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FRANCE-BRITAIN

Macron, Charles III: from one monarch to another, under the British Petroleum sun

Tuesday 3 October 2023, by [LABICA Thierry](#) (Date first published: 29 September 2023).

France and Great Britain stand side by side, beyond the throes of Brexit. The King may plant an oak tree at Versailles, but the complicity of the two heads of state lies elsewhere...

It's true, eight years and tens of billions in arms sales by BAE Systems, Thales and Dassault to the Middle East's super-cop - the absolute monarchy of Saudi Arabia - for its atrocious war in Yemen, maintain the friendship in the emulation, admittedly competitive, with the world's leading arms buyer.

In the background, we hear the British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, justifying his decision to postpone the measures banning the sale of petrol and diesel cars until 2030. According to him, such measures would entail "unacceptable costs" for ordinary people.

There is something "positive" in this cautious combination of reasonableness and consideration for ordinary people: temperatures of 41 degrees in London (and parts of the world becoming uninhabitable), against a backdrop of ever-increasing poverty and the proliferation of food banks, or the collapse of the National Health Service, would not be "unacceptable costs". This clarification from the British Prime Minister, who himself ranks ahead of the King in the annual list of the country's wealthiest individuals, may well have been necessary.

Fossil power: a multinational and its Prime Minister

The element of reason, therefore, should not escape us. The postponement decided by Sunak duplicates at government level the directions already taken by the oil industry. Last February, British Petroleum announced that it was revising downwards its plans to reduce hydrocarbon production: in May 2022, BP had declared a target of reducing its production by 40% by 2030 compared with its 2019 level. In February 2023, BP announced that the target reduction would no longer be 40%, but 25%.

No mystery: since - and thanks to - the war in Ukraine, BP has made the highest profits in its history. In 2022, at £28 billion (over €32 billion), the company has more than doubled its previous year's profit, making 2022 the most profitable year since its creation 114 years ago. The same is true of the other British oil giant, Shell: 40 billion euros in 2022, a record year since it was founded 115 years ago.

Incidentally, Sunak, like the short-lived Liz Truss before him, both have direct and close personal links with Shell and BP respectively. While this is not the whole story, it does tell us a great deal

about the porous nature of the current power bloc.

At the beginning of July, ahead of the pomp and circumstance of the ceremonies to welcome a monarch and then a pope in September, Macron had the good idea of decorating Patrick Pouyanné, the head of TotalEnergies, with the Légion d'honneur. So many signals of what to expect from a "climate transition" in the hands of the Franco-British fossil party.

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P.S.

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