

[Transcript] Le Collimateur / Construire des navires de guerre

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I'm Alexandre Jublain, and today, to talk about boats, big and small, but also more generally, naval construction and defense industry, I'm pleased to welcome the president-director general of the Naval Group, the company that builds the main ships of the National Navy, aircraft carriers, up to the drones passing by the submarines.

Pierre-Éric Pomlain, hello and welcome in the airfield.

Hello.

I have to say a word, just because it's a bit of a novelty for the climator, to receive a chief of business, even if I'm going to point out that Naval Group is held 62% directly by the state, and then by the Thales intermediary, it's a company that fulfills largely legal functions, or at least that was historically ensured by the state, including in the previous declines of the company when it was public. But, in fact, the private sector and the big defense companies are historically a bit of an angle of the podcast, which is a bit of my fault, I didn't know so much about what to take from it, and we often noticed that it was a bit of a lack, because it's important, and it's even an essential part of the French defense system, the fact that the weapons equipment is not produced by the state directly, but by companies more or less private.

So I'm very happy to be able to do an broadcast with the PDG of one of the most structured defense companies in France, which is Naval Group, and I hope to do it again if there are any other opportunities.

I just added an additional word, because you have to notice that all this has been percolated by another novelty, which is the evolution of the model of the collimator, now open to advertising, and I said it because I already mentioned it, but these are space, sponsoring and partnership that are completely open to public and private actors, and it is not impossible that Naval Group is going to come.

And so the only thing with that is that I can say that I would be very clear and very

transparent on the subject, when there will be advertising or sponsoring with partners, it will be displayed and announced very clearly as such, and there, this episode of today is something else.

It is an issue that I can say, which is in preparation for a long time, and since before I know that the podcast which is very lyrical and will open to advertising, because I find it interesting and important in the absolute for the collimator to talk with the director of one of the main companies of French defense.

So that's obviously a question that arises, and at the same time, I think that everyone can understand the needs of the podcast, so find resources and succeed in an economic balance, and as soon as that's what I have to offer, it's a complete clarity on what takes up traditional episodes and on what will take up the future of advertising.

So sorry for this long preview, but it's important methodologically for the podcast, and let's move on to these discussions, since I would like to enter a little bit in Naval Group by you, by your course, because it seems interesting to me, since you have a rather particular proximity with Naval Group, at the time you called it the DCN, even the DCCAN, the central direction of construction and naval armaments, since I find that you have a father and a grandfather who have worked, who have occupied important functions.

So maybe the first question, what vision did you have of this company or of this public service, by growing up, what do you understand from what was the DCN, the DCCAN?

So in fact, I was born in it, because I was born in Amrest in 1964, now you have my age, and my father at the time, he was not an engineer at the DCCAN, he was a DCN, or Arsenal, as we said, but he was an engineer of maritime work, and he was in charge of the implementation of the Lillong sample, and he was a chief engineer of the Lillong sample. So the Lillong is the basis of submarines, it's a place where you don't go often, or not many people go.

Yes, it's the basis of nuclear submarines, the launch of the British engine, and therefore at the heart of the French dissolution.

And so in the 1960s, this base was in construction, to welcome the first nuclear submarine, the Redoutable, which arrived at the end of the 1960s, the beginning of the 1970s, to start the patrols of the oceanic force of dissuasion.

And it's true, I have this childhood memory of my father in Lillong, we had an apartment that was given on the Rade de Brest, we saw the work far away, and I think it's something that marks, in any case, which I remember perfectly well, but beyond that, we live in the building with my grandmother, who lived under the apartment, I tell you in any case, my whole childhood life, and my grandmother had lived in naval construction since her husband, so my paternal grandfather, was an engineer of the Genie Maritime, who spent many years in Brest, and especially in the 1930s, with the construction of the fleet at the time, and my grandfather was also the engineer in charge of the Curacé de Richelieu. And my grandmother lived in this memory of her husband, she lived in Brest, she was my grandfather, who was himself the son of an apprentice worker of the arsenal.

So we have a grandfather who had worked for him in the machines, so here I think that we go back not to the last century, but also to the previous century.

So we are going to say a blessed childhood in this Brest environment, of naval construction, of the arsenal, and no doubt that it forges, not necessarily a career, but in any case,

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an desire and a conviction.

You have always wanted to do that, because you are an army engineer, you have become an army engineer.

You asked the question one day, or were you not really?

Well, it's always an area that interests me.

And then the work side for France is to have a useful service in its country, there is always something that has ticked me.

But not necessarily in this area, because when you are a young engineer, you finally get it.

So pretty quickly, I have a second passion that came from the aeronautics.

And what brought me when I had a choice to do, so an army engineer, that was pretty clear.

On the other hand, I went to Superhero.

But, I'm kidding.

So you therefore went to Superhero?

I went to Superhero because there was the construction of the Portavion Charles de Gaulle.

And so finally for me, the Portavion, so I'm not talking about the top gun impact, the top of the road, etc.

But it's sure that the aeronaval side marked me.

Besides, I had imagined when I was in polytechnic, why not be a pilot of the aeronaval?

Unfortunately, a medical visit had disappointed me.

I was inept at the ejection seat, and so it was not possible.

But when I arrived at Superhero,

I did my first flight to Brest on the Portavion's site.

And so there, on the other hand, the conviction is formed.

It will obviously be the armament, but it will be the armament linked to the aeronaval, and therefore to the naval.

And also curious that it may seem.

Finally, I did not go to Brest to work on the Portavion, which was really my choice from the start.

For me, there was no doubt.

But I went to Vernon in an establishment that no longer exists,

which was a magnificent establishment of the ADGA,

which was called the LRBA,

laboratory of ballistic and aerodynamic research,

and worked on what?

I give it to you in a thousand,

on the navigation systems of the nuclear submarine, the triumphant.

Yes, but it's very interesting,

because there is already a first interaction,

but which is revealed on Naval Group.

You entered the ADGA,

and then you went to DCN,

which is in the middle of the central administration,
in some way,
the general direction of the armament,
to the naval field.
How is it the same thing?
Is there a passage from one another?
Because through that,
the question of the proximity,
obviously, of what will become of Naval Group,
but in fact of the company,
in any case,
the structure that produces the boats
with the administration that commands them.
So you have to come back in these years.
So we are the beginning of the 90s.
So I am in a laboratory of the ADGA,
but in a function that is essentially naval,
even purely naval,
because it is the center of expertise,
of the navigation system,
of the submarine, the triumphant.
So I work in this team.
You will have a certain amount of work,
let's say, of a classic engineer,
but with a single client,
which is DCN,
and a single integrator.
It's funny, the client relationship,
because you were talking about it,
as if DCN was the client of the state,
while in truth,
it's the state that is the client of DCN,
and who sells the ships to him.
Yes, but at the time,
all that was the state,
in fact, all that was the state.
The LRBA was the state,
but the tasks,
to take terms,
usual terms in the industry,
the work package that was entrusted to me,
so the validation of the triumphant navigation system,
was a work package
in the works of what was called

DCN engineering at the time.
Because the DCN of the time,
in the early 90s,
it was already separating
what was called the static DCN,
let's say the master of the work,
the DGA,
and the industrial DCN,
the Chantier-Naval, the Arseneaux, etc.
And so it was DCN engineering.
After four years in Vernon,
finally, the DCN trade has been strong,
even stronger,
and I went,
so what was called DCN engineering,
to direct the activities
of navigation systems,
and then an extension with the optronic systems,
and all that very in-line with the Triumphant program,
with the Portage-on-Charles-de-Goules program too.
So you were going to do something very close,
but at DCN, instead of doing the DGA, what?
Yes, it was the DGA at the time,
DCN engineering,
the industrial part of DCN,
which went at the beginning of the 2000s,
finally becoming what is Navago today,
was still totally in the DGA.
All that, it was the DGA.
So I think we're starting to get to questions
that are quite central,
what is Navago,
what has become,
whether it is a private, public company,
state, not directly,
let's say like that,
how do you conceive Navago
as a public company,
as a public service, private, state,
So in 2003, so in 2003,
it is an extremely important date for Navago,
Navago changes status,
it is not a status of administration,
a status of business,

and so governed by status of private companies.
At the time, the capital, the action area,
of Navago is public,
but on the other hand, the status is private.
Private status, that means what?
For example, when DCN was in a public status,
it was therefore a very difficult administration
to hire and to have a social environment
around the collaborators of Navago,
allowing them an evolution
in a private status, retreats, etc.
We were really an administration.
So it was the state opened,
so obviously for the workers,
we still have state workers,
because between the status of 2023,
private status, and today,
a certain number of our collaborators
who were state workers kept their status,
and even if we do not hire them,
we still have a very large number of state workers
who contribute, by the way, to Navago
an exceptional skill.
But we hire private status workers,
we have a facility to hire,
according to the rules of private companies,
and as you know, it is not necessarily easy
to hire a private company
that is managed by a budget,
an effective case, etc.
You are also managed by a budget,
do you have effective questions?
Yes, but in a private status,
it is still extremely different from an administration.
So Navago is an entirely private company,
so we keep an actionary.
What happened then in the history of Navago
is that in 2007, Navago opened its capital
to an actionary,
himself private, of reference,
Thales,
who will go from 25 to 35%
of the actionary
of Navago,

which means that today,
the capital of Navago
is held at approximately 65% by the state,
35% by Thales,
so it is a little less in both cases,
because there is a part of the capital
that is held by the employees, a few percent.
Yes, with this particularity that Thales
is also largely held by the state.
No, but it is an interesting question too,
what is the interest,
what is the social status,
but what is the interest of a private company
whose state and actionary
has almost 100% of one way or another,
whether it is directly or indirectly.
What is the interest and what does it use?
Well, it uses
the private status,
I take the
employment, for example.
Well, we have
employment policies,
remuneration policies,
social policies that are issued from the private status,
which are issued from the social dialogue
in the agreements that we negotiate
with the syndicates.
Our collaborators benefit
from all the rights of a private company,
from the private retreat regimes, etc.
So it is really a state, a company,
normal. I mean, it is quite rare today,
by the way, to have public companies
under the form of public administration.
And in the field of defense,
there were a few,
Jiat, industry became an external,
DCNS became
a naval group, and then when we
come back in time,
the aeronautical arsenals,
became private companies
with aerospace, now Airbus, etc.

And then Thales, Domsun CSF,
who for also was in part,
in a very small part, much more than us,
had a notion of public service.
So here it is, it is an evolution
that allows,
just maybe
on the story of a naval group,
a naval group to suffer
from its public status,
when it won contracts,
especially exportation, it needed a great
flexibility on its salary mass,
on its resources.
It was very difficult in the 1990s,
for a naval group, public company,
administration,
to have an effective volumetric
that allowed
to adapt
to its charge, especially with export contracts.
I mean, it would have been
complicated to hire people
and launch on a project that would
finish one day, and after
having difficulties to save the mass.
Absolutely, the administrations
are managed by the public market code.
The public market code has a lot of merits,
but on the other hand,
it is an extremely heavy organization
to go through markets.
In a private company,
we are led to go through markets
sometimes extremely quickly,
when a client asks for something,
yes, you have to adapt in a few weeks,
when it is difficult,
you have to be able to deal with it.
So we are in
perfectly controlled market statuses,
with offers and so on,
with an extremely rigorous compliance,
but we are not subject

to the public market code
as a private enterprise.
Naval Group, TSNS, the summer.
So here are the social statuses,
the capacity to hire
and to adapt
to its charge,
to be able to benefit from the private status.
And then the public market code
has a number of examples that
to operate today
in a competitive way
in an international world,
only the private company status
allows it.
Do you think it will be reassuring
or, on the other hand,
it would be a no-go for foreign clients
to deal with a state enterprise
or an state administration
to buy something too attached
to it?
So the question is subtle
because we must remember
that our sales are always controlled by the state.
You know that we have no right to sell weapons.
We have no right to sell weapons,
except exceptions.
And exceptions are all given by the state
through the process which is called
the control of exports
or the famous Siemge meetings
under the leadership
of the Prime Minister.
And so
an international client
knows that
a sale is controlled
in a certain way by the state.
By the way,
the state participates most of the time
in our sales.
It participates in the training, for example.
When it comes to aviation

or when we sell equipment,
it is often the air force in one case,
the navy in the other,
which ensures training
for the clients, especially if it is
the same nature as those used by France.
So the state intervenes
in the navy,
the state intervenes in support,
the state can intervene in the navy.
On the other hand, the sale itself
is a contract,
in general, a contract itself
controlled by private nature contractual statuses.
We will negotiate clauses,
we will negotiate
all the conditions, of course,
of the execution of the contract,
the penalties of the contract, etc.
We have a political distance.
It is not exactly the same thing,
to buy a French navy
working with the state under the control of the state
and to buy a French state.
To buy a state, but to buy a state
can also work.
There was an example,
especially Belgium buying the Scorpion system,
which is a system
directly used by the French forces.
France has put in place
the equivalent of what the Americans call the FMS.
So a contract from state to state,
from the French side,
to buy, in this case, an external contract,
in a private contract context,
private rights, the equipment we need.
So it's true, I see that by
finding the question,
I imagine all the complexity
of finally understanding how it works.
But what I can tell you is that in the end,
after 20 years, after this change
of statuses, but Naval Group today,

it's a company of 17,000 people,
private rights,
a third of its activity
international,
and who has
this capacity and these
absolutely unique skills
to provide France with what it needs
to protect our fellow citizens,
to protect our nation,
especially when we talk about the system
of dissuasion, and then to develop
an international.
Exactly, let's talk about it, it's
how to do it, so I have
the question, what do you do?
But it's very wide, but at the same time
Naval Group, in 2, 3, 4 programs
that give a little
I don't know, an advantage of what they do
at the moment, what would you choose?
Because you have plenty of programs.
We have plenty, but not so much
in fact, because
Naval Group is a pure
we use a horrible word
English, it was a pure player,
that is, we are an industrial
defense naval.
And besides, the reason to be is to give
to the Navy the means of their power.
So finally, the programs, it's not
hundreds of programs, it's indeed
dozens of programs, there are some
who are extremely ambitious,
visible, and I will come back, since
you ask a little to categorize them,
then there are many, many who are
less visible, I think in particular
to all contracts of service, support,
repair, maintenance, because once
we have delivered our boats
for our clients, well often
we are engaged in maintenance contracts

to support them, which is better
Naval Group can hold Naval Group's boats
to paraphrase
if you are well known.
But not always, not always.
And not always, especially in the international
or, of course, the clients
also seek a sovereignty,
a capacity to be able to do
autonomously the maintenance and operation of their ships.
So, the few emblematic programs,
of course, in the field of nuclear submarines,
two emblematic programs,
Barracuda,
which is the
replacement of the submarine fleet
of French nuclear attack,
class Rubi, so with a new class,
the class Sufran,
which is a problem
that we have been dealing with for a certain time already
and whose deliveries will go
on the whole 2020 decade.
So here we can already point out that the Sufran
has been delivered, and that the second one,
the G3-1, is not very far.
And the G3-1 has been delivered, and is not very far
from what we call its service service.
So already two.
So, to replace the submarines
of class Rubi,
which will
operate dismantling,
by the way, Naval Group has been going
since the development until the realization,
I am talking about the realization of the nuclear submarines
until dismantling, since we dismantled
on our side of Cherbourg the nuclear submarines
of the previous generations,
which are joined by the Sena.
Which is, so to speak, not generalized.
And not generalized.
In other words, it's not everyone
who does it. And there are some nations

that we will easily find
who leave the old equipment
without knowing too much how to do it.
It's a skill, dismantling it.
Ah yes, and we will dismantle
the quasi-totality of our nuclear submarines.
So, the first barracuda
which is an extremely ambitious one.
So we have six boats delivered.
You talked about the Sufran of the G3-1.
The Tourville is on what we call
its missile device. So it is
in a few weeks
now from the start of its nuclear heat
and its preparation
for the salamanders that will take place next year.
And then comes behind,
the Degrasse and
the Rubi and the Casabiancar
which will be the last two submarines of the series
delivered before the end of the decade.
So, if I talk about the nuclear submarine
that I just talked about,
I can say a word since you talked about
the emblematic problem of what was the repair of the Pearl.
June 12, 2020,
the Pearl suffered a terrible fire
and we have been measuring this year
to relive the Marine
a repaired Pearl
with an absolutely incredible repair
which consisted in taking just
half of the Sufran submarine
which had already arrived in Sherbourg
for its dismantling.
And when the Pearl was returned to Sherbourg
the part before it had been cut
we put it the part before the sapphire
the boat was left to Toulon
where the staff
are still waiting to make an exceptional work
It's interesting,
in general,
it's an exceptional performance,

I think the National Marine is extremely satisfied with the result, does it open tracks or not? Or is it something that is measured once for an unpredictable disaster for which you did not stop or does it give ideas?

So, we are not yet to exploit ideas that could come but

I'll say two things.

First, we must never forget that the submarines are built by Tronson and that the job of an industrial submarine director like Naval Group is to be able to conceive and then realize to weld and assemble.

When we said, we're going to cut it and we're going to glue it again, it wasn't either a new operation for the company.

The second thing is that we were able to do that in our workshops and in our study offices, engineers, technicians, workers who had worked on this.

The continuity of the construction of the buildings, the construction of the buildings, 20-30 years ago.

It opens the perspective, in any case, it puts on the table that the consistency in the industrial activity is absolutely necessary to be able to do that, because what we did on the pearl we did it following a major accidental fire.

We could have done a repair of this nature following a tribute

in combat, etc.

In any case, it shows to everyone that the consistency in the effort and the fact of following it, which is the case of France and especially on the submarine roadmap allows to do things like that.

Yes, it can indeed be said for example, the Baracuda submarines in the 30s of life, why not, at some point or another add a trench for additional functions.

If I remember correctly, our architects are able to calculate the impact and our workers, our technicians and our engineers are able to do such an operation.

It's interesting to talk about this consistency because a second major project of the Naval Group which I imagine we will necessarily talk about is the new generation aircraft carrier still not named for the moment.

But it's interesting because it's obviously the Naval Group of Charles de Gaulle at the time and so in what measure is there a continuity?

After all, it's 30 or 40 years in the beginning so

there are still several generations of engineers and workers, etc.

And in what measure is there a continuity?

In what measure are we talking about a travel table?

If you allow me, before talking about the carrier which obviously will come quite quickly just finished on the submarines since we have now launched the development of the nuclear submarine of the third generation.

The first generation is the renewable class in the 70s.

That's your father.

The second generation is the triumphant
That's you.
And so the third one, I am a little bit
with the thousands.
No, but you don't think so well
because
this third generation
has been working since
I will not say decades but not far
anyway more than 10 years.
We are in the development
so the realization
we start the realization of the first nuclear heaters
on our site of Nantes-Drette
we will start at the end of the year
in the next year
the first elements of COC
of a first boat that will be in service
at the horizon
half of the next decade, we will say 2035
to fix the ideas
there will be a boat every 5 years
and so the last one will come out of Cherbourg in 2050
so
these are boats whose life span
is estimated between 35 and 40 years
so we can imagine that these are boats
so obviously all this is very
political on the choices made by France
on its dissuasion system
but we can imagine that these are boats that will
sail to 2090
so we place dozens of years behind
and I believe that this is the strength
of a company like ours
of this permanent support that the state has had
to build this industrial hub
and this capacity to do so
under the nuclear nuclear attack
under the nuclear submarine of the 3rd generation
here are two extremely emblematic programs for France
which occupy a lot
the collaborators of Naval Group
you have mentioned the nuclear carrier

so obviously it is part of
let's say big objects
small programs that mark
and
Naval Group having realized
and especially Charles de Gaulle who is now in service
and Charles de Gaulle who is also a nuclear carrier
the previous carriers were not
nuclear propulsion
in this continuity
nuclear propulsion
is an extremely important element
we see the object, so it will be a very big boat
75,000 tons
but there will be two nuclear heaters of new generation
and this consistency
in the competence, this consistency in the investment
and everything particularly
necessary in the nuclear
because these are very particular technologies
and these are areas
on which it is extremely important
to renew generations
and it is true that
the previous heaters
who equip
current boats
Charles de Gaulle then the submarine
Barracuda then the submarine
3rd generation who are from this generation
are a model, a base
with engineers
technicians, workers who have made them
and it is absolutely
essential that these skills
apply to a new brand
which is the new generation carrier
I want to say because in fact there are technologies
I think it is something known
for Charles de Gaulle on everything that is catapult
because it is catapult systems
steam steam
and in fact we know
there are not many competent people

on catapult steam steam
there are very few specialists in the world
absolutely kept
people who had to be absolutely preserved
but it was necessary
it is a niche that had to be
preserved
there, it is found that for catapults
we change since it will be
electromagnetic propulsion on an American technology
but it is applicable for other things
that is to say the fact that there are know-how
that you have to think
that you have to think about the transmission
at the level of the duration of the building
and that when there is something
then it can become very very annoying
very very quickly because if the catapult
in this case it can be too many things
we no longer have the specialist who is doing well
the planes are still much less good
but you are perfectly right
and this is the subject
of skills and transmission of skills
it is in fact at the heart
of the naval group strategy
we will see a lot of the strategy
by its production strategy and I will soon
talk about other boats than nuclear boats
we see a lot of the
strategy by technological developments
technological breakthroughs etc
naval group is an enterprise that must also have
its strategy through skills
key skills, critical skills
the jobs, in particular
the jobs in tension, those on which
we have trouble to recruit
and it is true that
what are these jobs in tension
we have some in the
industrial manufacturers
we have talked a lot about
welders, mechanics

engineers, welders etc
which are jobs in which finally
with what has happened in the industry
in France, that I regret infinitely
we have somewhere to dry
training centers and even to dry
a will to work in these areas
because
previously it is manual jobs
but extremely qualified
extremely well paid too
when skills are not
I mean it is really
elite skills
extremely qualified jobs you said
extremely valuable
these are essential jobs
in the implementation of our objects
and these are jobs in which we progress
and in which the professional development
is extremely important
and these are jobs in which
in fact
we lack
to reserve capacity
to attract our young people
because the industry
was still victim
in these last years
I'm going back a little
in the past but victim
of a rather negative communication
talking about the industry
I can say that when I was
at the College of Ulysses it was a van
I mean it was presented as a job
extremely little qualified
extremely little valued
when we see what welders do
how well they earn, how well they are valued
the positions it can be in the industry
it's quite interesting to see
and today
there are other jobs in the industry

I think of electricians for example
in our field today
we are missing electricians
and for a rather
particular reason
the world is electrifying
and to electrify the world
there needs to be an electrician
and today there are not enough electricians
in our training centers to electrify the world
it's as stupid as that
and I hope by the way
that we will convince a large number of our young people
to go to work in these fields
because we need them
today and tomorrow
in the field of
a little more technical, a little more engineer
of course everything around
digital, informatics
digital, cyber security
are today's attention media
we, companies like others
need extremely important
so the identification of attention media
the fact of working very hard
the whole environment of training
training centers
the IMM
the national education
to be able to work in our fields
the IMM is the professional union
of metallurgies
absolutely, the industrial branch
in which we are
and which is extremely active in the training
professional training, initial training
but to be able to orient
I just give an example
in the field of nuclear welding
our local partners
and two other companies
that are EDF and Orano
decided to make a common training center

for nuclear welding
in the region, next to Sherbourg
in the region of Contenta
that means you don't have time
to recruit on the trade market
you have to train yourself
absolutely, we are led to create ourselves
to orient, to look for
we have developed a lot the learning in recent years
and the links to the training centers
because it's true
Naval Group
even if we are not only
in the example of our site
next to Angoulême
Ruel
which is a little further from the sea
but whether it is Sherbourg
Brest, Orient, the Nantes
or the Toulonnais
wider than that
since we are going to Sint-Tropez
are training centers
in which we need to be attractive
we need to exist
to be visible and to encourage young people
because if we want to make boats
until 2050, in service until 2019
the young people that we recruit
today will be largely retired
when the boats are there
it's true that it's not easy
to say, I imagine
that it's the most general method
in the concept of armament
but to work on boats
that we don't necessarily see
we put water
if I can continue
we talked about submarines
we talked about the port of Avion
so the area of the surface buildings
which is also extremely active
we have put water

since we are talking about these moments
the first frigate for Greece
last week in the east
we are going to put water
in a dozen days
less than that
now the first boat for the Netherlands
in the area of the mine war
the surface that is supported
with frigates, corvettes,
mine war buildings
and then in partnership
with the Atlantic Champs
big effort to renew
so the problem is called FDI
defense and intervention frigates
new generation of frigates
so it's a beautiful boat
there is a big aeronautical industrial
that said
Marcel Dassault
to name it
a good plane was first a beautiful plane
I am proud
with all the collaborators of the Naval Group
to say that a good boat
is first a good boat, I think our boats are beautiful
and in any case our frigate
the last frigate has an absolutely incredible allure
but behind this allure
it also expresses
the mission
of such a boat, a combatant boat
capable of anti-submarine missions
indeed they are very beautiful
for those who want to see it
the first one has already been released
for France because it is co-produced
for France and for France
so this is what the Naval Group does
just a question, what do you do
since you have been
as an army engineer
you have put your hands in all this

what does the PDG do?
what does the PDG do?
so precisely, let's go to the end
here are some examples, but we also do submarines for Brazil
we do submarines in one
transfer technology
and we have projects in the Middle East
we also have projects
in Asia, Singapore etc
so an international activity
we will talk again about the export valve
because it is obviously very important
but what does the PDG do?
the PDG spends a lot of time with its customers
so obviously there is a French customer
he is not very far
but we have had a lot of work with
the French customer in the preparation
of military programming
and then it is 60%, 70% of our activity
is our great customer
even though the service of support of the fleet
is our great customer, the national marine user
the president of the Naval Group
spends a lot of time with them
to take care of the present
obviously
I can tell you, we talked about the Pearl
it is a subject that has occupied me a lot
in its time
to prepare the future
to make sure that the Naval Group
is perceived at the level
it should be in the device
and also to listen to its customers
of the national marine, etc
that is for France
but the PDG of Naval Group spends a lot of time
internationally too
so it is further
but our international customers
are states, marines
of first rank
also need to deliver

need to understand the needs of the future
and then need to win projects
because our industrial activity
is a complement
of this activity for France
and this activity for the international
that is what allows us
to carry our naval fields
our structure
to make sure that we are competitive
and for one and for the other
we need a volume of activity
which is the complement of the two
Do you miss the engineer's job?
Yes, listen
I think we are
I talked a lot about the internal vision
after I spend a lot of time
in the company
all the topics
related to the company's function
to its trajectory, obviously to its budget
its administration advice
Yes, but it is a bit different
at the time you were designing the navigation system
I will come, I will come
but ask me what I do
so I also try to trace the life
it is also a lot in the company
its administration advice, the administrators
with which I spend time
and then every time I can
engineer every day, engineer every day
I think when you are passionate about a field
where it is expressed
it is the field
as soon as I can, I go
I go where it happens
go see
the Coq workshops
of the Orient, of Sherbourg
spend some time
in our workshops, spend some time
in our design forms, spend some time with people

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and spend some time with engineers
the navigation field remains
and the engineers of the Navagrupa
who take care of the knowledge
I think when we are engineers, we are always engineers
so we are passionate
I love working with my engineers
on future projects
obviously, I spend time
to understand what we do
and then also orientate
a certain amount of work on the new generation
on the nuclear submarine
of the third generation
this is a bit the family tivism
that you have
and then the choice I made
I think when we make a choice
young people, it still marks us
the fact of having chosen to work on a submarine
makes
everything
spend time with the engineers
who work on the USN and the 3G
is an absolutely exciting hour for me
and then I am
incredibly admirable
of everything they do
the Navagrupa collaborators
admirable
of a worker in the Coq workshop
and admirable of an engineer
who works on extremely evolved algorithms
you know my navigation
because it can still evolve since
So, you talk about submarines
you also talk about the export
you may have to come back to one of the episodes
to talk about which the general public
has heard about the Naval Group
these last few years, it is obviously
the Australian submarines
an offer brought in
in 2016

then an agreement signed in 2019
for the construction of 12 submarines
not nuclear, it is important to attack
for 31 billion euros
the contract of the century
annulled in September 2021
in the framework of the Cooccus
which allowed Australia to acquire nuclear submarines
but what is interesting
it is obviously an affair
it was obviously a tough blow
for the Naval Group
i.e. between the time
when the deal was signed
and its annulation
so how did you
experience it, how did you even learn it
how did it hit you
how did it happen to you
and what did you understand
I will answer directly to your question
and then if you allow me to come back to the story
I had taken in my office
the 15th of September 2021 at 3.30pm
and so
with some colleagues
around me
we were very few
and so in a phone call
with the Secretary of State
of the Australian Defence
and in fact they were in a sequence
the Prime Minister called
the President of the Republic
the Minister of Defence called
the Minister of Defence and it was in a sequence of announcements
telling us
especially you do not say anything before tonight
because everything will be announced tonight
by President Biden
a wonderful meeting at the CUS
so that's how I learned it
and that's really how I learned it
it's really at that moment

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I often say that I'm always in a post-traumatic stress
at that moment, I think it's true
such a shock
that we can get ready for everything
but it prevents the game from happening
and
so you say that I arrived
it's true that when I arrived in March 2020
I didn't arrive at the moment of Covid
it wasn't an easy time
I arrived at Thales and then you arrived
in March 2020
and in Thales, thank you
when I was in Thales
actually I was directing
among others the naval activities
of Thales, including the submarine
sonar
and this Australian project
I had lived it since the beginning
next to the DCNS and the naval group
I even participated
as Thales at the visit of the Dutch President
in Australia
which was a bit of a precursor
of the will
of the naval group
and of this campaign
and I arrived at the naval group
with really the desire
to make sure that this program
it was a program
absolutely colossal
by its volume
by its dimension
by the commitment of the company
that it was going to bring
I often said at the time
to come to an Australian Franco-Australian company
it's a program that was actually
in the physical sense
of the term
which was the naval group
that approached it

and that also approached France
in a pacific water environment
but beyond that
even given the object
in a very special relationship
with the Five Eyes
because France would have entered
Five Eyes are these British-English countries
that have a big share
of information
a big strategic partnership
which was then forced by Ocus for some
absolutely
so an absolutely emblematic program
I arrive at the moment of Covid
and in a complicated phase of this program
because we were in engineering work
in preparation work of the naval field
in power work there
and we can no longer go to Australia
from March 2020
we can no longer go to Australia
with a remote program
it was absolutely necessary that I arrive
it was difficult this period of Covid
and we held our balloons
that was incredible because we managed
to put our teams in tele-work
in these extreme confinement phases
to continue to work remotely
somewhere the fact that the program
was between France and Australia
he had already gotten used to working remotely
and then I took a reflection
at that time that we were always looking at my phone
when I get up
but it's not very far
and always look at it because there was always
a message coming from Australia in the morning
always always always always
often messages from customers
so it was this period
and then I finished going
I had to go

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I had to arrive at the client
at a time a little complicated
negotiations on technology transfers
and percentages
and I had no other way to go
than to respect the rules of confinement
a lot of our compatriots did it
it's still an amazing experience
and we work a lot
we take care of ourselves as much as we can
but it's a little stressful
I did it and I stayed 10 days
so in fact talking about what a PDG does
he also does that
he has to go there and he will spend 2 weeks in confinement
and I will spend
the month of February 2022 in Australia
and the program was on the rails
that's what's absolutely amazing
is that it was all this period
so from the moment it's confinement
we show to Australians
that we know how to do it
we know how to do the boat
we know how to transfer technology
we know how to associate a supply chain
so that Australia
assures what she wanted behind this program
which was really an industrial sovereignty
and realisation
she wanted an exceptional boat
an extraordinarily performing boat
she wanted to be able to do it
a big part of it, 60% should be made in Australia
which is still extremely important
and we get there
and the 15th, that's what's amazing
is that on the 15th of September
in the morning
the last document we had to receive
to move on to the next phase
because it's a contract that was separated in phases
and it's true that at each phase
contractually they had the right

to reconsider
but on the 15th of September in the morning
we receive all the documents
in the first phase
and all the signs are open to move on to the second
we have a valid client plan
we have a price and a valid client budget
we have all the technical documents
which show that the boat is sealed
as we say in the submarine area
that we are ready
we have shown that we had the power of engineering
there are more than 1000 people working on the program
so 300 on the 15th of September in the morning
and we receive this document
we look at our phones at 8 o'clock
at 9 o'clock in the morning
because it was really the
and by the way my program director
went to Australia
that is to say that there was always
confinement on the 15th
and so Monday he goes to Australia
to sign the contract
and Wednesday when we have this
announcement he is in his hotel room
he will spend 15 days in his hotel room
to show you
how in the programmatic vision
finally
the political vision was more complicated
and we had seen
Mr. Morrison and his environment
basculated, China was no longer the same
the relationship between Australia and China
was no longer that of 2016
and we saw well in Mr. Morrison's
speech and the way
he envisaged these alliances
an extremely strong approach from the United States
so the political vision
we could envisage it
but the programmatic vision
of all the Ministry of Defense

Australia is like
here we are discussing together
and all of a sudden
we learn that France will buy
submarines in the United States
imagine a little the shock
including for the Australians themselves
and this is a little the force
of the Five Eyes
that you mentioned earlier
it is their ability to exchange
in a field of absolute confidentiality
and I think the two bubbles were separate
and by the way I do not think that the political bubble
knew that on the 15th of September
it was allowed to negotiate a resolution
not for retirement
but for convenience
because everything was green
they decided to stop
hence the negotiation that we brought
who concluded
conditions that were recognized as relatively favorable
and what did you draw
like the sound
because there was
at the same time
there was a big press campaign
it was a public subject in Australia
there was
in Australia in any case
the press said a lot of bad things about this program
do you think that this is it
a large part
do you think that it is something more structured
no but in fact I will come back
what did you learn
about this?
on Australia itself
Australia is a country where the political regimes
often change
and it is true that they passed
2016 the years of Turnbull in Morrison
from a vision

of the sovereign defense system
to a vision of the defense system
under the American roulette
and so it is true that our program
has always been under a certain
contestation of this policy of sovereignty
I think that
the first message
is that we often see the international
through our own eyes and sovereignty
it speaks to us
and a state that decides to be sovereign
we know why it wants to be
we understand
Australia had decided to be sovereign
we understand
except that in fact
Australia has always been
the great American ally
America is always there
there is never a total sovereignty
and so the fact that
the political sovereignty of Basque
has always been a debate
and I think that a part of the press campaign
was linked to this political debate
on the choice of the defense system
what we learned
there are a thousand people who work on the program
on the 15th of September
Naval Group is an incredibly resilient
and thanks to its customers
and especially France
finally the SNLE 3rd generation program
which started at about the same time
allowed us to reposition
a very large number of our colleagues
collaborators and France
was really supported at that time
so resilient companies
I will admit that all the work
I have been doing
we encouraged mobility
we were very close

to our colleagues at Herbour-Joy
at Naval Group
in France there were about
650 people to fix a large number
directly related to the program
a very large number in Herbour
I imagined the state in which they were
on the 17th of the morning
this resilient company
a human resource task force
of 50 people
doing the link
we had mobility from Cherbourg
to other sites at never reaching levels
so we also
somehow
benefited from this
you managed not to see people
obviously in Australia the story is a little different
because here we can not reposition
but here it is the government that took care of them
and Australia is a country of full employment
and finally the quasi-totality of our collaborators
are repositioned
after that
finally we can give place to big changes
so here it is a lessons learned
that the world of the five eyes is a little bit
particular
and here it is difficult
and therefore difficult for a French company
to be part of
here I
the program was the occasion
in any case it shows the difficulty
but here after
after what we also removed
and it was said by the Australians
that
the boat that we were doing
was really exceptional
the Australians recognized it
they said they chose nuclear
but in terms of conventional

the design that we had shown them
was really the one that would
provide a force that they want
so I think that reputation
even if our competitors tried to play on it
it was recognized by our customers
and then we got it
it's interesting because
in fact it also raises a question
of the dependence
on the export of naval groups
you said it's still a third of the number of business
it's important
and so it depends on that
you have to convince new customers
you have to sell them permanently
and it makes me think of what you said
about the transfer of technology
because it's obviously something very crucial
and then it also makes a little connection
with what we said about
the French status of naval groups
of public companies
very competitive
very competitive
while keeping
let's hope the most sensitive
and the most efficient capacity for France
how do we consider both?
well first of all
the competitiveness
is a complex and broad subject
we have to be competitive
by its solution, by technological innovation
a client can try to
buy a naval group
because in terms of innovation
capacity is simply better than the other
and he will look at that
he will also look at the price
but he will also look at that
we have to be competitive in our fields
and in naval groups
as in other companies

but we always work on
the competitiveness of our processes
of our ways of doing
of our computer tools
to be able to improve
and also of our industrial organizations
to be able to make
two boats, two frigates per year
when you make two frigates per year
individually, it will be less expensive
than if you make one per year
and so these are the competitive elements
similar to our Cherbourg fleet
we invest a lot in industrial means
we invest in all our sites
which will allow us to be
more efficient in certain tasks
to do more dimensional things
and after that
our export sales are
organized, controlled
monitored but also accompanied by France
and therefore France
as such by its defense agreements
provides a guarantee
and security
but I think that if...
Yes, it's the question of what we give
because obviously why does naval group sell
because there are skills
and exceptional French know-how
and at the same time we can't sell everything
even if obviously naval group doesn't need
to sell significantly
but it's complicated as...
It's a whole thing
let's take the example, we were talking about Australia
so let's talk about this sequence
because it's interesting
from September 15th to October 2021
shortly after
the Australian announcement
Greece announces that it chooses France
on its frigates

and the announcement of the French
it's a lot of commentators
saying that it's been 10 years
since we were in a country in Greece
it was really my choice
Yes, they weren't allowed to consult the group
on the day of the announcement
No, it was for a long time
we had been proposing the frigate
and now we are proposing the frigate of defense and intervention
but Greece will choose France
Greece therefore in a particular political situation
the Mediterranean etc
so Greece chooses
an alliance with France
when we choose the same boat as France
it's not an Oda
We are already allies
interoperability, ability to work together etc
and then Greece chooses the FDI
and when we look at it
it expresses through its design
its strength and power
so it's an extremely complete boat
I can tell you
You like the appearance of the FDI
It's always an interesting question
I love our boats
the frigate was beautiful
the faillette was incredible
the submarines are beautiful
when you look at a naval submarine
it's crazy
but it's true that the FDI
has a small side of complementary design
which is the transverse
which makes a lot of talk
and which will also make a lot of talk
when we will have seen the sea
because it will also be a great boat
it's a sea boat, it's a sea boat
not to forget that there are more than 100 sailors
who live on board
it's funny, it's transverse

because it reminds a bit of the Athenian triers
transverse means
of the bridge
it's enough to see a ship
and when we look at the frigate
Kimon
we will offer to the minister
of the Greek defense
Kimon is an admiral
it must be the Athenian fleet
500 BC
and the ship of the admiral Kimon
next to the FDI
2500 years later
and
to make this parallel
it would be a bit anecdotal
it prevents Greece from choosing
a ship whose architecture is very digital
of the FDI
and I think in terms of innovation
everything is digital, the radars are not our plans
the electronic war, the IFF
we are based on an architecture
based on computer servers
we are cyber-secured
by design, by definition
and then with all the ability
to evolve the collaborative combat
they choose France
they choose innovation
after that
it's true that we have to be in prices
that are also market prices
hence the importance in our fields
of working on competitiveness
Greece is coming and if I go to the end of the sequence
it's the occasion
during our innovation days of 2021
in the end we saw that
we had a lot of our strategy
which stopped
Australia
it also gave us human abilities

in a major way
in a new field
which is the drones
and it's at that moment
that Naval Group identifies the field of drones
of autonomous systems as being
on the one hand an absolute necessity
to equip naval forces
and finally seeing what we are
because Naval Group
by all its activities, we have talked a lot about the fields
but we must always remember that Naval Group
is an integrator of combat systems
and a director
of these software
of combat systems and missions
I think it's one of the reasons
why our boats are so integrated
with this look because we do the combat system
ourselves and therefore we are able to
optimize naval architecture
with its combat system
obviously with great partners
Thales, MBDA, Safran
to name them
but there are many others
and so from 2021
in this strategy of rebounds
it's always accessible
and on the contrary, we have to put the watts
and then the development of the drones
and I would say a few months before
or a year before
that it becomes an evidence for everyone
with what is happening
especially during the war in Ukraine
It's very interesting the Naval Group
we can't talk about it now because it's really
even because it's
I mean it took a long time
obviously compared to the drones
it's not the same weather
it's really different, it's not the same elongations
we don't have the time to talk about it

but maybe just talk about the LPM
because you mentioned it earlier
and the LPM for Naval Group
and
by the way
this is the first question you asked
in the LPM because obviously
there is a need for you and your
your predictions to determine this volume
but really
as far as it is collaborative
as far as you take
the command of the state
for example if the state
wanted to make two or three
new generation aircraft
if the light
was to arrive on the army
to decide to
change dimensions
could the Naval Group be able to answer yes
could you say
you have to wait
it's not that simple
where do you intervene in this LPM
the LPM there are a lot of changes
I intervene as a PDG Naval Group
with Naval Group but also with
my cascade of the Naval Industry
and Construction Group
and the Defense Industry Council
through the DGA
and through the support of the FLOT
for what concerns us but we will say a lot of the DGA
I intervene
to model
the different programmatic scenarios
that constitute the budgetary trajectory
and therefore
during these phases of construction
we have to imagine
that there are a lot of scenarios
they need us to have
the industrial impact of a scenario

both in the cost of the programs
in their elongation
so you are constantly consulting
on the numbers?
at some point
we talked a lot about the aircraft carrier
during the military LPM
how?
yes it's a lot of money
it's a lot of money to place
in a budgetary trajectory
the military LPM itself
it's a lot of money, 413 billion
it's an extremely important volume
the defense budgets are increasing
and we understand why
but these are scenarios
at the end of arbitration
and then an announcement
but what I can say about the military LPM
is that somewhere it engages us
the defense industry
the LPM and the army
during this period
called the war economy
but the war economy was
there too, in the LPM's case
to bring on the table
subjects such as
the
sovereignty issues
on certain elements
are we able to do what we have to do
so we brought on the subjects
we had
or we were dependent on
outside of France
the war economy brought us
the vision of our supply chain
finally we did
the stress tests of the supply chain
and if we had to multiply by 2 or 3
by the way, we did the stress test
because today

our eastern battlefield is set
to do 2 frigates a year
since we deliver
corvettes to the UAE
we deliver frigates to France and Greece
and so somewhere
this war economy field
we show it and it shows
the tensions that can be seen in the supply chain
and the investments on which the state
can help us
the vision of the PME
war economy and so in the LPM's case
we brought on simplifications
the door is open
how can we simplify our processes
how can we do it anymore
it's true that the field of drones
is a field that is close to simplification
we will not develop a drone as we develop a nuclear submarine
we will not put a drone in the water
as we put a boat with a crew of 100 people
but today if we look at the regulations
they are not mature
so what are the simplifications that we can bring
and then
the competitiveness
research of all the levers that allow us to be
more efficient, more competitive
we are part of these war economy fields
to which we were associated
it was part of the preparation of the LPM
to precisely look at these tragedies
so Naval Group is able to respond
to a redimension
which has been
appearing since 18 months
in the case of the LPM
if you have to produce more, you will arrive
and we are doing it
after the naval programs
we must always see if we are on the long term
and the naval programs
we are talking about the boat

but we must never forget that
behind the boat there is a crew
and so there are issues of human resources
and the boat goes into a port
and in a port there are infrastructures
so in fact we are in a system logic
and the dimension of a fleet
is not only the dimension of the naval field
which allows them, it is true that on the other hand
the French fleet is in great renewal
at the moment, I talked about nuclear submarines
I talked about frigates
of defense and intervention
which will complete the frigates
Fremes, which we delivered the last
few years ago
I was going to say a few months, yes it must be the last year
the Lorraine frigate
there are the fleet building
and also the fleet
so there is also the Jacques Chevalier
which is about to be renewed
we will soon renew the Haute-Hurier patrouilleurs
who will gradually replace
the escort ships
we will renew the surveillance frigates
the Outremer frigates
to allow France
to better monitor and protect
these exclusive economic zones
we will renew
we have talked about the port
so there is still an extremely important renewal
of the French fleet at the moment
and then international fleet
so we have an industrial tool
and it is often a problem
that we also have the industrial charge
it is made of long-term visibility
I talked about long-term programs
and then short-term opportunities
and the area of the surface buildings
is never an area
on which we have a long-term visibility

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it has always been a balance
between programs in France
and international programs
that we spend a lot of time
to convince international clients
to order us boats
because we also need it to charge our ships
Thank you very much Pierre-Éric Pommelais
With pleasure
So I remember
we will have the opportunity to talk about Naval Group
and all its perspectives in the airfield
So the airfield
a podcast produced by Alexandre Jublain
distributed by Binge Audio
I do not see that all the remarks and comments
are welcome on social networks
on Apevodcast and on Spotify
Thank you all
and see you next time
I'm Molly Wood
With this show
I'm excited to bring you conversations
with startup innovators, business leaders, policymakers
and everyday people
doing their best to solve the biggest challenge
of our time
We're trying to make hydrogen commercial aviation
in your term reality
If you eat a vegan diet
you reduce your green gas emissions
by 75% with every meal
The whole reason why I started Nest
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