale of cooperation and interoperability between allies varies and is driven by different political, strategic and fiscal factors. However, driven by the United States' pivot away from the North Atlantic region, there has been a progressive desire on the part of NATO and the EU to re-energize European defence at a time of dwindling defence budgets. Both organizations, NATO through the Smart Defence concept and the EU through its pooling and sharing initiatives, have highlighted the need to reform the way defence capabilities and expertise are built and utilized if NATO and the EU are to be able to meet the challenges of the future.

Although ultimately successful, NATO's military operation (Unified Protector) in Libya in March 2011 exacerbated concerns about burden-sharing across the alliance. Key capability gaps in the European inventory—especially in the areas of air-to-air refuelling and surveillance, and transport—further highlighted the need for the United States to underpin the capabilities of its European partners, provoking calls in the US for Europe to better coordinate its defence capabilities for the future. In the words of NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 'an alliance that brings Europe and North America together requires an equitable sharing of the burden in order to be efficient'.⁹

As a consequence of increasingly complex operations, sophisticated and expensive technologies, the long-expected US pivot away from the transatlantic region and, crucially, the strains of financial austerity for all but a few states (Norway being a notable exception), closer defence cooperation between European powers is viewed as essential—both by the United States (which considers Europe to rely too heavily on US military might) and by European states themselves. As a result we are now seeing the normalization of defence cooperation across the transatlantic area.¹⁰

⁹ Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 'NATO after Libya: the transatlantic alliance in austere times', *Foreign Affairs* 90: 2, 2011, p. 2.

¹⁰ John Gordon, Stuart Johnson, F. Stephen Larrabee and Peter A. Wilson, 'NATO and the challenge of austerity', *Survival* 54: 4, 2012, pp. 121–42. Although alliances are not new, states are increasingly reliant on each other to fulfil the range of tasks required in contemporary military operations, with states sharing assets as a means to reduce cost while maintaining capabilities.

Yet the fact that NATO and the EU are both behind this trend does not imply a structured top-down process. Rather, the enactment of defence cooperation between western states has taken a variety of forms in different regions. A range of states seeking to maximize resources in a context of falling defence budgets have turned to NATO's Smart Defence concept, part of its 'NATO 2020' vision,¹¹ which itself includes the often overlooked 'Comprehensive Forces Initiative' (CFI), in conjunction with the European Defence Agency's 'pooling and sharing' programme. These states have opted in or out of programmes depending on their own policy goals. Notwithstanding some dissimilarities, we are seeing a rescaling of defence, which impacts at some levels on the traditional understanding of state sovereignty, all in pursuit of wider defence and security guarantees. This is not uncontroversial. While the majority of European states agree on the need to cooperate, national anxieties regarding the notion of specialization—with each state taking on a particular role in a networked defence remains a step too far for some, cutting as it does, to the heart of what it, for many, means to be a state.¹²

This being said, it is important to note that discussion about possible iScotland–rUK defence cooperation is contextualized within a broader normalization of defence cooperation (and sharing) between states across the transatlantic area. While reservations and red lines remain, cooperation is essential and is a trend that will continue. At the subregional level there are already a range of defence-cooperation organizations that are seeking to maximize budgets and work towards better interoperability. The Visegrád Group (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia), set up in 1991 to help these states make their transition into EU membership, predates the current buzzwords of smart defence and pooling and sharing, but it too is seeking to build close cooperation. Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO), instituted in 2009 following the recommendations of the Stoltenberg Report, brings together Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland.¹³ Viewed with suspicion by NATO initially, NORDEFECO is, rightly or wrongly, now heralded as an example of the benefits of closer defence collaboration. Further examples include Baltic Defence Cooperation (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Defence Cooperation between the Benelux countries, Weimar Plus, and, significantly, UK–French defence cooperation (2010).

Each organization and treaty is different from the others, yet that they are there in the first place provides a compelling case that they are required if Europe is to be up to the challenges of the twenty-first century. What can these examples tell us about the potential for cooperation between iScotland and rUK? To take NORDEFECO as a key example, it is possible to extrapolate future benefits and challenges that might be alive in the 'British' case. Nordic Defence Cooperation has had its supporters and detractors, and has experienced a series of challenges and a range of successes. It is fair to say that it has not delivered on all of its promises.

¹¹ 'Summit declaration on defence capabilities: toward NATO forces 2020', NATO summit, Chicago, 20 May 2010.

¹² Bastian Giegerich, 'NATO's smart defence: who's buying?', *Survival* 54: 3, 2012, pp. 69–77.

¹³ See Tuomas Forsberg, 'The rise of Nordic defence cooperation: a return to regionalism?', *International Affairs* 89: 5, Sept. 2013, pp. 1161–81; Hakon Lunde Saxi, 'Nordic defence cooperation after the Cold War', *Oslo Files*, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Issue 1, March 2011.

There have been some significant failures in the area of joint procurement. However, there have also been successes. The joint Norwegian–Swedish helicopter arrangements, whereby Swedish military technicians worked to maintain Norwegian Bell 412 helicopters in theatre in Afghanistan, taking pressure off Norwegian personnel while simultaneously providing Sweden with helicopter capacity for its own provincial reconstruction teams, is one such example.¹⁴ NORDEFECO has also been successful in bringing about closer cooperation and encouraging economies of scale in training, particularly in areas where there are direct synergies between Nordic states. The acceptance by the Nordic states of shared air policing roles over Iceland has also been lauded as an example of NORDEFECO in action. Despite disappointment in some areas of procurement, in other key areas such as planning, training, exercises and operations the organization has succeeded, and it plans to deepen cooperation despite the different policy priorities of its constituent states. NORDEFECO is driven both by austerity and by the common set of security concerns facing these states. Thus, despite national differences (not least in their respective historical strategic outlooks) the organization provides an institutionalized framework from which the Nordic states can work together in areas of common interest.¹⁵

At the core of NORDEFECO is an understanding that each state has different priorities and different ways of viewing the security situation of the area, and consequently different policies and concerns. Of the five members, Denmark, Norway and Iceland are in NATO, while Finland and Sweden remain nominally non-aligned, but are part of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. Conversely, while Denmark, Finland and Sweden are members of the EU, Denmark chose to opt out of EU defence policies. Iceland and Norway are non-EU members. As a result of ongoing differences and priorities in defence policy, NORDEFECO does not require all states to participate in every project, and collaborations can take place between two or more states depending on their strategic interests. This lack of policy convergence has drawbacks in the sense that it prevents success in every area; however, it also means that states retain control over what they are involved in. If there is a lesson for the current debate in the UK, it is that policy convergence is not a necessary precondition for defence cooperation to work. Indeed, for cooperation to be successful there needs to be some acceptance that there will be differences in policy and an understanding that state actions will be driven by concerns over sovereignty and national priorities.

Defence cooperation and the Scottish white paper

The defence proposals set out by the Scottish government in its white paper underline the importance it attaches to maintaining defence cooperation with rUK should Scotland become independent. In arriving at their proposals for an SDF,

¹⁴ Saxi, 'Nordic defence cooperation after the Cold War', p. 42.

¹⁵ See: *Cooperation and Conflict*, special edition on the Nordic strategic culture, 40: 1, 2014. See also M. Petersson and H. L. Saxi, 'Shifted roles: explaining Danish and Norwegian alliance strategy 1949–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36: 6, pp. 761–88.

the SNP and Scottish government have looked closely at comparative examples of small states that most resemble Scotland's interests and strategic outlook. Norway and Denmark have been marked out early as such comparators, and SNP planners have examined the role and applications of defence cooperation between these states and their partners in NORDEFECO. It should come as no surprise, then, that defence cooperation is a central pillar of the Scottish government's own defence blueprint. Given Scotland's strategic geopolitical position and similarities with its Nordic neighbours, it is likely that Scotland will also look to cooperate in the Nordic region, possibly as part of NORDEFECO itself.¹⁶ The Nordic region is clearly where the Scottish government views its strategic ambit as lying, and cooperation with the Nordic states is firmly on the agenda should there be a 'yes' vote.¹⁷ This said, Scotland's defence relationship with rUK is even more important, and the Scottish government accordingly seeks to develop a strong cooperative arrangement from day one following the referendum.

In one sense this is obvious. The Scottish government has set out a timetable of ten years over which to transform its defence forces from part of the UK's defence into an independent force. This phased transition requires that Edinburgh and London maintain a strong working relationship. This is underpinned by the Edinburgh Agreement (2012) which stipulates that both governments will accept the result of the referendum and will work together in the interests of the people of Scotland regardless of the result.¹⁸ As the white paper makes clear, 'effective joint agreements will be of particular importance to both Scotland and the rest of the UK in the transitional period following independence'.¹⁹ The phased transition to a fully functioning SDF over the ten-year period is clearly in Scotland's interests; so the Scottish government will need London's assistance in the years before the SDF is up and running.

Notwithstanding this, the Scottish government white paper and the UK government's own defence paper, *Scotland analysis: defence*, both identify a range of capabilities and facilities that would be hard to replace, two obvious examples being the radar stations in Aberdeenshire and the Western Isles.²⁰ The white paper explicitly states that in the event of a Yes vote: 'The Scottish Government expects these to continue to be used after independence, following discussions with rest of the UK and its allies', and thus opens up the opportunity for close cooperation.²¹ The white paper notes further that:

The transitional period will also include continued arrangements for the use of defence infrastructure in Scotland by UK forces and vice versa ... This transitional period would

¹⁶ See Alyson J. K. Bailes, Baldur Þórhallsson and Rachel L. Johnstone, 'Scotland as an independent small state: where would it seek shelter?', *Fræðigreinar: Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9: 1, 2013, pp. 1–20.

¹⁷ Angus Robertson, 'The geopolitics of an independent Scotland', speech delivered at the Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen (Copenhagen, 30 Sept., 2013).

¹⁸ Edinburgh Agreement, 'Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a referendum on independence for Scotland, Edinburgh, 15 October 2012', <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/0040/00404789.pdf>, accessed 4 June 2014.

¹⁹ *Scotland's future*, p. 238.

²⁰ *Scotland analysis: defence*, p 24; *Scotland's future*, p 246.

²¹ *Scotland's future*, pp. 246–7.

allow for appropriate planning, including for the continuation of shared basing into the longer term where that was in the interests of Scotland and the rest of the UK.²²

Although early reactions to the SNP's suggestion that Scotland could share and cooperate on some aspects of defence elicited criticism in the press, the Scottish government vision of defence cooperation with rUK does not suggest a sharing or convergence of defence policy, where Scottish and UK ministers approve a de facto defence union. The Scottish government's vision, although needing refinement—something which can only come after negotiation with London—is of a situation from which both states gain advantage by cooperating and perhaps, in some instances, sharing certain assets and activities—bases, training, procurement and intelligence being the most important.²³

As noted above, military assets based in Scotland would be difficult to recreate, and it would make financial sense to cooperate rather than duplicate them where possible.²⁴ In effect, Scotland envisages what Malcolm Chalmers has described as a 'special relationship' with rUK.²⁵ The white paper also highlights the Scottish government's proposal for joint procurement and raises the prospect that rUK would continue to build naval vessels in Scottish shipyards on the Clyde. The white paper explains: 'Scotland would seek to work in partnership, build the necessary alliances and align our defence requirements with the collective needs and priorities of NATO allies, including the rest of the UK'. It continues by asserting that: 'Joint procurement is in the interests of Scotland and the rest of the UK',²⁶ and that it envisages the procurement of four new frigates which it 'will prioritise', as part of existing plans to build the future Royal Navy type 26 frigates on the Clyde.

On a range of defence- and security-related issues—training, basing, intelligence and procurement—the Scottish government has set out reasons why it should continue to share a 'special relationship' with rUK. With the exception of these areas, there is at present no detailed blueprint of what shape defence cooperation would take.

After independence?

What form defence cooperation between Scotland and rUK would take in the event of a 'yes' vote is at present a matter of debate. The Scottish government has highlighted its desire to work constructively with rUK in the defence sphere. While this is a genuine policy proposal, the foundations of which rest in the SNP/Scottish government's research into and evaluation of defence cooperation across the transatlantic region, it is also true that the Scottish government cannot

²² *Scotland's future*, p. 245.

²³ The suggestion of intelligence-sharing has come in for considerable criticism, with several committee reports and think-tanks arguing that Scotland should not expect to receive the same intelligence protection it currently does as part of the UK. See HM Government, *Scotland analysis: security* (London: TSO, 2012); See also: Scotland Institute, *Defence and security in an independent Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scotland Institute, 2012), pp. 37–42.

²⁴ Fleming and Gebhard, 'Scotland, NATO, and transatlantic security', pp. 307–25.

²⁵ See Malcolm Chalmers, 'Dissolution and defence', *RUSI Journal* 159: 2, 2014, p. 30–36.

²⁶ *Scotland's future*, p. 249.

(or at least would find it very difficult to) evolve its future defence capabilities without London's assistance. This is not to say that a cooperative approach is not in London's interests too. A secure, capable ally to the north would be far preferable to a Scotland struggling to meet its early defence needs. London may not like the result of the referendum (should it result in Scottish independence) but there is no reason why Scotland would not provide a modern, flexible defence force capable of securing Scottish territory and playing its part in the broader security of the British Isles as a whole.

As two recent articles have noted, London may well feel aggrieved at what it perceives as the loss of Scotland.²⁷ This may well prove true, but a yes vote would change the political and strategic situation completely—both states will have to proceed accordingly to a new political milieu and any frustrations will have to be put to one side. Furthermore, just as Scotland would have to move fast to create the foundations of a future SDF, rUK would also have to deal with the fallout from Scottish independence, and the difficulties and introspection (not least concerning its future defence aspirations) that it would bring. London would lose over £3 billion in tax revenue directed to the MoD from Scotland, it would be required to negotiate the division of defence assets with an independent Scotland, and lose infrastructure and manpower at the very time that the UK government plans to unveil the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review—which is expected to announce further defence cuts. London's position is complicated further by the uncertainty surrounding the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent.

Notwithstanding an initial period of introspection, however, rUK and iScotland will have strong incentives to work together, and in the long term there is little doubt that cooperation is in the best interests of both states. This being said, in order to enter into a long-term cooperative defence arrangement Scotland must be prepared to compromise. The Scottish government expects cooperation, but cooperation and the maintenance of strong relations will require both states to feel that they have something to gain. Scotland, as well as rUK, will need to make hard choices. Although this article has mentioned the Trident question in passing, the issue of what will happen to the UK nuclear deterrent if Scotland votes 'yes' looms large throughout the entire independence debate. The anti-nuclear stance of the Scottish government and the SNP is genuine, and has the support of much of Scottish popular opinion. Nonetheless, if the nuclear fleet is forced to leave the Clyde too quickly this would put enormous pressure on the UK to abandon its position as a nuclear power against its wishes. This may be music to the ears of those in the anti-nuclear movement, but it would set alarm bells ringing internationally. Moreover, one could legitimately question why rUK would feel compelled to help Scotland transition its own forces or to work cooperatively with it in such circumstances.

There is a lot at stake over this issue, but it should be noted that the Scottish government's position on the removal of Trident has always been that the nuclear

²⁷ Dorman, 'More than a storm in a teacup'; Chalmers, 'Dissolution and defence', pp. 31–3.

fleet should be moved ‘as quickly as can both safely and responsibly be achieved’.²⁸ The white paper underlines that any future decision to disarm the nuclear fleet is not a matter for the SG. Although the Trident issue is particularly sensitive, given the technical and financial difficulties of replacing Faslane and Coulport, providing London with the necessary (but not indefinite) time to relocate the deterrent is crucial if cooperation across the defence and security fields is to be realized, opening up the way for deals to be made in other areas.²⁹

For instance, the UK Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, has not ruled out the possibility of joint procurement with Scotland, stating in evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee that he is ‘not opposed in principle to co-operation on defence procurement’.³⁰ This being said, the UK government has consistently argued that it cannot guarantee that Royal Navy vessels will continue to be built in an independent Scotland. While the Scottish government emphasizes that the EU defence procurement directive ‘aims to open up the defence equipment market to competition’, there is an exemption clause to the directive which allows states to disregard this in areas where national security is deemed a priority. Thus, while the Ministry of Defence has procured naval vessels from abroad—most recently in South Korea—these have been platforms which are deemed permissible to source externally. The type of complex warships that have been built in Glasgow—the *Queen Elizabeth* class aircraft carriers and the future type 26 frigate—are deemed to be too important to national security to be built outside the UK. This poses a problem for the Scottish government, which itself notes that it ‘will protect the future of Scotland’s shipyards and maintain capabilities important to our long-term interest’.

This does not necessarily mean that the UK is required to continue exercising the exemption clause; and as Malcolm Chalmers has commented, shipbuilding might continue on the Clyde (at least in the short term) as part of a ‘grand bargain’ under negotiations between London and Edinburgh. Glasgow has the skills base and was deemed to be better value for money than the facilities at Portsmouth, and there is an argument to be made that the close relationship between the two states would allow for continued use of Scottish shipyards by the UK MoD. This would allow the Scottish government to begin design and construction of its own naval capabilities,³¹ and—more importantly in the long term—to diversify the shipbuilding industry to attract investment and allow Scottish yards to compete for a range of non-military contracts. Indeed, given that Scottish shipyards are

²⁸ *Scotland’s future*, p. 251.

²⁹ See *The referendum on separation for Scotland: terminating Trident—days or decades?*, House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee, Fourth report of session 2012–2013 (London: TSO, 2012); for further discussion on this issue, see Malcolm Chalmers and William Walker, ‘Will Scotland sink the United Kingdom’s nuclear deterrent?’, *The Washington Quarterly* 30: 3, 2013, pp. 107–122. The Scottish government has committed itself to enshrining the illegality of nuclear weapons being based on Scottish territory in a written constitution. It is thus highly unlikely that the deterrent would be based on the Clyde indefinitely. It is thus a question of how long the SG would allow the UK to continue using Faslane and Coulport while it finds a suitable replacement site.

³⁰ Secretary of State for Defence, Philip Hammond, oral evidence, House of Commons Defence Committee Report, *The defence implications of possible Scottish independence* (London: TSO, 2013), p. 48.

³¹ *Scotland’s future*, p. 235.

unlikely to remain viable in the long term even if Scotland stays within the Union, diversification seems the best option for maintaining or increasing the number of industrial sector jobs—a position underlined by the SG in its white paper.³²

Despite warnings of intelligence failures following independence, Scotland already has a solid foundation in the form of Police Scotland, which has specialist capability in counterterrorism and organized crime, and which is already under the jurisdiction of the Scottish parliament. Police Scotland already has excellent cross-border engagement with the rest of the UK, and has a strong working relationship with UK security services. These existing relationships and networks will not disappear if Scotland becomes independent, and provide a solid foundation for cooperation in the future. It is correct that Scotland might not initially enjoy the same confidences as the UK does as part of the ‘five-eyes’ intelligence network, and the onus is firmly on Scotland to demonstrate to rUK and international allies that it can handle security information safely before it can expect to get special access to privileged information. Although the SG will need to invest in its state security apparatus, there is little reason to suggest that this should be terribly problematic and the rhetoric about Scotland being a ‘soft target’ for terrorism smacks of politicking rather than hard evidence. Indeed, the very suggestion that the UK feels apprehensive regarding security issues in an iScotland would seem reason enough for it to build strong relations with Scotland in this field; common interests in combating organized crime and terrorism are especially strong.

If Scottish independence becomes a reality it is also likely that Scotland and rUK will work together on a range of security issues—terrorism, security of the seas, organized crime and other new security threats, as well as the overall integrity of the entire British Isles. It will take time to embed these relationships but both states would have to live with each other in the long term. As a consequence, cooperation on a range of defence tasks would thus be in the national interest of each state.

Conclusion

In short, there is room for negotiation across the range of defence- and security-related areas outlined by the Scottish government. Notwithstanding initial shock on London’s part, the nature of modern security challenges requires a joint approach. If there is a ‘no’ vote in September’s referendum, the UK will still find itself entering into cooperation agreements with allies. There is already significant operational cooperation in theatre,³³ but diminishing budgets will also see the procurement of major defence platforms taking place either bilaterally or within a multilateral partnership of states. The alternative for the UK is to slip down the pecking order in international relations, and the upcoming Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 will have to deal with the increasing disjuncture between

³² Chalmers, ‘Dissolution and defence’, p. 36.

³³ For a vivid illustration of operational-level cooperation, see Anthony King, *The transformation of Europe’s armed forces: from the Rhine to Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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available funding and governmental aspirations for the UK's global role. Of course, while the UK has cooperative agreements with France and other states, the nature of its relationship with Scotland would be different. The very fact that they share a border and an island means that cooperation is vital. Again, however, it should be noted that any relationship will be asymmetric in nature and that Scotland, as a small state with regional priorities, may have different policy goals from rUK, which is likely to want to maintain its global reach. Policy convergence (or lack thereof) would thus need to be factored into any agreement, so that should international policy diverge, a 'business as usual' agreement would continue in regard to cooperation on a 'Britain'-wide basis.

