

# Upgrading Our Armed Forces



Lt. Col. Richard Williams (Retd.) MBE MC  
Lt. Gen. Sir Graeme Lamb (Retd.) KBE CMG DSO

Edited by James Norman



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## About the Authors

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) is first and foremost an opportunity for the UK's armed forces to finally unshackle themselves from their Cold War chains, leave behind the indecisive salami-slicing approach of past defence reviews, where hard choices are avoided, and allow the armed forces to move forward as an affordable, adaptable, efficient and effective instrument of UK Security policy in a new world. This provides a real chance to accelerate the transformation of our forces from the traditional systems of the industrial age to those suited to securing our national interests by global power projection in this information age. National financial realities combined with the failures of our existing defence system in Iraq and Afghanistan, have created the urgency for change. This provides an opportunity to make UK defence forces better suited to the country's needs in the face of evolving global realities, rather than preserving ever smaller cadres of the old disguised behind some recently purchased kit and ideas that enabled upgraded operations in current areas of conflict.

In response to an evolving and new National Security Strategy (NSS), we expect the SDSR to create a new defence force that is ever more capable of securing, by force, national interests in ways that move with, not against, the grain of a multi-polar world, globalisation and the information age. A force that is truly confident in its ability to play its part in countering state and non-state based threats to the UK and its interests at home or abroad; alone (when possible), or as part of an alliance, coalition or partnership. One that retains an intelligent warrior rather than a peacekeeper ethos and purpose; and one that has fully taken

account of the lessons of the numerous military operations since the fall of the Berlin Wall, incorporated the new ways of warfare provided by new technology, cut its cloth to suit limited national resources, and positioned itself to make the most of the whole of the nation's considerable military potential – civilian, governmental, reservist and regular.

We should expect the Coalition Government's SDSR to create a defence force that is much more than just a resource-constrained evolution of the force designed in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, or one that is focused purely on "doing the same Helmand or Basra operations with better equipment". In our view, this would be a waste of time and scarce national resources and inevitably doom the forces to yet another period of being behind the military relevance and effectiveness curves, (i.e. structured for yesterday's war), as well as setting in stone a way of thinking about defence and security in government that has not served the UK well in the rapidly changing post Cold War and post 9/11 world.

Behind the vision in this report are the following assumptions:

- The UK will retain its nuclear deterrent in its current form, with constant upgrades, as an essential expenditure.
- The capabilities of the police, intelligence agencies and other government departments cannot defeat all threats to the homeland without military support.
- The UK's primary (but not only) military, intelligence, space-based, and communications security partner will be the USA.
- The UK will wish to maintain the ability to use combat-capable military force to intervene in situations abroad that threaten its interests and security.
- That 'military interventions' abroad tend to transform into some form of enduring and complex stabilisation operation.
- The UK intends to base all of its defence capability within the UK at some time in the future.

It is also assumed that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) will be given the freedom to cancel existing equipment and other capital expenditure programmes, and bear that cost now, if such legacy programmes are creating capability that will not fit with the new structure and way of delivering defence and security over the next 20 years. For it is better to bear the costs of cancelling projects now than have to bear the longer-term running and opportunity costs of having unwanted and legacy capabilities on the defence inventory. And that it must be the intention to ensure that the UK's defence industrial base, supported by government research and development, adjusts now to better contribute to a more efficient supply of essential defence capability over the longer term, and not just to meeting the tactical needs of the moment.

This review should deliver a truly radical transformation of the UK's standing military force, taking advantage of the proven and positive trade-offs that can be made between men / heavy equipment and technology when creating an expeditionary military capability in this information age. It should use the latest technology and thinking to leverage what we are good at / have much of, and substitute or reject what we are poor at / can't afford. If done well, this is sure to make the standing force smaller, when measured in head-count, but more capable when measured in its effect, as both an instrument of action or influence wherever UK military force is needed around the globe. Such a transformation would represent the much talked about "horse-tank" moment of the post-industrial information age; expanding the ability of defence to apply power from its traditional land / sea / air arena and into the new cyberspace and space environments.

The SDSR must deliver much more than an upgrade. For example, re-structuring the components of the force will not be enough on its own. A perfectly designed military component that is poorly directed

“ It is better to bear the costs of cancelling projects now than have to bear the longer-term running and opportunity costs of having unwanted and legacy capabilities on the defence inventory ”



or commanded will fail at worst, or conduct costly / inefficient operations at best (as we have seen recently). It is imperative this SDSR demands that the nation's defence and security community incorporates the lessons of the many failures of command that have occurred since 9/11, and thereby drive a change to the way that military operations are commanded at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Many of the complications and costs faced by both politicians and soldiers in Basra, Helmand or elsewhere could have been avoided if the national military command system had been more suited to considering, planning and directing military interventions in the modern era.

Connected to this strategic command point, the SDSR must initiate a complete and ruthless review of the commitments made by the UK to our various historical military alliances. This would aim to ensure that we accrue a greater dividend by our involvement, rather than continue to be one of the parties that pays the highest attendance costs and takes the most risks. In our view and in spite of considerable effort, NATO has not been effective in Afghanistan (dangerously so), and its thinking is still corrupted by the assumptions that underpinned its Cold-War genesis. We believe that the UK should insist on a radical change to this old alliance or consider our position within it, whilst developing a range of other bespoke non-NATO military partnerships and coalitions with nations wherever and whenever it suits the UK's interests.

Finally, it is also our view that the UK has been consistently poor at making the most of its available military potential; preferring to maintain the largest possible standing force, (for short-notice intervention operations), at the cost of creating and maintaining a truly useful reservist base; whose talents and utility would be valued in more than traditional military combat power terms. The SDSR presents an opportunity to direct a transformation of how we make use of the untapped human resource potential in the UK for military ends; thereby signposting the way to making more dual-use military-

capable citizens. This is both a more sustainable method for the UK to maintain and develop the ability to scale-up its military forces when the situation demands it, and a way to ensure that the standing military is able to leverage the wider, non-military talent within society. Greater use of the reservist base would also allow the armed forces to deliver sophisticated effect and mass in their military interventions – particularly in the critical, lengthy and consequent ‘stabilisation’ phase of operations; and in providing a nation-wide pool of military capability to assist the police and other agencies in homeland defence. It also extends the opportunity, via reservist service, for citizens to contribute directly to a vital and unifying national purpose: the security of the realm, pulling the new, diverse and evolving population together in ways that inevitably make the nation and its military forces stronger, as well as making the military ever closer to and representative of the broader society.

It is undeniable that resources are constrained, and necessarily so. Although this will influence the pace of change in some areas, it should not be seen as a constraint on its direction. For the essential requirements to work to a tight budget creates an opportunity for the leadership of the military to be forced to stop salami-slicing its existing defence capability in favor of more transformational plans, which really allow defence to move forward into the future. This will also force a change to the defence industrial base. It is our view that the focus of investment should be focused along two lines in order to start the transformation. Firstly, the *rationalisation* of the existing structure – making the essential and useful components better suited to information age operations at home and abroad, and discarding the less useful / good; and secondly, the *integration* of these elements so that they finally start to harness the potential of the space and cyberspace environment. Aligned to this is the need to retain as many of the experienced people as possible to ensure that this transformation is built upon a solid base of hard-won experience.

This report therefore recommends that the SDSR starts the delivery of a new defence system that finally leaves the Cold-War structures behind by rapid but affordable development along the following lines:

- Information age based force transformation creating the basis for more effective and agile ‘global intervention forces’.
- Wholesale adjustment to the National Security Council (NSC) and military command system.
- Greater use of the whole of the nation’s military potential – expand the reservist numbers and capability as a proportion of the total forces.
- Achieve greater dexterity in its approach to alliances, partnerships and engagements – re-shape and look beyond NATO.

The sum of these developments will produce a UK defence force that is more ‘*information age / global*’ as opposed to ‘*industrial age / local-territorial*’ in nature. It will be housed in the UK, leverage the most useful technology and best experience, be supported by a more relevant defence industrial base, be better integrated with other security agencies, be docked into a better ‘security decision-making system’ which has the confidence to act early and connected to a more creative network of alliances and partnerships. In short, a force that can better contribute to neutralising today’s threats, by being able to do a smarter Helmand, Iraq, counter-piracy, counter-7/7, counter cyber attack and other tasks; whilst retaining the ability to stand the nation’s reserves to arms over time against any traditional threat to an alliance partner or territory at some time in the future.

The subsequent analysis in this paper outlines these critical strategic lines of transformation. A full list of detailed recommendations can be found from page 57.

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## 2. Analysis – the Drivers for Change

### Threats and roles

Although it is dangerous to be too precise when predicting the evolving pattern of threats that confront the UK and its interests over the next 20 years or so, it is also sensible that to take a calculated view on the risks of certain types of conflict happening in order to justify the defence system that will support the NSS over the next 10-20 years. As the Defence Secretary has stated, the UK simply can't afford to maintain forces for every eventuality, and nor should it.

In broad terms, UK is unlikely to be involved in traditional wars of necessity conducted between states – those fought to guarantee the existence of the nation, its dominions or that of its allies, (when all else has failed), using land, sea and air forces. The threat of these wars, fought with allies in the European theatre of operations, has defined the structure of the UK's armed forces during and since the Cold War, and this dominant purpose has limited the UK military's ability to be as efficient a tool of National Security Strategy as it should be. When used, and particularly since 2001, the UK military has tended to deploy and employ what we have, (to make use of our legacy 'Cold War capability'), rather than what is needed or most effective. For example: in Basra in 2003 there were simply too many Main Battle Tanks, and not enough information-gathering, processing and targeting systems geared towards identifying, tracking and neutralising human threats to the stabilisation mission. Or in Helmand in 2006 there were too many vehicles suitable for supplying ammunition to armoured forces in North Germany or to drive around Belfast, but totally unsuitable for IED-strewn roads found there and an Air Force that cannot meaningfully contribute to air-based surveillance.

These legacy structures, maintained to fight the old Cold War critically limit the utility of the UK's 180,000 man defence force, which is only now able to sustain one 10,000 man commitment in Afghanistan, (which has taken nearly 5 years to resource with anything like the right equipment and a long way to go yet), and a few smaller non-combat tasks. This is obviously inefficient, and illustrates the direction of change that must be central to SDSR: to transfer resources away from being ready to defend Europe within its own territory, and towards systems that work well in complex operations fought away from the home base.

If we propose that the UK should be prepared to sensibly take risk with the threat of conventional territorial aggression, we do not advocate taking such risk when faced with Weapons of Mass Destruction. The strategic threat posed by state-owned nuclear weapons, (and their proliferation), demands that we maintain an effective and independent deterrence capability to counter any

“In an unpredictable world, where the balance of power can shift in response to unpredictable events, Trident stands as the UK's Praetorian Guard”

change to the nuclear threat facing the UK, the parameters for its use by the UK should no longer be governed by old Cold War nuclear doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction – where a nuclear attack on NATO would trigger the NATO-delivered nuclear destruction of Russia. Doctrine for its

use will need to change to suit today's situation and the size of our independent arsenal. This will mean the nuclear capability will be valued not in terms of its capacity to contribute to the annihilation of a state-based nuclear aggressor but more in terms of the UK being able to deliver untold hurt to an aggressor nation should it threaten the UK's existence, and in ways that inevitably lead to that state's collapse.

This capability is the last line of defence, and is one that demands the very best and most credible solution that we can afford, and in the appropriate numbers. Without question or peer, this is a certain

quantity of submarine-launched Trident, its replacement and a carefully chosen program of upgrades, which will ensure that this world-class strike capability stays ahead of any technological advances in counter-missile defence or platform detection. Without this, the UK would have to depend on a nuclear ally to preserve its existence or threaten / punish an aggressor. But with Trident, we can defend ourselves, on our own. In an unpredictable world, where the balance of power can shift in response to unpredictable events, alliances can fold and falter, and new nuclear or state threats can emerge faster than we can adjust our defence, Trident stands as the UK's Praetorian Guard. There is simply no credible alternative.

Looking ahead, we subscribe to the view that the situation faced by the UK in the post-2001, globalised, information age world will be defined by a state of constant and simultaneous competition in many places at home and abroad, and with many other nations and non-state actors who threaten our prosperity, our culture and our way of life. This competition will be watched by a critical world over ubiquitous global information media, ensuring that every decision or action by the UK has the capacity to make the situation worse rather than better; placing a high premium on good intelligence, excellent judgment, superb information / message management and a practiced ability to exert pressure simultaneously on a number of points of influence. It will be typically conducted in ways that will fall short of conventional military engagements; and be defined by an approach whereby the UK seeks to reduce rather than remove risk, to make the threat irrelevant or manageable, rather than to remove it entirely.

To thrive in such a complex, global and dynamic situation, the UK must merge its defence and security instruments and policies into a single well-coordinated whole, forming a single National Security Strategy that allocates the appropriate level of resources across all departments to match the requirements of the strategic tasks as well as being able to link together the efforts of all these

departments to a common security purpose. It can no longer view defence and security as separate compartments, or separate issues at home from those faced abroad. It can no longer think, plan or conduct activities in sequences / phases led by one department and then the other when trying to deliver security effect: FCO tries first, if that fails then use the MoD to intervene, once they have delivered tactical security, we then get DFID to tidy it up, and then extract. These approaches fail in the modern inter-dependent world, and need to be adjusted. The formation of the NSC is the first, and very welcome step, with the National Security Strategy to follow.

Although the National Security Strategy is yet to be published, it can be assumed that the primary role of the UK's military as a subset of this national security system will remain simple: to use force or the threat of force to reduce any threats found at home or abroad where the use of other non-military means alone will fail, or have a high chance of failing. Secondary roles will include providing specialist assistance to other government departments when required, including support to strategic information gathering, diplomatic engagement, disaster relief and so on. We therefore assume that the Government subscribes to the utility of force as an instrument of national policy, and that it seeks to have a combat-capable military rather than a gendarmerie with the latter being capable only of self-defence and tasked to contain / engage with a situation, whilst the former is tasked, capable and defined by their ability to 'act to change events' by offensive action in all threat environments.

Given our view of the world, we judge that the most likely threat which will require military force to counter it will come from non-state actors – terrorists, criminals, or even malign commercial entities with global reach and influence, equipped with weapons of mass effect and mass disruption – nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons, or cyber attack methods. They will often operate from the marginal areas of the world in failing or failed states with the support of a blend of national or non-state / global sponsors. Unchecked

they have the capacity and the stated wish to repeat 9/11, 7/7, Mumbai and worse, killing hundreds of thousands of UK citizens or wiping off multiple billions pounds of value from the national balance sheet by critically disrupting the ability of the UK to trade or support itself by mass-effect cyber attack. They represent the most immediate threat to the security of the UK and cannot be ignored.

This will require the UK to develop and maintain the independent ability to identify, track and disrupt such threats using host nation partners where possible and indirect / non-kinetic means where useful. For example, cyber-based disruption of communications, counter-ideology information operations and, when absolutely necessary, precise combat-capable military means to destroy or capture key terrorist capabilities, using land, sea, air and special forces. This will be a multi-agency effort harnessing all of the power of the UK's intelligence agencies, police, Foreign Office and others to provide the maximum range of options, ensure precision of effect, and sustainability of any outcome. This capability needs to be independent, as experience indicates there is no guarantee that allied or even US assets will be made available to support a UK intervention to counter a UK-focused threat when an ally is facing significant threats of its own at the same time. Its use will need to conform to the principles of legitimacy, proportionality and respect for sovereignty, where possible, but it needs to be such that it ensures that there is nowhere in the world that a non-state actor can hide, or threaten an attack on the UK without risking being hit by the UK's security system.

Connected to this, we believe in the continued logic that underpinned part of the humanitarian intervention doctrine of the last Government. That is to say that the existence of failed and failing states have the potential to critically threaten the UK's security directly, (via harboring terrorists with strategic reach, influence and weapons of mass effect), or indirectly by creating regional instability, conflict and an inability to access resources that are critical to the global economy, in ways that we cannot ignore. An unexpected and



very compelling *casus belli* for UK intervention from a seemingly containable situation can emerge suddenly following a coup, invasion by a neighboring state or via a change of government. These are outcomes that can directly threaten UK nationals living there, UK commercial operations in the area, encourage terrorists to operate from the newly failed state, or simply destabilise an area or region of strategic significance creating an expensive domino effect against wider UK interests. It is therefore the case, that the UK National Security Strategy must be equipped with the means to counter such a threat, alone or with allies, via a military intervention to change the situation for the better, when absolutely necessary.

This overseas and unpredictable risk to the UK's security requires the UK to hold expeditionary military force that is ready, at relatively short-notice, to enter or fight to enter, and then fight to change the circumstances of the failed / failing state to the advantage of the UK and its political partner in that target country. This type of operation is rarely short in duration, given that the initial intervention operation with a limited objective invariably requires an enduring complex stabilisation operation to be conducted that attempts to secure the conditions for lasting stability – typically by the development of a working economy, an effective government system, and an effective but sustainable indigenous security system. Nor are they popular, cost-free or easy as recent history and the conduct of on-going operations show, nor is success simple to define or secure within a timeline that fits with the domestic electoral cycle.

Given a mixed record and their political cost, it may seem desirable to the more critical or less hawkish observers of recent history that this expensive option is pushed into the background or ignored altogether as a policy choice, saving money and negating the need to ever again suffer the costs and risks of unpopular wars. But such a decision ignores the realities of the ever-changing global threat environment that clearly demands that the UK maintains a military intervention capability; as well as denying the UK the ability to leverage the hard-won experience that

it has gained during all the many interventions of the last 20 years; and reducing to a critical degree the UK's influence within its key alliances. Rather than choosing an option to reduce the ambitions and capability of UK defence to conduct only homeland defence, global counter-terrorist strikes and nuclear attack / defence we judge that it is better to critically examine the lessons learned, and design and resource new and affordable intervention forces that can better deliver the objectives of an NSC-directed plan, than to discount the option altogether.

In our view, this is the military contingency that requires the most attention within the SDSR; because it has not been done well in the past, and its retention affirms the UK as a leading nation in global military affairs, (and on the top table of various alliances), as an 'active' rather than a 'passive' actor. This is not just as a nuclear power, or a nation that will counter terrorism directly, but also one that has the capacity and will to act in failing states, when the risk calculation warrants it.

But to do this right, we must conduct a harsh examination of what works and what doesn't work in such interventions, and implement a thorough, rapid, unsentimental and ruthless adjustment to our system, if we are to improve both the efficiency of this option, (reducing cost, improving precision), its effectiveness and thereby improve its utility. To us, this demands that we recognise the following 'imperatives for success' for intervention operations, and ensure that they are embedded within our doctrine and resourced, as an essential part of the SDSR:

- **Clear strategic purpose and planning**

In all cases, constructed to support a legitimate host-nation partner, and conducted alone or with allies, this needs to look beyond the military intervention and towards the critical and deliverable strategic objectives that will stabilise the country or situation. This needs simultaneous not sequential activity and must aim to improve the economic chances for the population of the country as its primary aim. Economic development as part of

the global economy is key here, given that if a state that cannot pay for itself it is doomed to failure, no matter how strong we make its government and armed forces.

There is an unfortunate tendency for the military, (who tend to dominate planning), to split interventions into distinct phases – intervention first, which is led by the military, and stabilisation second, which is led by the civilians. This is partly due to the way that industrial age war has been described in military staff colleges – all events happen in neat distinct phases (even if the reality is much more complex, but hard to describe) and are drilled to brief. This creates a pattern of over-simplification that is hard to break and does not work in complex interventions as it separates in time the mutually supporting military and civilian activity, which denies the force the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive / blended effect, and thereby makes it nearly impossible to sell to the population that the military invasion forces have their best interests at heart. In practice the intervention and stabilisation activity must happen at the same time and be continuous, with the military objectives always secondary to the wider nation-building / stabilisation strategic objectives and military staff heavily augmented by civilian experts (possibly from reserve forces) if we are to be effective.

In this regard, it seems extraordinary that the development of Afghanistan's extraordinary mineral wealth, valued at around \$1 trillion, which would allow it to become a net contributor to the global economy, pay for itself, reduce its population's dependency on narco-based income, create the means to educate its citizens, and pay for health services has not been the most important objective for NATO and the coalition nations, even though its existence was known about in 2001. This is in contrast to the approach taken over years in Columbia with respect to developing their economy, in Sierra Leone in 2000 or more recently with the rapid development of the oil reserves in Northern Iraq.

To do better, the SDSR must demand an adjustment to the conduct of strategic planning and how it is informed, an improvement in the management of cross-government activity at the national level to ensure a more comprehensive approach is taken to intervention choices, planning and conduct; and a willingness to access the considerable insight that rests within the commercial sector of the UK, (and in particular the emerging market financiers of the City of London).

- **Access to the best intelligence**

The strategic insight needed by intervention planners must focus initially on the requirements of nation-building, (see above point), rather than which enemy must be defeated where. The primary question to be asked, while noting that the answer is non-military in nature, must be: what do we need to do to stop this country failing?

But at the operational and tactical level it should not be assumed that the UK military or its allies automatically have the best information to plan their operations or, if they do, that they do not currently possess the optimal analytical system for such operations. This is partly due to the military intelligence database being jammed with Cold War or Northern Ireland data, and with analysts that are focused on becoming experts in the wrong areas. Once again, we find a military whose head is jammed in the past, rather than looking to either the present or the future. The catastrophic misappreciation of the general situation in Helmand in 2005-6 is one famous example; another would be the failure to identify the significance of the emerging extremist threats in southern Iraq in 2003 before the UK extracted the majority of its forces.

“The strategic insight needed by intervention planners must focus initially on the requirements of nation-building, rather than which enemy must be defeated where”

To do better we must adjust the military intelligence collection plan, to direct its efforts away from the North German Plain, or other places that we have been recently – Basra and Helmand for instance – and towards emerging threats. We need to adjust and flatten the way that information is shared between departments – ideally so they all are networked together and there are changes to the way that the military analyse nation-building requirements – with less focus on the tanks of the 3rd Shock Army and more on understanding the networks that make up an insurgency or popular movement. It also requires a flexible approach to operations and intelligence collection, based upon an understanding that new and unexpected threats and requirements emerge as soon as a force arrives on the ground, and that these have the potential to be significant.

- **Sufficient and correct military and non-military resources to deliver the objectives for both the intervention and the stabilisation activity**

This flows from sound and well-informed planning, as far as it can given that situations always change, and bills tend to increase rather than decrease with activity.

But for military strategic planning purposes it is important that a standard unit of intervention action is developed that can overcome the challenges of an intervention, and whilst enabling the simultaneous start of stabilisation activity. In our view this should be a joint intervention element, commanded by a Brigadier, capable of acting as an operational-level Joint Force Commander. Its headquarters should be joint, networked to the highest level of command and multi-agency insight provided from the theatre of operations and back in the UK. It should be capable of commanding land, sea, air, logistics, cyber and special forces and be able to overcome multiple tactical threats to its mission whilst operating in a populated area.

This unit of intervention will vary in size and type depending upon the nature of the intervention, but should be based on a

Brigade sized force and made up of both regulars and reserves. It needs to be able to sustain operations for 6-9 months at a time, and be replaced as necessary depending upon the enduring nature of the operation. It could operate alone – in a UK only operation, or as part of a coalition. In particularly demanding situations two or more of these units can be grouped together, and placed under a 2-Star Headquarters. In extended stabilisation operations, it is perfectly possible for most of the military capability to be found from reserve forces, operating as formed units; and for the in-country headquarters to adjust to become a composite structure which has key headquarters personnel trickle in to their appointments for loner tours (of a year's length), thereby improving continuity, force sustainability and bringing their specialist civilian skills to bear.

- **Simple, forward-based, networked, joint, military command HQ with the correct authorities and partners**

The deployed Joint Commander needs to have the delegated authority to take operational decisions without reference to the UK. This is vital. The model for this command system was observed in Sierra Leone in 2000, where success depended almost entirely upon the well-placed, and well-trained Joint Commander being able to use his initiative as he saw fit, and thereby maintain a necessary a pace of activity that could never have been sustained if he had been required to seek permission from London before every new action. In such circumstances, the commander must have access to the highest level of intelligence, expertise and insight; and because he must be forward in the theatre of operations. He therefore requires a HQ communications system that can receive and process vast amounts of data.

This seems obvious, but the fact that neither the processes nor the communications systems are in place to routinely enable this, indicates a significant weakness that SDSR should aim to overcome.

**An unusual model of intervention – Congo 1996**

A British Joint Task Force (JTF) commanded by then Brigadier Graeme Lamb, and based on 5 Airborne Brigade was told to deploy force via Rwanda and into the Eastern Congo to protect the Hutu refugee camps there from another genocidal massacre; this time by the Alliance of Democratic Forces of Congo (AFDL) led by Laurent Kabila. This was driven by a political desire of the Government led by John Major, supported by the UN, and the wider international community 'to do something in the area', in response to the impotence shown during the recent Rwandan Genocide. It was a very loose but limited mission and not part of a strategic plan to influence the outcome of the political dispute in the Congo one way or the other.

The JTF HQ deployed to Rwanda with sketchy intelligence on the refugee camps, and into a very fluid situation that could see the UK forces becoming unwittingly involved in a conflict with the AFDL, as they advanced to Kinshasa to remove Mobutu Sese Seko from power. On arrival the JTF Commander gathered intelligence from various sources, including UK businessmen with connections to the regional political leaders and the AFDL. From this, he discovered that the refugee camps had been vacated, and were not under any threat from the AFDL, (who themselves sought to avoid a fight with UK forces anyway). He confirmed this by deploying P9 Strategic Surveillance Aircraft and by listening into a number of communications systems used by the militias in the region. This confirmed the assessment of the UK businessmen: there was no 'protection task' for the JTF.

This enabled Brigadier Lamb to present a case to both the UK Government and the UN to cancel the deployment before any UK Forces became embroiled in the conflict without being connected to any clearly defined UK strategic objectives for either the Congo

or Rwanda. It remains unclear whether the threat of deployment of UK forces stopped the AFDL from attacking the refugee camps, or whether they had no intention anyway. Either way, the JTF Commander, in the face of considerable political pressure, was able to stop the UK's involvement in a failed state before a clear purpose had been defined, a plan agreed and resources allocated.

This was particularly effective due to:

- A forward-based, JTF Commander, capable of gaining the most up-to-date intelligence, with the skill and experience required to design and lead a flexible 'campaign' that would set the conditions for not just operational, but also put this within a strategic context. Once again: key decisions were made 'forward', and not in PJHQ or London.
- The ability of the UK Strategic Command, informed by the JTF Commander and the military strategic command, to act in the UK national interest first, resisting any diplomatic pressure from the UN elsewhere. Noting that being embroiled in a direct conflict with Kabila's AFDL would certainly create a 'quagmire' at a time when UK forces were deployed in the Balkans; and recently subject to two defence 'reviews' – Options for Change (1990) and Front Line First (1994).
- The ability to deploy, if needed, agile and lightly armed land forces rapidly over strategic distances, with the in-house ability and authority to over-match any opponent faced.
- The unconfirmed effect of the threat of UK Force on the AFDL decision-making. The threat of the deployment of 5 Airborne Brigade targeted the AFDL's strategic decision makers, making them see the potential costs of massacring the refugees versus rapidly taking Kinshasa.



- An *ad-hoc* intelligence system that made the most of a personal relationship network with MI6 officers, GCHQ and ex-military and reservist businessmen operating in the area. This was in the era before, the routine deployment of strategic intelligence support to forward military headquarters, and based upon the JTF Commander's special forces background, and African connections. (PJHQ was unable to provide any useful insight or direction).

- **A military force geared towards neutralising threats within a population**

Apart from Sierra Leone in 2000, where special forces were used to neutralise the primary para-military threat to the mission, (albeit as part of a hostage-rescue task), the UK has never deployed an intervention force capable of detecting, tracking and neutralising an insurgent or terrorist threat within a populated area. This is in spite of observing the experiences of US intervention forces in Central America, and Somalia in the 1990s; experiences which informed the US Military of the adjustments required to be ready for the post-9/11 world. In spite of many brave efforts by poorly equipped troops to gain the upper hand by other means, this has universally denied the deployed UK forces the ability to win and sustain the tactical initiative against such enemies in the early phases of an operation. This has increased the cost and length of the interventions, made it exceedingly difficult to start meaningful stabilisation activity, and ultimately limited the achievements of the mission.

In Basra in 2003 the intervention force did not deploy with the ability to collect the right sort of intelligence. It was too dependent upon a very small number of human intelligence teams, it had no ability to track threats using electronic or

airborne surveillance systems, it had no suitably-equipped and trained strike forces, it had no / limited detention facilities, confused and counter-productive detainee processing drills, no ability to collect and analyse electronic or other data taken from an objective and it lacked the ability to manage an intelligence data-base and share targeting information throughout its command. The same applied to UK forces deployed in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Macedonia and in all other interventions as well. Yet the requirement for these systems was known in advance, given that they were all used in Northern Ireland albeit mainly by the police and intelligence agencies there.

This weakness in force design and doctrine is the single most significant factor that has limited the UK's tactical and operational effectiveness in all of its post Cold War interventions. It has denied the UK military the opportunity to ever gain and maintain the initiative, and lives have been lost as a result. Frustratingly, it is relatively simple to rectify, but requires a mind-set / doctrinal shift, a change of investment focus and a transfer of resources away from the heavy or Cold War focused machines into the smart targeting systems needed by those conducting interventions in a populated area.

- **An ability to dominate the ‘information / propaganda space’**  
As with contentious police actions within the homeland, every military intervention will be watched by supporters, critics and adversaries alike – in the target nation, at home and globally. Every action has the ability to send the wrong message, if it is not presented in the right way. This is an intervention against people, amongst a people, conducted by people, watched by people all of whom are networked together. This appears to many to be an impossible environment for

military operations that demand secrecy, and inevitably cause damage and casualties, but in reality it is nothing new. Effective procedures supported by well-trained and experienced staff exist for managing presentational risk for operations in the UK, and indicate that much is already known that could improve information-management during military interventions overseas. But once again deficiency of method, resource and thinking litters an examination of the history of the UK's intervention with information being seen typically as a defensive asset to justify operations, casualties, actions as opposed to a primarily positive asset designed to magnify effect and improve the chances of lasting effect. This is partly due to an over-regulation of the process by too many layers of command, (see later point), or a constant shift on the key personnel involved but it seems to also reflect a poor understanding of what is required, and an unwillingness to transfer resources into this key area.

The SDSR must demand these and other changes if the UK is to be serious about wanting to conduct effective military interventions. In our view, it is the ability to conduct these smart interventions, that will define the structure and describe the utility of the UK military in the post Afghanistan-era.

The final role for the UK military relative to the new blend of global threats will be found at home. This has been the least developed of all the roles, due in part to attention being drawn away by the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the worst resourced thus far. In priority order, and not including the nuclear deterrence requirements, the military will be required to defend UK airspace, and its maritime territory from direct military or asymmetric threats – the counter 9/11 scenario, as well as deter other hostile military activity, such as aviation-based or

submarine-based spying. This will require some limited capability being held at very short notice. Following on from this it will be required to provide specialist military capability to support the Home Office with its efforts to neutralise terrorist and other threats to the UK homeland, held at very short notice such as special forces and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) for preemptive / disruption operations as well as traditional hostage rescue (in all environments, and from small to very large stronghold, as seen in Moscow or Beslan). But in addition to this, the military should be available to support the civil powers to contain the effects of any mass casualty situation or similar catastrophe, wherever it occurs in the UK; as well as contribute to containing a Mumbai-style low-tech, mass terrorist attack. And all of this is in addition to the standard requirement to be able to support the civil powers when out-faced in any situation, as would occur if there was a massive deterioration in the situation in Northern Ireland.

Although we accept that taking risk with the need to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), we believe that the range and spread of these scenarios, combined with the limited number of armed police available for deterring and countering large-scale terrorist attacks and the limited number of blue-light services for containing the after-effects indicate an important role for the UK-based military. But this is one that has not been developed well, and in fact has been ignored. It is a startling fact that London's population of over 7.5 million people can only draw on two regular battalions of soldiers to support the Metropolitan Police, that there are no standing-orders for the London-based Reservists to provide emergency support, and that there is no standing military headquarters in place whose sole role is to prepare forces for providing such essential support in an emergency. This too must be an area that the SDSR will need to focus both attention and resources.

### **A model intervention – Sierra Leone 2000**

A British Joint Task Force (JTF) commanded by then Brigadier David Richards deployed on 7 May 2000 to the failed state of Sierra Leone in the midst of their civil war. This JTF was tasked to evacuate all UK, EU and Commonwealth passport holders only. The intervention was initiated by the threat posed to the citizens living within the capital Freetown by the advancing Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which had attained such a degree of moral and physical authority over the in-place UN Force, that their presence provided no security to Freetown at all. Within 64 hours of the call being given, this JTF had linked up with the host-nation government, deployed intelligence-gathering assets into the capital's hinterland, landed paratroopers to secure the airfield as an extraction point, and positioned a maritime task force based around the aircraft carrier – HMS Illustrious, off the coast as an intimate support base.

Initially there was no intention to broaden the purpose of the mission beyond the scope of the evacuation, but on arrival it became clear to the operational commander, (Richards), that a limited amount of military activity was required to bolster decisively the authority of the UN and Government forces to the point that they could once again secure Freetown against the RUF. With the permission of the in-place Foreign Office Leadership, and with the co-operation of the Government of Sierra Leone the JTF started to indirectly re-energise the UN and Government defences of Freetown, whilst they secured the evacuees, the airfield, and its hinterland – defeating a number of RUF advances over this time.

Adding to this increasing pressure on the RUF and their affiliates was the capture of the RUF's leader Foday Sankoh on 17 May, which broke the cohesion of the RUF threat, allowing not only the evacuation of the hostages, but also started the resurrection of

Freetown's security. The evacuation operation was completed by 15 June, and followed by the deployment of UK military training teams to support the development of the Government forces, so that they could act to stabilise the situation over the longer term.

During this stabilisation operation, a second significant offensive act was conducted. This was a raid by the UK's special forces to rescue a number of UK military hostages taken by the West Side Boys (WSB) – an affiliate of the RUF, which resulted in the near complete destruction of the WSB as a force. This affirmed the absolute physical and moral authority over the increasingly dispirited rebel forces, and further accelerated the stabilisation of the country. A longer-term effort that was supported for 6+ years by military training teams, foreign office directed and DFID enabled civil support, and other efforts designed to support economic activity, good governance, and the development of society.

This was particularly effective due to:

- A simple and clear superior National Strategic Intention – to stop Sierra Leone becoming a failed state, in accordance with UN authorities and guidelines. This provided the JTF Commander the opportunity to use his evacuation force in ways that worked to that strategic purpose, and not just the short-term operational task, ensuring that a longer-term effect could be generated from the crisis-response operation,
- A forward-based, well-informed JTF Commander working closely with the political authorities of Sierra Leone, with the skill and experience required to design and lead a flexible 'campaign' that would set the conditions for not just operational, but also strategic success. Key decisions were made 'forward', and not in PJHQ.

- The ability to conduct ‘security / intervention’ operations and ‘stabilisation’ operations simultaneously with Government forces, thereby ensuring constant and blended pressure on the rebels.
- The ability to deploy agile and lightly armed land forces rapidly over strategic distances, with the in-house ability and authority to over-match any opponent faced; and supported in the littoral environment by a maritime task force, as its tactical and operational reserve.

A good intelligence system tied to an offensive capability capable of destroying key enemy capabilities, capturing key leadership targets, and rescuing own forces. This maintained the initiative and destroyed enemy confidence and cohesion.

### Capability – information age v industrial age

The transformation of our armed forces from our Cold War, industrial age military, where decisive effect depended upon successfully launching a massive quantity of kinetic energy from a defensive position into the massed armoured, naval or air forces of the Soviet Union, and its war-making capacity into a new information age-based security system, is yet to happen.

The UK military still thinks in industrial age ways: emphasising the quality of mass troop numbers on their own as opposed to precision strike from multiple small platforms onto multiple points of influence; focusing on exemplary efforts in national areas of operations as opposed to nation-wide or opponent-wide effect; designing production line / phased military operations as opposed to networked and simultaneous activity against every point of an enemy’s network; of defensive information operations as opposed to the enabling the neutralisation of an enemy’s ability to think or

influence via creative use of the media; of separating civilian and military effort in time and space, as opposed to ensuring a blended whole; of thinking in terms of homeland and overseas as opposed to an interdependent continuum; of hierarchical, centralised decision-making as opposed to networked, decentralised command; of the primacy of physical strike over network-crushing cyber attack. The list goes on.

Warfare in the information age can be waged between nation states, in conventional and unconventional ways; witness the on-going struggle between Israel and Iran. However, is most often waged by new non-state actors that have been able to leverage new information-based technologies to become true military competitors to ourselves and other conventional militaries and national security systems. These new competitors are practiced at using networked and de-centralised decision-making; of maintaining situational awareness of their opponents by well placed and inter-connected surveillance systems; of conducting multiple and precision strikes against an opponent's strategic, operational and tactical points of influence, observed by the ubiquitous media; of knowing where all their assets are; and of being able to mask and protect their communications; and protect their own strategic leadership. In short, they have developed effective information age systems faster than we have.

Their capacity to innovate and adapt is related in part to their lack of heavy legacy doctrines and structures and the instinctive love of cheap, effective, new information technology. They are mercifully free of conventional military teaching or experience. Machines, hierarchies, "total war" doctrine, regimentation or military tradition for its own sake, mean nothing to them. Their doctrinal history, (if there is one), starts with the experience of a guerilla force whose asymmetric, agile and unconventional methods provide many of the basic building blocks of an information-based system, less the global inter-connectivity. And if intellectual change leads physical change, then we have much to learn from our opponents, as well as the



ground-breaking Americans and their rapidly evolving network-based military systems with global reach.

It is thought that the MoD and its constituent parts have been deliberately fighting against the need to operate within and defeat threats that emanate from this new technologically based environment. For in spite of a number of evolutionary, flagship, but sub-strategic enhancements over the last 15 years – such as the digitisation of the Army’s deployable brigades following the 1998 SDR, and the purchase

“It is clear that the MoD has simply refused to trade equipment for information-systems at the right rate, as though it didn’t believe in its transformational importance or its effectiveness”

of SkyNet satellite communications and the Watchkeeper UAV program under the 2002 SDR New Chapter review, the UK’s force structures remain too heavy on equipment / manpower and too light on the essential components of an information-based military system. It is clear that the MoD has simply refused to trade equipment for information-systems at the right rate, as though it didn’t

believe in its transformational importance or its effectiveness. To use a historical analogy: the MoD has remained committed to “horses over tanks” for longer than was sensible and this delayed transformation has cost us lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, and made us increasingly vulnerable in any future conflict. It also makes the defence organisation bigger (in terms of numbers of platforms, command nodes, and people) than we need to be.

We have been chronically slow to resource networked and multi-sensor surveillance into Afghanistan and it remains now in woefully short supply, whilst the non-deployed forces remain starved of essential information age capability. This has limited the ability of our conventional forces to apply carefully targeted force in either Iraq or Afghanistan in ways that critically influence the conduct of their opponents (be they the Shia-extremist mortar men in Basra or the IED teams of Helmand). In all cases since 2001 the ground-holding UK military has been denied the ability to gain and maintain

the initiative over a relatively small number of lightly armed opponents for any meaningful length of time; and has thereby been forced to remain in a reactive / targeted posture throughout. It has fought hard and bravely with all the means available, but has been unable to gain anything that approaches information superiority over their enemies or the local population within their areas of operation; and this has made them extraordinarily vulnerable.

Much has been said about the lack of helicopters, and much done to up-armour our vehicles and men, and increase the numbers of brave counter-IED engineers. But it remains surprising that so little has been mentioned about the lack of information-based capability. And if this omission of emphasis is prevalent in the current field of conflict, then what does it indicate for our force transformation beliefs in a wider / strategic sense? It is our view that the UK military is not yet fully committed to the idea that it will be investment in information-based technology that will provide an inevitably small and dispersed UK force with its competitive advantage over any enemy; and not investment in yet more tanks, ships, soldiers and airplanes.

The UK military is miles behind. To illustrate the point, look no further than the short supply of communications bandwidth in Afghanistan; the life-blood of information age military capability and how this limits its ability to conduct networked operations. For example, to run at least two remote surveillance operations (conducted by UAVs) in a single area of operation and share the video information with multiple command nodes to allow them to act upon that information – i.e. neutralise an enemy threat or stop an IED being laid, requires at least 6 Megabits / second (Mbits/s) of bandwidth provided constantly to every element of the force via a network of communication relay points. Unfortunately, the UK brigades in Helmand are provided with less than that, and have many nodes that cannot access such information, because they are not sufficiently linked to the network, or because most of the

available bandwidth is used up passing other, non-threat-based, or routine information. This makes it very difficult for them to detect, track and remotely strike the enemy with any degree of accuracy, denying the in-place forces the chance to gain and secure the initiative. As an extension of this, it absolutely denies them the ability to conduct multiple strikes against the network that it opposes, forcing it to operate in a conventional, industrial age, predictable and very vulnerable manner. In contrast, the US Brigades routinely enjoy between 10-15 Mbps of bandwidth, allowing them to conduct multiple and mutually supporting surveillance and strike operations, and link into the theatre-wide civil-military intelligence database, with no interruption to routine traffic.

### **Military bandwidth – US and UK performance compared**

The ability to rapidly communicate vast amounts of data across an inter-linked global/strategic, operational and tactical network is the essential part of an information age command system. This is typically achieved using satellite communications provided by military or commercial systems.

The military use of satellite communications has increased at a phenomenal rate since 1990, driven by new concepts, operational demands and equipment. The three greatest users of bandwidth are not surprisingly:

- Remote sensors / surveillance systems, such as UAVs; (finding/tracking the enemy)
- Automatic database uploads; (sharing / analysing critical enemy and friendly force information)
- Friendly force / asset tracking; (knowing where all friendly assets are in a battlespace).

Based on our experience and published US bandwidth data, UK forces' access to bandwidth lags considerably behind their US counterparts. The following factors have influenced this growing "digital divide":

- The US Military has invested in satellite communications and networked command (over global distances) at an extraordinary rate. This has provided them with a powerful information-based advantage; and the ability to conduct offensive operations against isolated insurgents operating from amongst a people. This has been primarily not only by the requirements of the on-going conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan; but also the foresight shown within US Military strategic planning since the 1980s.
- The UK has lagged behind the US to a remarkable degree less its Special Forces. This is due in part to a lack of emphasis during military strategic planning since the 1980s – it was not part of the strategic concepts that underpinned the various defence reviews. But also due to a belief that the use of such high-technology systems in a counter-insurgency did not represent the 'British Way of Warfare'. This mindset changed following UK experiences in Helmand, and the sharing of experiences / concepts with UK special forces; (see below). Demand now outstrips demand by a significant margin.
- UK special forces have always used more satellite bandwidth than their conventional counterparts, due to their strategic / global role. But the recent growth in demand was not the result of in-house foresight; but born of their close co-operation with US Forces in Iraq, which changed their operational concepts dramatically; as they learned the utility of US-designed information age command systems.

This deficiency will become worse in the future if nothing is done, given the trajectory of development of US thinking, which sees their brigade-sized Units of Action requiring between 30-50 Mbps as a minimum by 2015. It is hard to envisage the UK being able to track that, given its current spending priorities, a lack of transformational champion, and the way that the provision of much of the UK bandwidth is locked into a number of very inflexible and expensive contracts with its commercial suppliers. This will need to change as a result of the SDSR.

It is a truism that whether operating alone or with allies, and in all types of operation, (not just counter-insurgency), the UK military will always be short of enough platforms and men to be able to dominate its opponents by physical presence alone. It is essential that these physical components (men and machines) are linked together by an information-based system that provides to the UK forces the minimum essential level of information superiority over the enemy and their environment. To do otherwise is to be defeated at worst, and to fight needlessly expensive (in terms of lives and equipment lost) operations. This applies when fighting against insurgents or conventional forces and in all environments equally.

But this is not just about enabling the better conduct of intervention operations by the UK's military machine, at the operational and tactical level. Investment in this area will also improve decision-making at the strategic / national level of command – at the NSC. It will provide strategic decision-makers with a broader range of options for securing UK interests in advance of, or instead of any deployment of military force. This will include cyber-based disruption, cyber-defence informed by activity that ensure that the intentions and activities of non-state actor are identified in advance. This is a critical and highly sensitive strategic activity, led by GCHQ.

In our view, the SDSR must direct an accelerated transformation of the UK military into information age forces, via the total re-organisation of

its capability into network-based structures. This must become the highest priority for all equipment programs; and be championed by a new cyber command positioned within the MoD, commanded by a 3 Star uniformed officer with the authority to craft a new strategy for the forces on CDS's behalf, and with the power to drive the equipment program, and the doctrine, training and operation of the military. The MoD must be free to adjust the ways that it purchases bandwidth from the commercial sector, and have this happen through a single point of acquisition to ensure that its supply reflects defence priorities.

### Use and cost of alliances

One of the stated pillars of the UK national defence system (in every post war defence review) has been our membership of and leadership within NATO. It has been taken for granted that this alliance is the most efficient way of ensuring that the UK and an enlarged Europe is secure from conventional attack, and of gaining access to the forces of other nations when conducting interventions which cannot be afforded by UK assets alone. The UK's role within NATO has also been seen as an essential element of our national military prestige, making us a first division military power in the eyes of both our allies and our adversaries; thereby allowing us to punch above our weight.

In our view, this Cold War system has become a grossly inefficient way to secure our defence interests and maintain our military prestige and influence. It now carries significant opportunity cost when measured against the UK's ability to transform its force elements for the information age and be ready for operations outside the NATO area. In short, it has been a drag on the development of our forces, and a limit upon our ability to conduct independent or alliance operations around the globe. It has required the UK to allocate a considerable proportion of its military resource to this alliance, and in ways that limit the UK military's ability to transform.

For, in spite of the many post Cold War experiences, and new initiatives, NATO is still built upon conventional forces structured for Cold War state-on-state conflict: tanks, fighter-aircraft, and deep-water navies; a legacy alliance force structure that limits the ability of its members to transform their defence forces for the modern age. And this is particularly marked for the UK, whose must pay the price for maintaining the leadership of key NATO organisations such as the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (the ARRC), by tying down much of its scarce military resource in legacy requirements such as heavy armour, long-range missile artillery, fighter wings, and deep / blue water navies.

Notwithstanding the agile / raiding ambitions contained within the NATO Response Forces (NRF) mission charter, and the scope of the Petersburg Tasks providing an interventionist focus, the alliance remains a regional and not a global force. It provides for the UK (and arguably the US) a useful focus for the defence of an enlarged Europe, but it does not exist as an alliance that can assist effectively with challenging military interventions on the global stage. It is now seen by Russia as a potential threat to its spheres of influence and interest, which is actually creating unhelpful instability in the greater European area. It has also not been effective in Afghanistan – in fact in many ways it has been a drag to progress there. This was not surprising, given that NATO was always a political alliance resourced on a ‘just enough’ basis to meet its Article V commitments; which is very different from trying to be effective in Afghanistan with its very dynamic series of requirements. Its ineffectiveness stems three sources:

- An inability to build a consensus view of how to fight a challenging counter-insurgency campaign that suits the varying needs of each nation’s electorate; exacerbated by a European suspicion of US methods and purposes. It is worth noting that this is the first time in history that an alliance as large and diverse as NATO has tried to fight a counter-insurgency;

- An inability to provide the right military resources for such a campaign: too many tanks, fighters and battleships in the armoury and not enough surveillance aircraft, communications bandwidth, and light forces; and
- Industrial age thinking and methods; which we have already seen makes an expeditionary force military very vulnerable, when trying to dominate a networked enemy. No common operating picture, no unified targeting system, no sharing of critical information, a sequenced approach to military operations, limited manoeuvre / precision-strike capability, limited unity of information-messaging.

NATO worked in the Balkans because it did not face a significant threat to its forces. It is suited to non-combat / gendarmerie-style operations, but not sustained intervention and stabilisation operations, in a non-permissive environment.

The NSC should look for other solutions to enhancing, by alliances, the UK's capacity to magnify its military reach and influence, and this should be part of the SDSR framework. This is a task for the military-diplomatic arm of the National Security Strategy: in the current multi-polar world, the UK's diplomatic machine prides itself on being able to create and maintain relationships with any nation in accordance with national strategic objectives. This ensures insight, access to commercial and other opportunities, and a degree of influence in local and regional affairs. Relationships are traded up and down depending upon the needs of the UK, and nothing is ever permanent unless it suits us. This allows the UK's energies to move wherever it best meets the national needs, and not be fixed by out-dated requirements. This is a highly flexible model that could be usefully tracked by the UK defence machine, but only if it can free itself from its current alliance commitments.

This could be usefully applied to a new approach to military alliances, creating a more flexible, networked approach to military-



diplomatic engagement, via three distinct systems, which we should resource in order of utility, having first resourced our vital UK-only national defence requirements:

- The first, and most useful, would be meaningful **‘military partnerships’** between the UK and other nations. This would create collective capabilities to deliver certain strategic objectives, such as the disruption of extremist Islamic terrorism, (as is effectively the case now with the USA), or securing the sea lanes off Somalia. These partnerships would be defined by a firm commitment of resources over time, and a command structure to deliver operational effect. They will not be a diplomatic exercise, but a military operation with clear objectives and costs; and depend upon the ability to agree common rules of engagement, information-sharing protocols, and command structures. This could also include a new European-based alliance, (separate to, or embedded within NATO), equipped and tasked to conduct global, information age intervention and stabilisation operations into failed and failing states.
- The second would be **‘defence engagements’** which would create a defence-based relationship to reinforce the diplomatic effort – an extension of the 1998 SDR’s defence diplomacy idea. This would allow the UK defence to engage directly and overtly with nations such as China, Russia and others beyond the scope of our traditional NATO / European spheres of engagement – so called, engagements of the unthinkable, for the conventionally-minded.
- The third would be **‘territorial / defensive alliances’**, such as NATO which should be resourced using forces held at the lowest degree of readiness.

In a multi-polar era characterised by a rapid globalisation of threats, influence and opportunity it is important to that UK defence is able

to stretch itself across that globe in support of NSC-directed diplomatic activity. It also seems important that as many of its resources are available as possible for this type of activity and not tied into historical and primarily defensive alliances. We can only afford to create a meaningful global counter-terrorist partnership with the USA and others, or build a new standby allied intervention capability, or conduct useful engagements with distant (and to some, threatening) states if we can free up resources sitting inside NATO and other defensive commitments.

### Command failures

The UK military command system has failed in the post 9/11 era to provide the optimal military solutions to the range of challenges faced. Notable examples include the misappreciation of threats and requirements for the Helmand operation and its subsequent operational mismanagement; and the under-resourcing of internal security, civil / economic development and offensive capability for Southern Iraq, which in both cases denied the deployed forces the ability to gain and retain the initiative. There are many other examples.

In our view this is due to a systemic rather than a personality-based problem, exacerbated by a lack of experience at every level of command, inefficient headquarters structures, poor information architecture, poor inter-agency integration, an almost pathological national ego-based problem with operating as a junior partner in a US-led alliance, and a peacetime unwillingness to command operations forward, away from the London-based bunkers and offices.

But this is not the fault of the military leadership alone. For, above the MoD, the command system has been too stove-piped at the national strategic level within and across Whitehall. This has made it extremely hard for the government to coordinate the efforts of

“The UK military command system has failed in the post 9/11 era to provide the optimal military solutions to the range of challenges faced”

multiple departments in the crafting of security strategy and with ensuring the delivery of security-related strategic objectives. For although the effectiveness of the COBRA-led crisis management system indicates how well departments can work together in a short-duration emergency this has not been extended to enabling well-led and coordinated pan-government activity over a longer / strategic time period, as recent attempts to deliver a comprehensive approach to operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan have shown.

This has resulted in departments such as the MoD, FCO and DFID being too powerful relative to the centre, leaving them free to set their own objectives and priorities, hold onto rather than share critical information, and then pass blame onto other departments when the delivery of various objectives has proved elusive or when the original objectives no longer suit a particular agenda set by the department themselves. The MoD has been particularly adept at this, famously blaming DFID and FCO for a lack of support in enabling comprehensive effect in Basra, even though the fault lies higher up, with the weakness of the coordinating authority of Government in directing departments to provide essential non-military support to interventions such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

The establishment of the National Security Council is certainly welcome as the first step in creating a national decision-making process that can better enable security strategy formulation, and enable the conduct of well coordinated pan-departmental strategic activity even though this will remove the absolute right of the MoD to run things in any / all security crises, thereby limiting both its ambition and its influence.

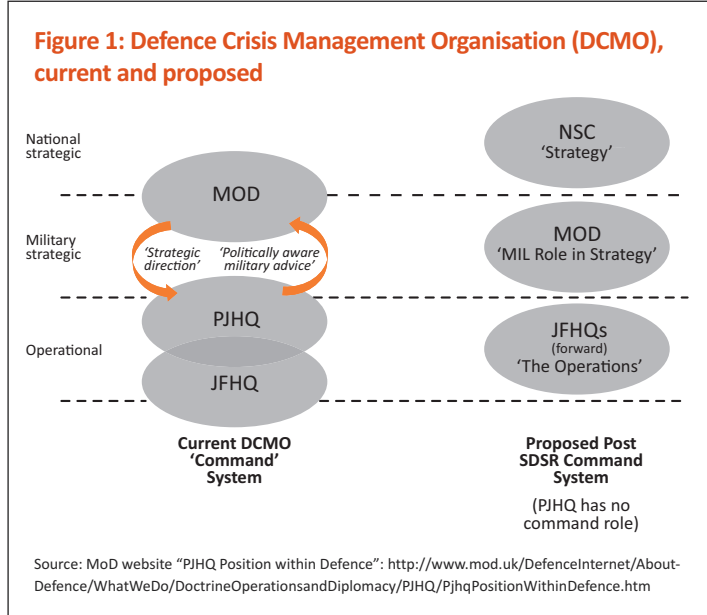
The MoD system of command is also grossly inefficient. Not only is it top-heavy, (98,000 civil servants and too many Senior Officers), but there are simply too many layers of command, too many supporting Headquarters, and too little sharing of information in both routine and operational business. This is confused further by the current Defence Crisis Management Organisation (DCMO)

process, which allows the MoD to act as both a weak national strategic command, (which should be done by the NSC, as outlined above), and the military strategic level with the wholly expected outcome that it does neither well. This bloated, over-extended and London-based command system is over-stretched by design which necessarily results in staff officers, (not the experienced commanders, which are in short-supply) making many critical decisions that they have neither the experience, training, nor authority to make and with incomplete information. To witness a relatively junior naval officer craft a critical and very influential briefing note outlining the operational options to be considered when deploying UK Land Forces into Helmand, with no experience of the country, counter-insurgency or land operations, other than what he has read in a 3 week period at staff college, illustrates the point.

To this confused strategic command system of the MoD, is added the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) in Northwood, which is charged to act as a UK-based operational command centre, directing and resourcing the sequence of tactical activities in any theatre of operations. This is a system that wrongly assumes that the command of military operations can be best done from a UK-based bunker, by staff and commanders that commute home every night, rather than remain in the field, within the right time-zone, alongside key allies and partners and within the sound of, or even range of the opponent's gunfire.

The overall system places too much weight on three levels of London / Northwood-based decision-making, and not enough on the critical level of the theatre-based operational commander, who actually has to do the job. This inevitably created a politicisation of analysis / decision-making, delays, confusion and inertia. Because of this, the forward-based commanders are either forced to: ignore London, get on with it, (and accept the consequences of any failure) or wait for the deliberations in London / Northwood to provide

guidance before acting (a risky approach when needing urgent guidance out of hours or famously on a Sunday evening, during a Test Match, in the school holidays).



To many of those serving in the field in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere, the current system seems to be a modern version of “Chateau Generalship” of the First World War, where it appeared that decisions were made miles from the front, by a bloated staff-led committee structure with little regard for the accuracy of the information feeding it or a in-depth understanding of the requirements or what is possible on the ground. The situation has been made worse where the UK forces have operated within a US-led alliance in either Iraq or Afghanistan, where the UK component is not consistently commanded by a UK operational commander (with staff) embedded within the US-led coalition headquarters, where all the key information was sitting but once again from the bunker in Northwood.

As with the formation of the NSC as a way to improve strategic decision-making, this tendency to insist on command from the rear has been eroded by the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, and it is very recently the case that operational command of the UK Forces deployed in Afghanistan has been given to a British General based in Kabul, embedded in the US-led headquarters – as it always should have been.

To remedy this, it would be better for PJHQ to relinquish its role as an Operational Command Centre immediately, and simply exist as a facility that does contingency planning on behalf of the MoD, and deploys, sustains and recovers military forces from operations. This would allow command to rest with a correctly networked command node in the theatre of operations; shortening the command chain between the military strategic headquarters – the MoD, and the forward-based Operational Commander improving the speed and quality of decision-making in all cases.

### **Military utility relative to tasks**

The UK provides world-class military capabilities in a number of areas, only some of which are likely to be useful, given their numbers relative to the threats faced, the roles envisaged, and their ability to meaningfully contribute to an information age system. A cursory audit of the current balance sheet indicates some startling truths about the discrepancy between assets and their ability to serve UK's defence requirements in the modern world.

At the strategic level, and beyond the strict scope of the SDSR is the effectiveness and utility of GCHQ and its supporting elements. This capability leads both the ability of the UK to detect threats to its interests, but also the ability to disrupt via cyberspace those same threats in ways that reduce the need for higher-profile, more risky operations. In some ways, the significance of its current role in contributing to the security of the UK mirrors that of its forebears

in the Second World War, who cracked and manipulated the Enigma code machine. It stands as the most significant source strength in the UK armoury, and one already well placed to defend the nation in this information age.

Within the military, the most useful capabilities relative to likely requirements are: light infantry, special forces, littoral maritime capability (including mine-sweeping) and submarine forces. This indicates a national military strength in raiding, internal security / counter-insurgency and asymmetric operations, making us a commando-style and highly adaptable military; well suited for intervention and stabilisation operations. This is hardly surprising given our past, culture and geography. But this significant potential is severely limited by a lack of investment in networked information and surveillance systems and tactical air-mobility.

Less useful are very-high quality, but small numbers of, armoured forces, supported by heavy artillery and very limited amounts of close air support aircraft and bombers, all packaged to deal with Cold War conventional combat, (as part of NATO); an air-air combat capability built upon a world-class aircraft – the Typhoon, to contribute to NATO air operations, and a Navy that can contribute to NATO-led blue-water maritime operations. As with the agile forces, none of these are provided with a sufficiently effective networked information, surveillance and command system. These represent the UK force elements geared for high intensity combat or conventional war-fighting – the building blocks of the NATO alliance. These are the so-called heavy forces, whose utility is dependent upon being part of a conventional alliance, or being useful, (when provided in smaller packets) to an intervention operation.

The planned development of the two Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers, with their planned complement of 138 Joint Combat Aircraft (JCA) jets – known colloquially as the carrier strike capability, would represent a new capability that seems to sit astride the useful / necessary versus heavy / non-essential sections of our

balance sheet. On the one hand, they are useful in deploying airpower from the sea, but on the other they appear to less useful as multi-role platform supporting landing operations given their planned self-defence suite, which keeps them a long way from shore, making helicopter operations difficult, their lack of ramp for loading landing craft, and limited networked communication capacity. Their size also makes them a particularly vulnerable single platform system, which denies the maritime forces the advantages that accrue to a more networked system of many smaller multi-role ships.

It seems sensible for the SDSR to take the view that it should preserve and enhance the most useful elements of the balance sheet held at the highest state of readiness whilst reducing the readiness or scrapping altogether those legacy capabilities that seem unable to contribute to global intervention operations (into failing states, or focused counter-terrorist strike), and homeland security tasks. Consideration needs to be given to maintaining key capabilities within the reservist forces as a way of reducing their cost, and preserving their use for the future, should the situation change.

### Regular and reservist force mix – we are out of date

In spite of a long history of maintaining territorial / reserve forces as a way of being able to rapidly increase the amount of trained defence manpower at a time of national crisis, and their utility being proven, beyond question, in the battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, there is still a tendency within the MoD to cut / limit their numbers or starve them of resources as a way of funding investment in the standing forces. In our view, this runs against the flow of the natural evolution of our forces in the modern era. In particular, it seems to be disconnected from the requirements of any logical National Security Strategy; to take little account of their utility relative to cost; their obvious effectiveness (in UK forces, as well as in the US National Guard and the Israeli Defence Force), the need to improve



the MOD's ability to contribute towards homeland security, the development of a more unified British society, the military value attached to their 'civilian skills'; and the need to find a way to base the forces within the UK at a sustainable cost.

The MoD seems to be a reluctant user of its reserve forces, (except as a personnel pool to backfill regular units, mostly with junior ranks), yet it is hard to understand why. It seldom deploys the reserves as formed units to its theatres of operation, apart from medical units. One exception was the deployment of a formed squadron of 21 SAS to Afghanistan in 2008-9, (where its actions won 3 Military Crosses for its soldiers), following a similar deployment of 23 SAS. Most Territorial Army (TA) infantry battalions have sent formed companies for force protection, but even that is now being written out of the script. Despite being misused in the eyes of many Territorials, some 20,000 reservists have served in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and 23 of them have given their lives. This is in stark contrast to the US, which routinely deploys its National Guard brigades to Afghanistan now, having made regular use of them in Iraq for years; maintains a third of their air-air combat aircraft within the National Guard, and deploys formed National Guard aviation squadrons to support its elite Tier-One special forces units or the Israeli Defence Force whose Air Force pilots are almost all reservist. This denies the MoD the ability to reduce the strain on the regular forces when operations endure, (at home, in the case of air-air combat aircraft, or homeland security and abroad in terms of conducting stabilisation operations).

The relative cost of reservist to regular manpower is also interesting, and hard to ignore. The MoD has attracted censure from the Public Accounts Committee for refusing to publish comparisons. Nevertheless the new Secretary of State has said that the average annual manpower cost of a Territorial is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the annual cost of a regular soldier and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in the case of the other two services. In our view, the actual relative sum is likely to be nearer to  $\frac{1}{6}$  or

lower, since the annual running cost of a regular does not include the amortised costs of pensions, barracks building, ancillary civilians and so on – little or none of which apply to reservists. These are figures that are hard to ignore, at a time when MoD needs to achieve the maximum value for money, reduce the strain caused by enduring operations, and consider ways to house all of its capability within the UK home base. The crude ratio is further sharpened by the fact that the current framework for reservists, in terms of full-time staff and buildings could accommodate a substantially larger force without expansion in overhead.

Other than providing formed Army units for Afghanistan, including combat infantry battalions trained for counter-insurgency, (thereby relieving the strain on the regular battalions, and adding useful civilian skills into the tactical stabilisation efforts there), we believe that the reservists should be used to fill other roles under SDSR as well. The first would be to become the custodian of the majority of the heavy / conventional combat capability required for traditional / Cold War type conflict. This would correctly balance the need to maintain a capability to fight conventional war with the likelihood of its use. This will release expensive regular manpower from their Cold War shackles to be employed to meet the shorter-notice, most-likely requirements of today; thereby improving the utility of the whole of the forces. This would not just apply to the Army, where most of the armoured corps, armoured infantry, heavy artillery and associated Cold-War capability could be transferred to the TA but also the RAF, where we would recommend most of the air-air combat, deep strike bombing, maritime surveillance / interdiction capability, be transferred to the reserves and the Navy, where we would advocate all homeland security / coastal waters support is done by the reserves, including filling the current gap in capacity for protecting civilian ports against mines, as well as some low-readiness conventional / deep-water tasks.

**“ For homeland security, we feel that the reservists could provide the most cost-effective way of ensuring that the MoD can rapidly support the civil powers with trained manpower in every part of the country ”**

The model for this already exists in the Army, whereby a long-range missile artillery regiment had its heavy equipment, (a Cold-War conventional capability, of no use in counter-insurgency), transferred to a TA artillery regiment in 2008. In one easy move, this reduced the cost of holding that capability by an estimated 70%, and dramatically improved the utility of the regular soldiers who were released from

Cold War duty to play their part in the operations of today. It also means that the UK remains ready for conventional warfare should the situation change, but at a lower degree of readiness. In the event of a major shift in the threats to the NATO area, the nation could be stood to arms via the mobilisation of these reserve forces, including further training for their combat role. Using the Army as the

example, we feel that this should be extended further, with the majority of the capability of the Armoured Division based in Germany, brought back to UK and placed under TA stewardship, with a small remainder – possibly one regular brigade, being held to support intervention and stabilisation operations where such capability is required.

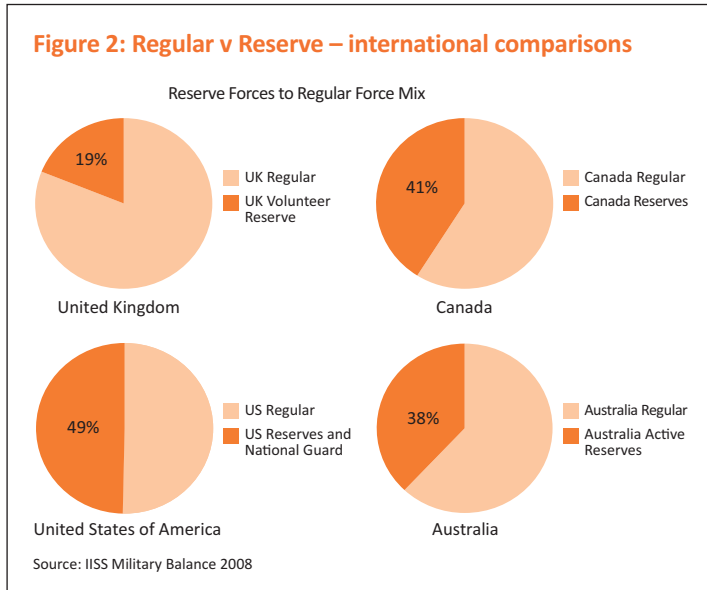
If adopted, we feel that it is vital that these reservist custodians of the conventional combat capability are more than just a Home Guard or equipment managers who will only be employed if a soviet-type threat materialised. This would not be efficient. They must be available to provide combat-capable units for conventional operations following pre-deployment training after their call up. This is routinely done in Israel, but was also achieved most successfully by the US National Guard in Iraq Invasion of 2003, and in the operation to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1992 – where a US Marine reserve tank battalion earned the distinction of destroying more enemy tanks than any other US armored unit.

For homeland security, we feel that the reservists could provide the most cost-effective way of ensuring that the MoD can rapidly support

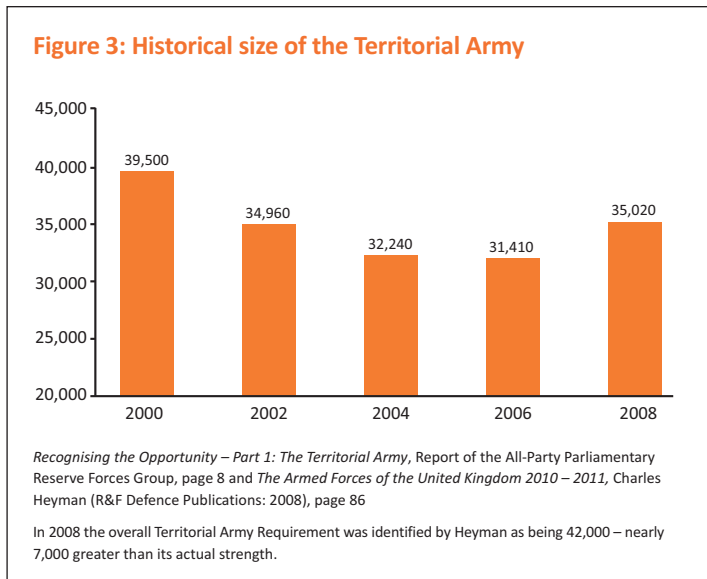
the civil powers with trained manpower in every part of the country, should it be required; but only as long as their basing continues to have a nationwide footprint, filling the gaps between the garrison towns. A role that will be particularly important in the London area, where, as has already been noted above, the civil powers securing approximately 7.5 million people are only now able to draw on two Regular Battalions of the Household Division capability in an emergency. In the air, we would see the air defence of the country being led by reserve forces, (in the same way that nearly 50% of the pilots fighting in the Battle of Britain were drawn from the Auxiliary Air Force and RAFVR, including 14 formed squadrons), mirroring both the US and the Israeli Air Defence models. The same approach should be extended to the Navy reserves.

The UK has very small volunteer reserves relative to its regular forces, when compared to other nations involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. Its manpower is: 35,000 TA, and only around 4,000 Royal Navy Reserves, Royal Marine Reserves, and Royal Auxiliary Air Force combined. The TA represents 26% of the total regular and reserve army, which contrasts with the US Army National Guard and Army Reserve representing 53% of its Army, the Australian Army Reserves representing 41% of its land forces, and the Canadian Reserves providing 42% of its Army. In Israel the figure is nearly 75%. Given the precedents set by these countries, the proven utility of reserve forces in today's conflicts and with the right leadership and energy, (demanded by SDSR), it would not seem either risky or impossible to alter the balance of the UK's reservist-regular forces mix. By a combination of reducing the regular numbers and increasing the reserve; and this could be as much as reducing the regular army from 100,000 to around 75,000, and increasing the TA from 30,000 to 60,000. An adjustment that would improve the UK regular forces utility, relative to today's tasks, reinforce the proven, but under-exploited, utility of the reserve forces, reduce running costs, and ensure that all forces can be housed in the UK at an affordable cost.

**Figure 2: Regular v Reserve – international comparisons**



**Figure 3: Historical size of the Territorial Army**



But to achieve this, there would have to be another significant mind-set shift within the senior leadership of the military, and a commitment to make the most of the opportunity offered by the reservists to support the tasks given to it by the National Security Strategy. It would require a strategic shift in the way that reservist and regular manpower is managed, which would necessarily demand a number of new and more flexible ways to maintain numbers and talent across both elements; possibly with individuals being free to follow a range of career paths that allow them to jump either side of the regular-reserve fence, to suit their and the military's ends. Such a significant change in mind-set would have to be led from the top.

If such an adjustment was directed, the SDSR would create a new form of multi-use, combat-capable, reservist, whose service would see them engaged in 4 key roles:

- homeland defence from their own home area;
- preparing for general / conventional warfare;
- supporting regular forces in intervention operations; and
- deploying with their unit on stabilisation operations.

It may even see him or her spend time employed within the regular forces for a period of time. All of this, whilst directly contributing to the economic, intellectual and cultural wealth of the country by attending college / university, holding down a job, paying taxes, and contributing to the welfare and well-being of his local community as a citizen used to the requirements of selfless service.

### Resource realities – forcing transformational choices

Due to the current state of the public finances, the SDSR will be resource constrained. This is an obvious national necessity given the urgent requirement to restore national economic security following

the recent financial crisis and this rightly has primacy over any other issue, given the strategic priorities of the moment.

This will affect both Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) programs, many of which are already over-budget and delayed, and Operational Expenditure (OPEX). This will clearly necessitate a radical adjustment to the former in both the quantum of CAPEX resource – the total amount of money available, and in project focus / volume / depth – the number of investments being made. This double squeeze will necessarily force the MoD to make structural choices rather than just salami slice the planned capabilities, or delay programs as it has previously done. This will inevitably cause some expenditure to be halted, with sunk costs being written off and shut-down costs being paid from in-year CAPEX budgets.

In our view this should not be seen as a wholly negative situation, given the analysis in this report of the changing nature of security, conflict and the new defence and security requirements which makes many of the legacy CAPEX programs irrelevant at best and dangerous at worst. They are yesterday's choices enabling defence to fight yesterday's wars, in yesterday's ways and do not reflect the need to ensure defence can expand its ability out of its traditional land / sea / air environments and into that of space and cyberspace.

The MoD must not use a reduced CAPEX budget to just buy less of what it wanted, or delay any purchase until money can become available in the future. This popular and commonplace approach simply preserves the force of old, (but in smaller numbers), changes nothing and delays the move of defence capability into the cyberspace and space environments. At a time such as this, when we have an industrial age defence system that is struggling to take the step into the information age, it is far better to use the reduced budget to invest in areas that force this transformation. As a result the MoD should cut old programs and use the remaining CAPEX to integrate what we have better into a wholly networked system within traditional MoD-run defence and across into all other agencies; and

rationalise the force elements so that we only have what is useful and effective based where we want it, (probably in the UK, rather the Germany), and affordable, in terms of annual OPEX.

Such an adjustment would mirror how the US military cancelled their Comanche helicopter program in 2004, reallocating the resources (net of shut-down costs) to other areas, most notably information-based systems. This is an example that illustrates the type of investment choice that we would recommend: to trade investment in traditional large / heavy platforms for investment in smaller, networked information-based capability. To do otherwise is to continue to delay our transformation.

Resources are tight, but investment in the right areas – information age systems – is sure to create an exponential increase in the UK's ability to defend itself and its interests globally. However this demand-driven focus will not create a rapid transformation unless the UK tackles some of its inefficient purchasing practices of the past, seeks to rationalise its defence industrial base to enable better access to leading-edge capabilities that harness the competitive edge of UK's industrial and scientific community, as well as continuing to seek the best value from buying capability from the global market. One particular area that needs urgent review is the acquisition of bandwidth for military use from commercial suppliers, given its central role in information age operations and the general excess of global military demand versus commercial supply.

Research and Development CAPEX will need to continue, but it should focus on identifying ways for the UK to develop leading information age capabilities as the priority. The ability to improve the efficiency of the networked command systems – smarter sensors, more processing power, simpler databases, artificial intelligence, less bandwidth-hungry and power-hungry networks, greater security and survivability, greater reach / range should all be targets for our research. As should the ability to harness the power of nano-



technology and bio-metrics to enable the security system to remotely detect and track human targets / threats via their DNA trails, thereby extending the reach of our sensors beyond the electromagnetic spectrum and into the biometric environment. And the list goes on.

One resource that is in good supply and provides significant strength and opportunity for the future of the military arm of the national security apparatus is manpower. Its experience and commitment is vital to ensuring that the future of the UK's defence is built upon firm foundations and led by the right sort of experienced, but visionary leaders. However, as with equipment, it can also be better rationalised and integrated. Principally, it needs to be developed to enable a smaller higher-quality standing force totally at ease with the advantages that accrue from an information age military, and an expanded reserve force in balance with the requirements placed upon them, along with the ability of the nation to support them as a lifetime contract. All of which are routinely based in the UK.

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## 3. Recommendations and Conclusions

It is clear that the SDSR is the start of an essential change process, rather than the final act, but this report recommends it includes the following:

- **Affirming the role of the National Security Council as the key security committee informing the National Strategic Level of Command and the body that sets the course and priorities for military strategic activity.**

The interaction of the new institution of the NSC with the MoD during the process of the SDSR will affirm usefully the hierarchy of authority that separates the MoD and this new cross-government body, and herald to the country the new way that defence and security is to be managed. In so doing, this process will highlight to all stakeholders in government, and defence, that the MoD will not be allowed to set its own course independent of National Security Strategy, and that all relevant government departments will be required to engage in national security thinking and activity when required by the NSC. This is a radical shift in government, with many positives, that is not well appreciated at this time.

Well presented, the SDSR will provide the Government with the opportunity to confirm that the responsibility for national defence and security sits at the highest level of command; and that every department is required to contribute to National Security Strategy on a routine basis, and well as in crisis-response (via the COBRA system). In this way, it should represent a useful evolution of what has been called 'joined up government'; ensuring that the SDSR (and all subsequent reviews) is not just a bottom-up fight between

the MoD and the Treasury or a lateral competition between peer departments for scarce resources, but a truly top-down and strategic system for making rational decisions about spending / strategy as well as during crisis-response / interventions.

Therefore as part of the SDSR we expect to see the NSC set the objectives for the MoD as well as its purpose and its transformational course. In this way, we expect to see explicit evidence that the SDSR is not a cost-cutting exercise, but about gearing better the evolving capabilities of defence with wider security policy and the needs of the modern era. Thereby confirming its place as a strategy driven as opposed to a resource driven review.

To ensure that the MoD (Military Strategic Command) and the National Strategic Command are correctly geared, the SDSR should affirm an adjustment to the DCMO system to reflect the new process and confirm the method that will ensure that MoD's thinking, requirements and constraints are included within the formulation of the National Security Strategy on both a quadrennial basis as well as during a crisis / intervention to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken in the following key areas:

- Global counter-terrorist intervention;
  - Global intervention and stabilisation operations;
  - Cross-department homeland security integration;
  - National global, security-related, communications and information-processing architecture; and
  - Defence and security-related, UK-based, research and development activity.
- 
- **Re-shape our alliance, partnerships, and engagements to suit national defence and security priorities and improve their ability to secure common security interests and requirements, at affordable cost.**
- The SDSR should propose a radical change in the way that we allocate military resources to our traditional Cold War alliances,

and well as demanding a change in their purpose. This should allow the UK to correctly balance military resources against the spectrum of threats faced ensuring that the MoD resources its global intervention requirements first supporting the territorial defence requirements of NATO.

As the catalyst for significant change, the stated need to support Article V NATO Contingencies (Territorial Defence) should be placed at a lower readiness, freeing up NATO to better organise its command and its forces for intervention operations, and request that the cost of providing certain key enabling capability for interventions, such as strategic communications bandwidth are pooled / provided on an alliance basis.

In line with the evolving national security policy, which is sure to recognise the value of working in partnership with other nations in delivering common security objectives, the NSC should direct the allocation of the UK's military resources in the following priority order:

- **Priority One: National Defence**, via the use of UK-owned assets only, at home and abroad. This includes the nuclear deterrent, the ability to conduct limited stand-alone national military interventions overseas, support to essential OGD activity, (such as intelligence / insight-gathering and cyber attack / defence) and essential homeland defence.
- **Priority Two: National Security Partnerships**. Created to ensure national objectives can be achieved with the essential support of key allies. An example would be the counter-terrorist and counter-weapons of mass effect partnerships with the USA, one that requires us to spend money to maintain certain elements, held at readiness, capable of operating with the US at the leading edge of technology and in this primarily offensive arena – such as special forces, cyber capability, and specialist EOD.

- **Military Diplomatic Engagements.** Created to support FCO and other NSC-directed activity, where defence is in support of the diplomatic levers of influence. This includes but is not exclusively capacity building.

This would also include developing coalitions of the unthinkable whenever the NSC judged this to be a useful way of securing national interests beyond the strictures of existing partnerships or political alliances. Increased UK military engagement with China would be possible in this type of activity.

- **Alliances.** Resources will be allocated at a lower degree of readiness to NATO's conventional territorial defence relative to NATO's global non-Article V intervention capability. The former covered by the UK reserve forces (see below), and the latter by double-hatting available UK intervention forces.

Our significant role within NATO – membership of the NRE, and even the leadership of the 3-Star ARRC – should be continued but only if their structure and purpose was transformed in line with the non-Article V, global intervention mission requirements.

- **Adjust Defence Planning Assumptions to meet today's requirements**

Given the threats faced, and in addition to providing essential support for homeland security, the MoD should provide joint military forces that are combat-capable rather 'peace support focused / gendarmerie'. These should be capable of:

1. Conducting at short notice, multiple, simultaneous, very small scale (battle group-sized on land) and limited duration interventions globally, using its networked, expeditionary, joint intervention forces. This can be conventional (land / sea / air), special or specialist (such as cyber) forces. This could include the use both regular and specialist reserve

forces. This standby capability meets the demand of counter-terrorist and other short-notice precise interventions.

2. Conducting at short notice, one enduring medium-scale intervention (brigade-sized) that has the ability to grow into a large scale stabilisation-type deployment (division-sized) over time, via the mobilisation of reserve forces as formed units for the stabilisation phase under regular brigade or divisional command. This UK operation could happen either alone or as part of a coalition.

Or:

3. Conducting at medium notice, one large-scale intervention, (division-sized) as part of an alliance, which has the capacity to endure, using a combination of regular and reserve forces; with reserve forces being mobilised to provide formed units.

This means that the largest joint force that the UK will be able to deploy onto land at short notice, without large-scale mobilisation of reserve forces, on its own, as opposed to as part of an alliance, will be a brigade-sized force commanded by its one-star Joint Headquarters; whilst simultaneously being able to meet homeland defence requirements and a number of small-scale interventions. This will require the UK to be able to maintain simultaneously at least two significant and possibly more lines of strategic communications – for voice / data and logistics. They are also based on the desire to maintain a 6 month tour for any brigade-sized deployment, with a 24 month tour interval.

These assumptions finally de-couple the MoD from the Operation Granby planning assumption that stated that the UK is to be prepared to deploy one Armoured Division for so-called High Intensity Conflict, as these requirements are based on the choice that these forces will be light / medium-weight (or ‘multi-role’) in nature, and not based on a Cold War-type armoured division or armoured brigade.

The in-built requirement to mobilise reserve units as part of these Defence Planning Assumptions also provides an automatic regulation on the size of any commitment in the face of either initial force generation requirements or mission creep; plus an additional incentive to ensure the correct management of those forces and their relationship with the standing military.

If there emerges the requirement for such forces over time, these will be generated initially from capacity held in the reserve forces (see below).

- **Build a new, flatter, and more networked military command system, from the MoD downwards.**

In response to the formation of the NSC, the MoD will return to becoming the military strategic command rather than trying to lead a grand security strategy committee or war cabinet. As the military strategic command it is solely responsible for managing what has been called the defence segment of the national security policy. It must delegate operational command of any deployed military force to the relevant commander, who will typically be placed within the theatre of operations.

We recommend that PJHQ relinquishes its role as an Operational Command Headquarters immediately, removing a friction-inducing level of command that sits between the deployed operational level commanders and their military strategic leadership. This has the immediate effect of *flattening the command system*, with a corresponding increase in efficiency as seen in the Sierra Leone operation.

PJHQ should step back from operations to have a new split role: firstly, becoming the HQ that conducts operational planning on behalf of the MoD, and secondly becoming the joint headquarters that assists in organising, deploying, sustaining and recovering intervention forces; perhaps even incorporating the Joint Logistics Organisation to simplify the process.

This will ensure that the operational commanders become the key decision-maker delivering military effect in the theatre of operations; and not someone buried in a bunker in Northwood. They are to be informed by a flatter, networked command system that links them directly to the military strategic command, the highest level of national intelligence, as approved by the NSC, and each of the key non-military decision-makers associated with the intervention from the FCO, DFID, Home Office and any of the key headquarters of a relevant alliance / coalition partner.

In line with the Defence Planning Assumptions, and enabled by years of joint staff training at the Joint Staff College, the primary operational-level headquarters is to become a one-star intervention headquarters, and not the two-star divisional headquarters of now. These intervention headquarters' brigades are to have the *standing* capacity to be able to operate at the operational level of command, essentially making each brigade a standing Joint Force Headquarters or JFHQ (as defined by the current model). This will necessarily require them to have standing Joint Staff and procedures, the correct level / capacity of communications connectivity, an ability to be augmented by inter-agency staff, the ability to fight their own information / targeting battle, (using a minimum of 15-20 Mbit/s of bandwidth) and the ability to network to the various Joint Logistics structures that will sustain the force. In effect each brigade will become networked JFHQs with information age teeth.

Given the need to support alliances or grow enduring operations, a minimum of two 2-Star / divisional headquarters should be maintained at lower readiness. Their primary role will be to provide the capacity for the UK to provide its national contingent commanders within an alliance headquarters, (when a brigade is deployed as a tactical unit of action), or a tactical divisional headquarters when operating as part of an alliance operation commanded by a composite 3-Star / corps level of command.



In all cases when operating as part of an alliance, the UK must deploy a National Contingent Commander to the Alliance Headquarters who will command all UK deployed elements, thereby ensuring efficient co-ordination across the alliance battlespace – in contrast to what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In line with homeland defence requirements, a new standing 2-star Home Defence Operational Headquarters should be created as near to London as possible (within PJHQs Northwood base or otherwise in HQ London District) and commanded by the standing operational commander responsible for managing the defence component of any homeland security operation.

Both the air and maritime forces will be required to maintain operational command headquarters for those operations that are environment specific, or when the UK is only contributing forces from that component to an alliance.

- **Invest to expand the capabilities of defence from the land, sea and air and into cyberspace and space environments whilst re-organising the standing military so that it is based upon a structure that provides networked, expeditionary, joint intervention force elements.**

The development of the whole force into an information age networked capability will require both a *rationalisation* of the existing capability relative to likely requirements, an *integration* of the resultant force elements (across all environments), as well as *investment* in new information-based capabilities.

This will take more time, and resources that are available to the MoD at this time, and within the four year timeframe of the SDSR. Therefore this will need to be a staged process, with the immediate SDSR effect being to provide a strategic intent, a direction of travel, and the allocation of all available resources.

We would expect this process to deliver the following strategic adjustments:

- **On Land:** A re-organisation of the Army into five Joint and multi-role intervention brigades, all based in the UK, and based primarily on light / medium forces; from both regular and reserve forces. An additional brigade should be a heavy brigade capable of providing armoured capability at short-notice for interventions. Each brigade to be capable of acting as a Joint Force Operational Headquarters equipped with networked command and control, with a minimum of 15 Mbits of allocated bandwidth and capable of exploiting a minimum of three lines of airborne surveillance, all available signals intelligence and various sources of precision munitions. Each brigade to be capable of deploying by sea, air or land, and being augmented by centrally-held support forces, reservist forces (as individuals or formed units), other agencies, and elements from the maritime, air, special forces, logistics or cyberspace components as necessary.
- The homeland defence requirements will require reservist network that ensures a ready supply of useful manpower to in every area of the country, supported by one small (homeland defence) specialist, and reservist-heavy, manoeuvre brigade organised to support the civil powers at short notice. This will be manned using a mix of reservist and standing forces; and be primarily a Military Police, Engineer, EOD and Logistics organisation.
- **On the Sea:** The primary focus for the maritime forces is to be offensive littoral operations (having effect on land, via deployment of scalable precision munitions, including Trident), from a networked maritime force of many smaller platforms, all capable of contributing to offensive effect, but not so large individually, (as Capital Ships), that their loss renders the network ineffective. The maritime reserve forces are to be expanded to cover many homeland defence tasks.

The programme to build two Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers with supporting Joint Strike Fighters (known as

“Carrier Strike”) should be stopped immediately, with resources being reallocated to build more, smaller helicopter capable platforms built which are also capable of sufficient air-defence to sustain themselves on UK-only joint interventions in the littoral environment. Or if it is too far advanced to be stopped, then only one carrier should be built, but enhanced to ensure that it is multi-role and useful for littoral operations, with other smaller platforms being built to complement it; thereby building the networked maritime force.

The Fleet Air Arm will be retained in recognition of the specialist nature of the maritime flying environment; but its capabilities extended to include the management of a new UK maritime capability: ship-based unmanned surveillance.

The submarine force should be retained intact, recognising the value of the UK’s competitive advantage in this specialist area, of value to both UK defence and its allies.; and its central role in providing our nuclear deterrent.

An element of the maritime force should be retained in the UK in support of various homeland security and defence requirements. This can be a mix of reservist and standing forces.

- **In the Air:** The primary focus is support to intervention operations conducted on land; with forces held to provide air security (local superiority), precision fire to ground / maritime forces, strategic bombing, all (manned and unmanned) airborne surveillance, and logistics / deployment support for three to four lines of strategic communication (this latter requirement being met by reservist forces).

The merging effect of the joint helicopter command is to be continued; with all helicopter forces for logistics or air manoeuvre currently held by the RAF should be given to the Army Air Corps.

A limited air-air combat capability would be held in the UK at very high readiness for homeland defence; using a majority of reservists.

- **Special Forces:** These would retain their recent enhancements, and remain as the intervention capability held at shortest readiness for all contingencies and intervention options, particularly where discretion or precision is required. Their primary focus should remain as the lead defence component for all offensive counter-terrorist and counter-proliferation missions; but they must remain capable of leading UK-only special-purpose interventions as well as contribute to a US led high-tech Special Operations Task Force.
- **In Cyberspace / Space:** A new component of UK defence capability should be formed immediately. This will be a 'Cyber Command'; mimicking the US military's recent development, and sign-posting the emphasis that SDSR is placing upon information age transformation.

This new component should be commanded by a 2-star Combat Arm Officer. It should be based upon the current Joint Signals and Electronic Warfare Capabilities, but expanded and transformed. It would provide specialist military capability to support the National Strategic-level cyber activities led by GCHQ, the wider intelligence community and special forces; as well as capability that enables the tactical networked offensive and defensive capabilities of the Joint Intervention Forces, and leadership of the development of this essential component within the MoD.

This new component and its command would ensure that every level of command is able to exploit all the information and opportunities to influence that exist via space and cyberspace communications mediums, (creating numerous opportunities for non-kinetic attack / influence), whilst protecting their own ability to communicate securely.

- **Transfer heavy / conventional capability required at low-readiness to the reserve forces.**

The majority of the military capability currently held to fight conventional state-on-state conflict should be shifted to the

reserves. This would ensure that it was at the appropriate state of readiness, relative to the likelihood of the threat, as well as provide enhanced reservist capacity to support operations by the standing military should the situation require it.

This would require an expansion of the reserve forces by at least 200% – doubling the size of the TA to 60,000; and increasing the size of the reserve forces of the maritime and air forces to at least 15,000; enabling a corresponding reduction in the standing forces by some margin.

In our view 66% of the capability held for armoured warfare should be given to the reservists, and based in the UK near a dock; with the remainder (one armoured brigade) being held as a combat support brigade providing elements for the Joint Intervention Brigades as required by any intervention mission.

This model should be extended to any other area where retaining expensive standing military assets is judged to be inefficient relative to the threats / requirements. This could also include air-air combat aircraft, air transport / logistics aircraft, (less those that enable tactical insertion of special and early intervention forces), and maritime capability held for homeland security. It could also include all elements conducting ceremonial duties in London or elsewhere.

An expanded and more capable reserve force would enable the reduction of the size of the standing forces so that they could be based effectively within the UK; given that reservists do not require housing / barracks etc.

It would also ensure that military capability could be built to meet the demands of enduring operations or when such operations expand beyond the scope of the standing military to resource. In such cases we would support the deployment of formed TA units as has been so successful with the US National Guard.



As the Government considers how to re-shape its policy to face new threats and deliver the savings needed to help reduce public spending, *Upgrading Our Armed Forces* presents an alternative model of how to staff and manage the UK's armed forces.

Following the creation of the National Security Council in May 2010, the authors question whether the existing operational chain of command needs to be simplified to take account of more direct political control over military decision making. They examine what, if any, new alliances might be required to ensure the continued safety of UK citizens and interests; as well as considering whether the military's existing technological base is adequate to deal with warfare dominated as much by information, as industrial power.

The report also examines a number of recent operations undertaken by British forces in different parts of the world and considers what lessons should be drawn from them in order to ensure that those in positions of leadership are able to respond effectively to new and emerging security threats.

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