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BRITAIN AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EUROPEAN MILITARY AEROSPACE COLLABORATION, 1960–2023

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Abstract: The United Kingdom has been collaborating with international, primarily European, partners in the design, development and production of advanced combat aircraft for over sixty years. Driven by a combination of rising costs and limited domestic markets, collaboration has also been a highly political act involving a combination of national, industrial and technological interests. Over the years, the form of collaboration has evolved, in some cases leading to the creation of transnational companies. The United Kingdom has been a pioneer of globalisation in the defence industry, establishing a strong presence inside the US defence market and has become a significant partner with American companies in key military aerospace programmes. This has contributed to divisions within the European military aerospace industry which are likely to continue into the next generation of combat aircraft.

Keywords: defence spending, military aircraft, aerospace industry, political economy, Anglo-European relations

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Contents

Introduction	1
1 Military Aerospace Collaboration 1960–1990	9
2 The Emergence of European Transnational Defence Companies 1980–2010	39
3 Observations from Fifty Years of European Military Aerospace Collaboration	55
Select Bibliography	64