



House of Commons
Defence Committee

Defence White Paper 2003

Fifth Report of Session 2003–04

Volume I



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Report, together with formal minutes

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The Defence Committee

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Summary

The 2003 Defence White Paper, *Delivering Security in a Changing World*, flows directly from the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review* and the 2002 *New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review*. At its centre are the concepts of effects-based operations and network-enabled capability. It signals a shift of focus from platforms and numbers towards effects sought. It proposes a re-balancing of land forces from heavy-weight towards medium-weight. But it lacks essential details. We are disappointed that an important policy document has been presented with little or no information on the relevant procurement decisions, funding questions or likely changes in force structures.

There is potential for confusion between the concepts of network-enabled capability and effects-based operations. Network-enabled capability may contribute to the delivery of military effect, but it is not a prerequisite for it, or indeed, necessarily the main contributor towards an effects-based operational outcome. The limits of what the military can achieve on their own in effects-based operations need to be understood not only by the Armed Forces, but across Government.

We believe that the security challenges faced by the UK require the retention of the existing scale of forces, enhanced by the benefits of network-enabled capability. A policy of reducing or restructuring existing forces in advance of acquiring new capabilities is potentially dangerous. At times the White Paper's conclusions appear to have been based more on what UK forces have been doing in the recent past than on an objective assessment of what they might have to do in the future. It is far from clear whether the White Paper has been effects-led, or rather resource driven.

The emphasis on effects-based operations places new demands on individual service personnel at all levels to understand the impact of their actions and we question whether the current focus on training for war-fighting adequately equips our service personnel for these much wider demands.

We have no reason to believe that the demanding operational tempo of the past six years and consequent stretch on too many of our service personnel will not continue. We believe that manpower shortages must be tackled urgently. The Armed Forces depend on the reserves for their operational capability. A reappraisal of the role of the reserves and of what can reasonably be expected of them is required.

On the surface the Defence White Paper might appear to be only another incremental step from the original Strategic Defence Review, but taken together with similar steps over the past six years, it could lead to profound changes in the Armed Forces and their relationship with political decision makers. The existing structures for decision making may not be capable of supporting the rapid and politicised pressures of effects-based operations in the future.

1 Introduction

1. In this report we examine the extent to which the *Defence White Paper: Delivering Security in a Changing World*¹, published in December 2003, has met the objectives set for it and the likely effects on the three armed services of the policy that is emerging. The report focuses on the nature of effects-based operations and their implications. It explores the direction in which the policy is taking the Armed Forces and how well placed the UK is to embrace these significant changes.

2. In the absence of any detailed explanation of likely effects on force structures, costs and equipment, the Defence White Paper remains very much a work in progress. We expect to return to a number of the issues raised in this report over the coming months as the current spending round comes to its conclusions and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) provides Parliament and the public with more information. This inquiry builds on our previous report *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review* (HC 93-I, 2002–03) and our recent inquiry into *The Lessons of Iraq* (HC 57-I, 2003–04), which addressed many of the issues raised by the Defence White Paper.

3. During our focussed inquiry we took evidence from Rt Hon Geoffrey Hoon MP, the Secretary of State for Defence and Sir Kevin Tebbit, the Permanent Under Secretary at the MoD, and from the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Sir Michael Walker, and the three individual service chiefs, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Alan West, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), General Sir Mike Jackson, and the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup. The inquiry also draws extensively from wide-ranging information acquired from visits, informal meetings and private discussions. These included a briefing by the MoD Policy Director, Mr Simon Webb and visits to the three principal single-service command headquarters, Fleet, Strike and Land. We also received a number of written memoranda and are grateful to all those who contributed to our inquiry. We were assisted in our inquiry by our special advisers, Mr Paul Beaver, Professor Michael Clarke, Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold, Air Vice Marshal Professor Tony Mason, and Brigadier Austin Thorp. We are grateful to them.

1 Cm 6041-I & II.

2 Background to the Defence White Paper 2003

4. The Defence White Paper places itself very much in the context of the original work of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review² (SDR) and the subsequent New Chapter to the SDR.³ In many ways it builds on themes raised in the New Chapter at the grand strategic level, but in policy terms it contains very little in the way of detail. Implications for equipment programmes, the future structure and size of the Armed Forces and personnel issues remain largely unexplored. With this in mind we have decided to focus on the assumptions underlying the Defence White Paper, the implications for personnel in the three services and the implications for future force structures, equipment and expenditure.

Strategic Defence Review to New Chapter

5. The SDR was published in fulfilment of a Labour Party manifesto commitment to conduct a defence review to reassess Britain's security interests to meet the "new strategic realities". Central to these realities was the assessment that "there is today no direct military threat to the United Kingdom or Western Europe". Instead there were a range of instabilities, both in Europe (e.g. the Balkans) and further afield. However, the SDR also identified a range of new risks "which threaten our security by attacking our way of life". These included "new and horrifying forms of terrorism [which] can cause...dangerous instabilities".⁴ The paper which emerged after a year of work in July 1998 was intended to address the UK's defence requirements for the period up to 2015.

6. The SDR was praised for its considered approach to reviewing British defence policy. A central plank of it was the need to retain a war-fighting capability (for the Army this meant divisional-level operations in a joint/combined framework). It also introduced the concept of expeditionary operations into policy planning more explicitly than before. Its goal was to give the armed services a coherent and stable planning basis in the context of a radically changed strategic context following the end of the Cold War.

7. Most importantly, the SDR led to a shift in thinking away from commitment-based planning and towards planning based on capabilities, with the emphasis on expeditionary operations. By defining the type of capabilities that the UK's Armed Forces should be able to sustain, the SDR hoped to provide a basis for prudent force planning and avoid excessive overstretch. To this end, the SDR stated explicitly the number and scale of missions that the Armed Forces could be expected to be able to conduct concurrently and sustain. These were that at any one time they could either deploy and sustain one "large" division-sized force, similar to that sent to the 1991 Gulf War, or two "medium" brigade-sized forces, one equipped for war-fighting and the other for peace-support operations. However, these concurrency capacity objectives have been exceeded on a number of occasions since the publication of the SDR, for example, during the Kosovo crisis in 1999.

2 MoD, *The Strategic Defence Review*, Cm 3999, (July 1998).

3 MoD, *The Strategic Defence Review—A New Chapter* Cm 5566, (July 2002), Vols 1 & 2.

4 Defence Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2002–03, *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review*, HC 93-I, para 7.

The SDR New Chapter

8. The *New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review* of July 2002, sought to reflect the changes that had occurred following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001. The New Chapter's starting point was that the original SDR had not fully contemplated the scale of asymmetric threats that emerged on 11 September 2001 and so re-examination of the UK's defence posture and plans was required. Its focus—according to the Secretary of State—was on “the way we want to use our forces against a determined, mobile, often disparate, and elusive enemy”.⁵ The MoD maintained that the original SDR provided a firm foundation on which to build. Thus, one purpose of the work on the New Chapter was to check the conclusions of the SDR against lessons learnt not only from the events of 11 September but also from campaigns such as Kosovo and, as it turned out, Afghanistan. It was also designed to contribute to the wider effort across government to develop a strategy to eliminate terrorism as “a force for change in international affairs”.⁶

9. The New Chapter concluded that it was better to engage the enemy, where possible, at longer range (i.e. away from the UK itself) and therefore that the UK needed to have significant forces ready to deploy overseas to act against terrorist groups and regimes that harboured them. Military force could be used to “prevent, deter, coerce, disrupt or destroy” opponents.⁷ To achieve these objectives, UK forces should aim for “knowledge superiority” over international terrorists. Particular UK strengths were identified both in find-and-strike operations and in prevention and stabilisation operations. The former were identified as requiring high-intensity war fighting capacity and decision-making structures to enable forces to act rapidly and decisively. In stabilisation operations, the UK had capabilities and experience that enabled it to take a leading role in the early, more demanding stages of operations, such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and Operation Essential Harvest in Macedonia.

10. The New Chapter argued that the trend towards expeditionary operations would become even more pronounced. Furthermore such operations might not be limited to the core geographical regions identified by the original SDR (i.e. Europe, the Gulf and the Mediterranean). UK forces would need to be ready to engage “further afield more often than perhaps we had previously assumed”.⁸

11. It also reaffirmed the SDR's conclusion that in most cases the UK's Armed Forces would be working alongside allies, often with the US in the lead. It noted, however, that local infrastructure (otherwise known as Host Nation Support) might not always be available. Thus operations might become more frequent, often with smaller, but possibly simultaneous deployments placing an increasing strain on “enabling assets” such as deployable headquarters, communications and logistic support. This has been called the challenge of concurrency.

12. The analysis in the New Chapter also highlighted the importance of what it called “network centric capability” (NCC)—that is precision weapons and information

5 A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review, HC 93-I (2002–03), para 18.

6 *Ibid.*, para 19.

7 *Ibid.*, para 20.

8 *Ibid.*, para 23.

technologies linked together to produce military effect at a qualitatively higher tempo, and often using smaller force structures than in the past. According to the New Chapter, the three critical elements required to deliver this military effect are sensors, a network, and strike assets. Exploited to the full these elements could provide a “common understanding among commanders at all levels” which in turn had the potential to offer: greater precision in the control of operations, greater precision in the application of force, greater rapidity of effect, and better force protection.⁹

13. This capability was identified as being particularly important in operations to counter terrorism overseas. But its implementation would depend on the effectiveness of a number of advanced technologies. In this regard the New Chapter stated “we will accelerate and want to increase our investment in network-centric capabilities” and identified areas in which investment had already begun, including airborne surveillance, communication systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and precision munitions. In the future, the New Chapter argued, it would be “military effect”, not simply platform numbers and people, which would be critical.¹⁰

14. The New Chapter also acknowledged that Britain’s service men and women had been “working at or near, and in some cases beyond, the boundaries of what was planned in the SDR for some considerable time now”. It emphasised that they should not now simply be asked to do even more. Admitting that fully manned and sustainable force structures were proving elusive, the New Chapter identified individuals in certain of the most heavily used specialisms as critical for the success of its approach. It noted that increasing use of civilians and contractors in operational deployments was to be expected.

15. Co-operation with allies was also highlighted with the emphasis on working through international organisations such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union. Particular mention was made of NATO’s work to improve its capacity to deal with weapons of mass destruction, enhance home defence and cooperate with other agencies and organisations.

16. In the course of our inquiry into the New Chapter we were told of the importance to UK military thinking of the manoeuvrist approach:

The manoeuvrist approach is really at the heart of the UK approach to warfare or of the use of military force, which is to try and get inside the opponent’s decision-making cycle. It is the attempt to have your ability to think through something and act before the opponent has the chance to do his thinking and acting as well. Our network-enabled capability undoubtedly offers the prospect of being able to do that more quickly.¹¹

British Defence Doctrine refers to this as the “OODA Loop”, formulated by an American officer to explain how information can transform operations by speeding up the loop of Observing, Orientating, Deciding and Acting. We noted that the New Chapter’s approach encapsulated in the phrase “detect, decide, destroy” appeared rather similar to the OODA

9 *The Strategic Defence Review—A New Chapter, Vol I*, para 35.

10 *Ibid.*, p 15.

11 *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review, HC 93-1 (2002–03)*, para 64.

loop approach and therefore rather “old” conceptually. Its relevance remains significant, but we doubted how far the New Chapter represented “new” thinking.¹²

17. It was in the New Chapter work that the MoD introduced “effects-based planning” as a fundamental principle of modern military operations, as the Secretary of State emphasised:

We must therefore move away from always assessing defence capability in terms of platforms or unit numbers. It is now more useful to think in terms of the effects that can be delivered—we must consider what effect we want to have on an opponent and at what time...There are traditional so-called “kinetic effects” [or] other effects designed to influence the will of an adversary...Effects-based planning has always been understood intuitively by good commanders.¹³

18. We concluded in our report that the world had not stood still in the three years between publication of the original SDR and the al Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. While the MoD emphasised that it was not embarking on a review of the SDR as a whole, we argued that by trying to avoid the broader picture, the New Chapter in fact “served to draw attention to the many areas where developments since 1998 are making the SDR look increasingly out of date”.¹⁴

Afghanistan and Iraq

19. The preparation of the 2003 Defence White Paper was undertaken in the context of two major expeditionary operations—Afghanistan and Iraq—both of which provided important lessons for the armed services. Kosovo for example had revealed the Royal Air Force’s (RAF) weakness in all-weather precision bombing from altitude. US operations in Afghanistan then demonstrated the need to re-learn the skills of close air support and its modern iteration of “kill-box interdiction”, which we discuss in Chapter Six below. In this sense Afghanistan proved a turning point for the RAF in its evolution from a Cold War air force to an expeditionary force capable of supporting ground operations. These trends were confirmed by the experience of Operation Telic, the British contribution to the Iraq campaign.

20. In Iraq, it is arguable that in some ways “military effect” was not as well linked to the campaign’s broader objectives as it could have been. The Government admitted in its response to our Lessons of Iraq report that the extent to which the Iraqi police and armed forces “effectively dissolved themselves” was greater than the coalition had expected.¹⁵ Operation Telic demonstrated that western armed forces, embracing new military technologies, had become highly effective at engaging with, and rendering traditional opponents ineffective as formed units. But the very success of these forces at this level of conflict may have created military and non-military effects not entirely suited to broader strategic effects. The melting away of the Iraq military in this context might serve as an

12 *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review*, HC 93-I (2002–03), para 66.

13 *Ibid.*, para 88.

14 *Ibid.*, para 146.

15 Defence Committee, *Lessons of Iraq: Government response to the Committee’s Third Report of Session 2003–04*, First Special Report of Session 2003–04, HC 635, para 184.

illustration of the potential limits to the effects which the Armed Forces (as currently structured and trained) can be expected to achieve.

21. Instead of a defeated military surrendering its forces and crucially its weapons and equipment to a successful opponent, the experience of operations in Iraq has been of a country awash with weapons and militarily trained personnel with little or no involvement in a process of de-militarisation, in which political and military structures have disintegrated. This has made subsequent operations more difficult and protracted than appears to have been planned for. **As the post-conflict stage in Iraq has shown, a great deal more is required to achieve the objectives of an effects-based operation, than advanced military technologies in the hands of numerically small forces.**

The United Nations

22. The White Paper makes only limited reference to the United Nations in its two volumes. The Secretary of State indicated to us that he did not see a role for the UN in the “delivery... of military effect”, although the UN could provide “political supervision”.¹⁶ The United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland noted that there has been a diminution of the number of personnel offered by NATO states to the UN and expressed concern that there was no reference to the UK supporting peacekeeping missions of the UN through the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the White Paper. They further expressed concern about the UK’s close association with the US policy of pre-emptive action.¹⁷

23. Very little has been said about the role of the United Nations in current UK defence thinking. The SDR did not deal explicitly with the UN and the legal context for the expeditionary operations it emphasised. The New Chapter made explicit reference to the United Nations and its evolving role in international security, but did not offer any view of UK thinking about it, beyond the observation that it was one of the “central organisations” that provided “a framework of international relationships and organisations, and international law” within which the Armed Forces must operate.¹⁸ No mention was made of possible changes to the Charter of the United Nations or the membership and role of the Security Council, or its Military Staff Committee. The MoD’s paper on *The Future Strategic Context for Defence* of February 2001 explicitly considered legal dimensions of policy, but here the emphasis was entirely on those elements of international law which protected individual human rights and which promoted the likely role of the International Criminal Court.¹⁹

24. In our New Chapter report we drew particular attention to the more formal legal implications of evolving UK defence policy by questioning the assumptions the Government had adopted in its statements on the international legality of pre-emption—pointing out that this would always be legally contentious if the UK followed current US postures on pre-emption. We noted the inherent difficulty of addressing terrorism in the

16 Q 193

17 Ev 77–78

18 Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter—Public Discussion Paper*, (February 2002), paras 39–40.

19 MoD, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence*, (February 2001), paras 48–52.

absence of truly applicable “laws of war”, and the likely need for much more detailed interpretations of existing international law in specific cases. The report also raised a concern over the implications of network centric capabilities for the interpretation and operation of rules of engagement, pointing out that senior officers regarded such capabilities as setting sharper challenges for the legal framework within which the Armed Forces operate.²⁰

25. The Armed Forces must always act within a framework of legality. The United Nations is clearly a major element in any interpretation of the international legal framework. The crisis leading up to the war in Iraq, and the politics of the reconstruction process since, have re-emphasised the sensitive nature of debates in the UN and their potential effect on the legal framework within which UK defence policy operates. The UK has repeatedly proved itself to be a loyal and crucial member of the UN, though the Iraq war temporarily set it at odds with many of its alliance partners within the organisation. **We recommend that the MoD should explain more fully how UK forces have supported the United Nations; how the UK expects to continue to do so; and how defence planners see the UK’s military role within the UN system in relation to its roles within NATO and the European Union.**

The FCO’s Strategy Paper

26. The original SDR was trumpeted as having been foreign policy led, but was criticised by some observers when the foreign policy conclusions upon which it was based were not published. Commentators have long argued that in the evolving security environment of the post-cold war world, the UK was in need not of another statement of defence policy, or foreign policy, but rather a broadly defined national security policy.

27. MoD emphasised to us that the Defence White Paper had been drawn up in close co-operation and consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and pointed to the fact that shortly before the Defence White Paper was published, FCO published its own strategy document, *UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO*. In that document, the FCO identifies 8 strategic priorities for the UK:

- i. a world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction;
- ii. protection of the UK from illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other international crime;
- iii. an international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts;
- iv. an effective EU in a secure neighbourhood;
- v. promotion of UK economic interests in an open and expanding global economy;
- vi. sustainable development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights;

20 HC 93-I (2002–03), paras 139–141.

- vii. security of UK a energy supplies; and,
- viii. security and go vernance of the UK's Overseas Territories.²¹

28. The MoD is identified as one of the principal partners across government in all but the fifth of these priorities. According to the FCO the focus of the UK's security and defence policy will be on countering the "new threats, often from non-state actors empowered by new technologies, and originating outside Europe".²² The FCO says that these threats need to be tackled "assertively". Insecurity in Africa and elsewhere is to lead to efforts to "reach a clearer consensus on principles justifying the use of force for humanitarian purposes, conflict stabilisation and timely action against terrorism or threatening WMD capabilities". Other issues challenging the UK and its partners will be ideology and religion, global economic inequalities, population movements, environmental change, demand for energy and the proliferation of technology which may have negative as well as positive effects. The role of UK Armed Forces will "continue to shift towards deployments in crisis areas around the world. Our ability to project force will be a key instrument of our foreign policy".²³ The Defence White Paper for its part focuses its analysis on international terrorism, WMD proliferation, failing states, social and environmental factors and regional instability.²⁴

29. The Conflict Prevention Pools (CPP) initiative is one example of attempts to develop joined up policy for a broader conception of external security relations by MoD and other government departments. Both Conflict Prevention Pools—a 'Global Pool' and an 'Africa Pool'—were established in the Spending Review of 2000. The overarching intention was that since peace, stability and poverty reduction "are global concerns and key objectives for the British government...eliminating violent conflict is an essential precursor to achieving any of these objectives".²⁵ Based upon this vision, ministers agreed that the FCO, the MoD and the Department for International Development (DFID), in association with the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, would work closely to improve the UK's contribution to peacekeeping, conflict prevention and conflict management. The three main departments would pool funds that they were spending on various conflict prevention activities, and the subsequent pools were to receive additional central funds to serve as an incentive to promote new substantive initiatives. This form of "joined up" government was not predominantly about financial management, but instead designed:

to improve the effectiveness of the UK contribution to conflict prevention and management as demonstrated by a reduction in the number of people whose lives are affected by violent conflict and a reduction in potential sources of future conflict, where the UK can make a significant contribution.²⁶

21 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO* Cm 6052, (December 2003), p 30.

22 *UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO*, p 13.

23 *Ibid.*, p 14.

24 DWP 1, pp 4–5.

25 Cabinet Office, *History of Conflict Prevention*.

26 *HMG Spending Review, 2000, (July 2000)*, www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

30. This was not the first initiative by the Government to promote “joined-up” policies and programmes, but it was the first to be applied to a concept—*conflict prevention*—that sought to promote policy and programme coherence and coordination in its activities overseas. There is no equivalent that we are aware of by other governments. After three years in operation the Conflict Prevention Pools have demonstrated some benefits from pursuing an imaginative and joined up initiative. However, each of the three main departments also have relevant spending programmes of their own that do not necessarily conform to a common definition of conflict prevention and are not susceptible to common forms of evaluation and monitoring.

31. Despite collaborating in the Conflict Prevention Pools, we have not seen substantial evidence of cross departmental co-ordination or effects-based thinking emerge from the two policy documents from the FCO and MoD. We discuss how true effects-based operations will increase the requirement for a pan-Whitehall approach in Chapter Six below. In the case of the FCO, this may require diplomats to engage more directly with concepts such as information operations in missions involving British forces, rather than seeing their role in narrow diplomatic terms. While the CPP initiative is a good model of inter-departmental cooperation and the harmonisation of priorities around one particular UK security theme, the limits of its impact on the ground—and in Whitehall—since 2000 demonstrate how far the UK still is from the broadly defined national security policy for which our predecessor Committee, and many commentators, have repeatedly called. **While we note the co-operation between MoD and FCO at the policy level we believe that the future operational demands of effects-based thinking will require even greater collaboration.**

3 Strategic Environment

32. Changes in the strategic environment in recent years have been discussed in reports from a number of organisations. The United States issued a *National Security Strategy* in September 2002 which was seen as clearly articulating a pre-emptive strategy following the terrorist attacks on America: “to forestall or prevent...hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively...the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather”.²⁷ The European Union for its part adopted a *European Security Strategy* in December 2003, “A Secure Europe in a Better World” which emphasised the need for multilateral approaches to security, noting that in most recent military interventions, military efficiency had been followed by civilian chaos.²⁸

33. The Defence White Paper’s main conclusions have largely flowed from the New Chapter work. The regions of the world that the UK is preparing to operate in are extended beyond those identified by the SDR to include sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The number of military tasks that the Armed Forces are set to perform have been reduced from 27 to 18, and are grouped in four categories, which we discuss below. The armed services are directed to plan to support three concurrent operations (one medium scale and two small scale—of which one is an enduring peace support operation), while retaining the capacity to undertake large Scale operations, with longer notice. The objective is to re-balance forces to allow the reallocation of resources to those capabilities currently over-employed on operations—often called “key enablers”, such as those engaged in logistics, engineering and intelligence. There is also a greater emphasis on medium-weight and rapidly deployable forces. One of the few detailed proposals in the White Paper is for the re-categorisation of one heavy armoured brigade to be a medium-weight mechanised brigade and the consequent re-categorisation of a medium weight brigade to light.

34. The lack of detail in the White Paper has been much commented on, with descriptions such as “good light reading”, but “no real meat” typical. In the House of Lords, the former Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Guthrie was disappointed:

Although I approve the thrust of the White Paper...I have serious concerns. It does not attempt to go into detail...it is, as it stands, a bland document and lacks detail. It is full of buzz words and platitudes—flexibility, force multipliers, network enabled capability. What does it actually mean? Everybody gives me a different answer.²⁹

35. In this inquiry we have attempted to answer that question, but have found, like Lord Guthrie, a lack of clarity in the document itself and the explanations offered by ministers and MoD officials. **We are disappointed that a policy document that could have far reaching implications has been presented with little or no detail on the relevant procurement decisions, funding questions or likely changes in force structures and consequent effect on personnel.**

27 White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (September 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>, p. 15.

28 European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World—European Security Strategy*, (12 December 2003), <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, p 12.

29 HL Deb, 13 January 2004, col 516

Changes since the Original SDR

36. In the Defence White Paper, MoD accepted the need for updating the SDR, despite continuing to argue that its basic assumptions remained valid:

While the SDR and the New Chapter set us on the right course to respond to the trends emerging in 1998, the security environment and technology have moved on. We therefore need to adapt further our force structures in light of our operational experience and continue the process of modernisation that SDR set in hand.³⁰

Most importantly, UK forces have been involved in a wide range of crises in various parts of the world, and at greater frequency than expected since the SDR was published in 1998. This has been accompanied by the rapid and dramatic expansion of NATO, the continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and a number of advances in military technologies, such as the increased provision of precision guided munitions (PGMs). There were also lessons to be learned about the nature of the threat to the UK itself in a globalised world in which “strategic-effect” terrorism appeared capable of audacious attacks anywhere in the world. We explored these issues in our *Threat from Terrorism*³¹ and *Defence and Security in the UK*³² reports, in both of which we noted (as our predecessors had) how the original SDR had not adequately considered the threat of “asymmetric warfare”.³³

37. One of the particular lessons drawn by the MoD from the terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001, was the need to be able to prevent, deter, coerce, disrupt or destroy international terrorists and regimes that harbour them. This increasingly might be outside the core regions identified by the original SDR, and this had particular implications for expeditionary logistics.³⁴ The regional alteration is a significant change from the original SDR. The White Paper identifies the need to project forces further afield into sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with “medium scale operations” in sub-Saharan Africa; “small-scale operations” in Asia; and “small-scale counter-terrorist operations” world-wide. The Secretary of State told us that:

we can no longer safely assume that the main theatre of operations for the United Kingdom would be Europe and the Middle East, which is essentially what we set out in the SDR. Afghanistan demonstrates that a failed state, providing a harbour for terrorist organisations, means that that threat can strike at us or our close allies from huge distances. Therefore we need to recognise that global environment in which we accept in almost every other respect that we have to face up to dealing with threats from as far afield as they can come.³⁵

The White Paper also emphasises “speed, precision, agility, deployability, reach and sustainability”.³⁶ Military operations in the future will have to be undertaken at even

30 DWP 1, para 1.7.

31 Defence Committee, Second Report of Session 2001–02, *The Threat from Terrorism*, HC 348-I & II.

32 Defence Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2001–02, *Defence and Security in the UK*, HC 518-I & II.

33 HC 93-I (2002–03), p 7.

34 DWP 1, para 1.5.

35 Q 113

36 DWP 1, para 3.4.

shorter notice than anticipated under the SDR. **What has emerged in the past six years is the extent to which the Armed Forces have been operating at the limits of what they can achieve. The SDR's planning assumptions provided relatively little resilience to enable the services to re-orientate when called upon to do so.**

Missions

38. The SDR identified 8 Defence Missions for which the Armed Forces had to prepare, under which came 28 Military Tasks. The Defence Missions were as follows:

- i. Peacetime Security
- ii. Security Of The Overseas Territories
- iii. Defence Diplomacy
- iv. Support To Wider British Interests
- v. Peace Support And Humanitarian Operations
- vi. Regional Conflict Outside The NATO Area
- vii. Regional Conflict Inside The NATO Area
- viii. Strategic Attack On NATO.³⁷

39. In the White Paper this has been replaced with a single defence mission:

To deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories by defending them, including against terrorism, and to act as a force for good by strengthening international peace and security.

Below this come 18 Military Tasks which are categorised under four generic headings:

- Standing Strategic Commitments,
- Standing Home Commitments,
- Standing Overseas Commitments, and
- Contingent Operations Overseas.³⁸

This in turn has led to a revision of the scales of effort being planned for. As discussed above, the SDR developed generic planning assumptions for the type of operations that the Armed Forces might have to undertake, based on capabilities rather than commitments. These in turn were based on the scales that might be required, categorised as Small (battalion-sized), Medium (brigade-sized), Large (division-sized) and Very Large, or Full. The SDR assumptions stated that the Armed Forces should plan to undertake:

37 MoD, *The Strategic Defence Review – Supporting Essays*, Cm 3999, (July 1998), Essay Six, p 6-2.

38 DWP 2, p 4.

- a single enduring peace support commitment at Medium Scale whilst providing suitable training and leave to all the forces; or
- an enduring peace support commitment at the Medium Scale plus a limited duration Medium Scale intervention commitment; or
- a one-off Large Scale commitment.³⁹

40. Since the SDR was published, the Armed Forces have managed to do what has been asked of them, but key elements have been significantly over-stretched while other parts of the force capabilities have appeared relatively under-utilised. Furthermore, according to the White Paper, an important lesson of the post-SDR world has been that “in some respects—particularly for enabling assets such as deployable HQs, communications and deployable logistical support—several Small Scale operations are potentially more demanding than one or two more substantial operations”.⁴⁰ This should not have been a surprise since the original SDR stated that in addition to the sustainable medium-sized operations mentioned above—the Armed Forces were also supposed to be able to carry out “several small but perhaps long-running commitments and respond to minor contingencies”.⁴¹ Although, the SDR’s ambition to set out plans for 17 years ahead (to 2015) appears to have unravelled in under six years in the important area of scales of effort, the Defence White Paper repeats the goal of seeking to look “about 15 years” forward.⁴²

41. The scales of effort problem was summarised in the White Paper as follows:

Since SDR our Armed Forces have conducted operations that have been more complex and greater in number than we had envisaged. We have effectively been conducting continual concurrent operations, deploying further afield, to more places, more frequently and with a greater variety of missions than set out in the SDR planning assumptions. We expect to see a similar pattern of operations in the future, with the emphasis on multiple, concurrent Medium and Small Scale deployments.⁴³

Force Structures are tailored to a set of interlinked planning assumptions, such as frequency, duration, scale of effort, and length of time troops should be asked to serve away from home each year (collectively known as harmony guidelines).⁴⁴ If one or more of these are exceeded the inevitable consequence must be greater pressure on people, unless a reserve is held. This can manifest itself in a number of ways: shorter tour intervals; longer tours; the sacrifice of individual career progression training; or less training for other roles.

42. It may be rash of the White Paper to state that “we expect to see a similar pattern of operations in the future”, just after its predecessor document—the SDR—has had to be substantially amended, not least because unforeseen developments in the security environment have led to changes in operational demands. We are not convinced that

39 DWP 2, para 2.7.

40 *Ibid.*, para 2.12.

41 *The Strategic Defence Review*, para 90.

42 DWP 2, p 7.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Harmony guidelines are explained at Ev 84.

expecting things to follow a similar pattern to the recent past is the best way to shape UK defence policy in a rapid change.

43. The White Paper has also refined the concurrency assumptions from the model presented by the SDR. The assumptions are as follows:

- That as a norm and without creating overstretch we should be able to mount
 - an enduring Medium Scale peace support operation simultaneously with an enduring Small Scale peace support operation and
 - a one-off Small Scale intervention operation.
- That we should be able to reconfigure our forces rapidly to carry out
 - the enduring Medium Scale peace support operation and
 - a Small Scale peace support operation simultaneously with
 - a limited duration Medium Scale intervention operation.
- That, given time to prepare, we should be capable of undertaking
 - a demanding one-off Large Scale operation while still maintaining a commitment to
 - a simple Small Scale peace support operation.⁴⁵

44. The changes represent a shift from a central focus on the most demanding, but occasional, large-scale activity, towards structuring the armed services to be better able to undertake the most likely medium and small-scale operations. MoD appears to be moving away from a structure and organisation based on the ability to conduct large-scale operations, from which all its other activities flow. Instead the focus is moving to the “effects”, which are sought from regular and continuous expeditionary activities around the world at shorter notice and at smaller scale. On the face of it this represents an important departure from the original SDR. It may also have implications for how the ability to conduct high-intensity war fighting operations is defined by the military.

45. In shifting the emphasis to one medium and two small-scale operations, with a large operation only achievable with more notice (stated to be a minimum of six months),⁴⁶ the MoD has not explained why the next large-scale challenge should necessarily arise with longer warning time than the next two small-scale operations. The actual reason for this may not be that six months is the assessment of how quickly such a challenge might arise, but rather the length of time that will now be required for the UK to be able to mount such a scale of operation. Indeed, the continuing need to conduct multiple small-to medium-scale operations is already beginning to undermine the UK’s ability to conduct large-scale operations. This will become more serious the longer this trend continues, in part because as the training establishment becomes geared up to providing forces at the medium level,

45 DWP 2, para 2.10.

46 Ev 79

the urgent requirement to provide forces at large-scale becomes more difficult—a point accepted by CDS in evidence to the Committee.⁴⁷

46. Furthermore, there is no convincing discussion in the White Paper of why it has been judged that one medium and two small-scale operations should be prepared for—why not three or four small-scale? **We are left wondering whether the Defence White Paper is properly set in the strategic context of Britain’s security circumstances, or whether it is more a reflection of what the UK has actually been doing for the last three years, and the existence of a number of legacy systems of whose continuing importance the MoD is uncertain. In other words it is far from clear whether the review process has actually been effects-led, or rather resource driven.**

Homeland defence

47. Despite the events of 11 September 2001, the MoD and Home Office have been reluctant to consider novel ways in which the Armed Forces can support homeland security. The emphasis has been on adapting existing structures, rather than considering significant new mechanisms for military support to the tasks of national security at home. Even the establishment of the 14 Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF), pools of 500 reservists in each of the brigade districts of Great Britain (which we considered in our report on the SDR New Chapter), is not as significant as at first appears. MoD officials and members of the Armed Forces have repeatedly emphasised to us that these reserves would not replace the regulars who previously would have been expected to come to the aid of the civil authorities.⁴⁸ Indeed it remains unclear in what circumstances the CCRFs will actually be used, how useful the, rather modest, 5 additional training days per year will be, and how far they will be adequately prepared or equipped to tackle a major emergency. CGS professed himself satisfied with the additional training, but did not elaborate on what it entailed.⁴⁹ CDS told us:

we support the civil authorities in terms of the homeland security task rather than are pre-eminent on it. Certainly we are not designed as a structure to be purely capable of doing homeland defence and operating to do all the other optional things we have to do.⁵⁰

His statement sits rather oddly with the Defence White Paper’s new single defence mission which begins, “To deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories by defending them, including against terrorism”.⁵¹

48. The presumption continues to be that homeland security will be undertaken with whatever is not being used for other tasks. More importantly, notwithstanding the steps taken to bolster the military contribution to homeland defence since 11 September 2001,⁵² the approach remains essentially reactive. CGS told us that no template actually existed,

47 Q 64

48 Q 14

49 Q 10

50 Q 9

51 DWP 2, p 4.

52 The Committee considered these steps in its SDR New Chapter inquiry, HC 93-I (2002–03).

nor should it be argued, for such contingencies, because the nature of the challenge would shape the response.⁵³ We were unaware of any proper capability review by MoD of the possible contribution of the Armed Forces to home defence. **We are not convinced that an essentially reactive approach to defence of the UK homeland is satisfactory given the nature of the threat to the UK today.**

49. The Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) pointed to how the Armed Forces had managed to undertake Operation Telic while at the same time providing 19,000 troops for fire-fighting duties under Operation Fresco and argued that this demonstrated the ability “to be valuable at home as well as meeting international obligations”.⁵⁴ The Secretary of State, who during the New Chapter process had apparently been considering novel approaches to homeland defence, confirmed the expeditionary (and conventional) conclusions that the Armed Forces should fight terrorism away from home, not at home:

if we are to deal effectively with a terrorist threat which might manifest itself in the United Kingdom, the best way of dealing with that threat, so long as we know where it is, is to go to deal with it at source, which is what we did in Afghanistan. That continues to be our assumption. We are not in a world where we have highly trained, extremely expert armed forces waiting for the threat to arrive in the United Kingdom. I do not judge that would be sensible.⁵⁵

The approach of fighting terrorism at distance has informed all of the MoD’s work since 11 September 2001, but ultimately assumes that terrorists will agree to fight on our terms and in places of our choosing. As UK Ministers and officials regularly warn, they may choose to bring the campaign closer to our region, or indeed to the UK itself. In the context of repeated attacks on the UK we do not think that MoD’s assumption would be sustainable.

53 Q 14

54 Q 119

55 Q 119

4 Effects-based operations

50. The concept of “effects-based operations” lies at the heart of the Defence White Paper, which describes it as follows:

Effects-Based Operations is a new phrase, but it describes an approach to the use of force that is well established—that military force exists to serve political or strategic ends. We need a new way of thinking about this that is more relevant to today’s strategic environment. Strategic effects are designed to deliver the military contribution to a wider cross-governmental strategy and are focused on desired outcomes. Our conventional military superiority now allows us more choice in how we deliver the effect we wish to achieve. We have begun to develop our military capabilities so that we can provide as wide as possible a range of options to fulfil operational objectives without necessarily resorting to traditional attritional warfare.⁵⁶

The MoD’s claim that the approach inherent in effects-based operations is well-established, is correct—much of it would be familiar to any student of the Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz, or indeed the Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu. The concept embraces both kinetic and non-kinetic effects, although in our inquiry it has appeared to be the kinetic effects that are best understood and emphasised.

51. The MoD frequently distinguishes between kinetic and non-kinetic military effects. Kinetic effects are achieved by projectiles of some kind hitting a target and leading to tangible destruction; non-kinetic effects are achieved by some less tangible physical force—such as electronic jamming—having an effect on a target. We accept the essence of this distinction, but in an environment of effects-based operations it is also important to recognise that non-kinetic effects on targets can also be achieved by actions with no physical force at all—such as psychological operations, information operations, political initiatives, and so on. During Operation Telic coalition forces targeted some Iraqi officers with phone text messages to urge them not to fight and to demonstrate that their identity was well known to the allies. Coalition military planners were using a highly non-kinetic technique of psychological warfare that appears to have had some real military impact on the will of Iraqi forces to fight.

52. We note that MoD has only “begun to develop” capabilities to provide a range of options other than having to resort to traditional attritional warfare methods. We are disappointed at the apparent lack of progress in developing capabilities to provide non-kinetic options.

53. In the New Chapter, the MoD emphasised network-centric capability in the delivery of military effect. This development of capability enhancements through the linkage of platforms and people through a network, is now termed ‘network enabled capability’ (NEC) by the MoD, with the centrality of networking replaced by an emphasis on its enabling characteristics.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ DWP 1, para 4.4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p 3, fn 2.

54. The Defence White Paper discusses speed, rapidity, agility and the need to shorten the time between “sensor” and “shooter”. According to MoD’s analysis, the ability to respond quickly and decisively to achieve maximum effect should also act as a force multiplier, allowing the same military effect to be achieved with less. They further argue that NEC will improve communication and understanding of strategic and military intent throughout the chain of command and that through NEC the command structure will improve its responsiveness to events on the ground and have the flexibility to respond in near real-time to fleeting targets, even where higher-level decision making is required prior to engagement.⁵⁸

55. However, shortening time for decision makers and between sensors and shooters through the network has important implications for the relationship between the decision-makers and the troops on the ground. It requires decision-enabling information systems that the UK does not yet possess. It may also raise challenges to the British concept of mission-command, as people at the strategic or grand strategic level are able—thanks to technology—to reach across the tactical and operational levels of command and make decisions about what is happening on the ground. This has been termed “the long screwdriver” effect. (We discuss this effect in Chapter Five below). We concluded in our SDR New Chapter report that “the doctrinal basis for embracing these technologies needs to be rigorous and clearly understood if the benefits of the network are to be realised by the UK Armed Forces”.⁵⁹ In the interim we have not seen the evidence that this has been achieved. Indeed, in discussing the effects-based approach to force planning, the White Paper candidly notes that, “the concept is still at a relatively early stage”.⁶⁰ The Government in its reply to our New Chapter report attempted to argue that not much was changing:

A key conclusion of the new Chapter was we need a series of adjustments and refinements to existing military means, not a step change in capability or concept of operations.⁶¹

We believe however, that the implications are significant.

56. While technology appears to be driving much of this process, MoD does acknowledge that the utilisation of information is at least as important:

we need to be able to deploy and configure forces rapidly and have the capability for rapid decision making, accompanied by the precise delivery of force. These characteristics need to be underpinned by an improved ability to exploit information that can then be translated into synchronised responses to achieve decisive military effect. The ability to detect the emergence of threats, to understand their nature, and our adversaries’ motivations, intentions and capabilities allows us to target their weaknesses and better identify our own vulnerabilities.⁶²

58 DWP 1, para 4.7.

59 HC 93-I (2002–03), para 97.

60 DWP 1, 4.3.

61 Defence Committee, *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review: Government response to the Committee’s Sixth Report of Session 2002–03*, Third Special Report of Session 2002–03, HC 975, para 37.

62 DWP 1, para 4.5.

The ultimate application of effects-based operations might involve only the discrete or limited use of destructive force, an enhanced application of information warfare and the embracing of non-lethal technologies. Indeed the concept of the indirect approach is one that was understood by earlier strategists—Sun Tzu wrote:

to gain a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; to subjugate the enemy's army without doing battle is the highest excellence.⁶³

57. The effects-based operational concept was originally developed by air force planners, building on the experience of developing long lists of targets for destruction by air strikes, but has been embraced and applied to the joint environment of air, sea and land. Taken to its logical extreme, effects-based operations will need to embrace all instruments of national power to reduce, or contain, potential sources of threat, through persistent and effective coercion.

58. The White Paper lists eight strategic effects that the Armed Forces will be asked to provide: prevent, stabilise, contain, deter, coerce, disrupt, defeat and destroy.⁶⁴ Effects-based operations are therefore designed to give policy makers tools other than those solely of kinetic effect, in order, for example, to achieve the goal of containing or preventing threats to national security. The capabilities available to achieve these goals, however, remain primarily kinetic in nature.

59. In our Lessons of Iraq report, we warned against taking too far the argument that because military operations can contribute effects to the overall political context, military planning should explicitly seek to create effects that support the over-arching political objectives.

The priority for military planning must be the achievement of military objectives. We are concerned that too great a focus on effects-based planning and on the part military action can play as one component in a spectrum of political and diplomatic activity may further complicate the tasks of military planners and commanders who are already operating in an ever more complex battle space and under more intense and intrusive scrutiny than ever before... The ultimate success of a military operation of this type can be determined only as part of an assessment of the success of the overall process of which it was part. The risk is that in making that assessment the military is judged against a range of outcomes which are beyond their control and which are likely to be too complex and abstruse to be capable of being sensibly made a part of military planning.⁶⁵

MoD needs to accept that this complexity requires new planning tools. Another challenge is to prevent the process of achieving “effects” becoming more important than the ends sought, as has been found by the US in some circumstances.⁶⁶

63 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (c.453–221 B.C.).

64 DWP 1, para 4.3.

65 HC 57-I (2003–04), paras 517–8. Defence Committee, Third Report of 2003–04, *Lessons of Iraq*, HC 57-I, II & III.

66 Heridon, et al ‘Effects based operations in Afghanistan’, pp 26–30, *Field Artillery*, (Jan–Feb 2004) p 30.

60. Effects-based operations need to go beyond war-fighting to the end of the campaign, through the various phases—crisis, war-fighting, stabilisation and reconstruction, and peacekeeping. The key effect is that achieved at the end of the campaign, but inevitably planning will have to be adjusted as the campaign progresses. It may be that the latter phases can only be planned in outline at the start. As the distance increases from intensive war-fighting, so does the difficulty in effects-based planning, specifically as the number of actors increases and the non-kinetic methods increase in relative importance.

Network-enabled capability

61. While sometimes discussed interchangeably, “network-enabled capability” (NEC) is not the same thing as “effects-based operations” (EBO), nor is it the same as all capabilities that support effects-based operations. Network-enabled capabilities can be enablers of true effects-based operations, but need not be. They are simply one part of the possible contributions towards EBO. Too often in the British debate on effects-based operations, the focus has been on the enabling capabilities rather than the effects sought. At times this important point, though accepted in the White Paper, has not been articulated publicly. The repeated emphasis on reducing the time between “sensor and shooter” in statements risks clouding the objectives behind the process of embracing new technologies, and true effects-based operations. CDS told an audience at RUSI that:

The critical elements in delivering military effect will be: sensors—to gather information; an effective network—to fuse, communicate and exploit the information; and strike assets—to deliver decisive action. Technology will be a key driver for change and will present us with new opportunities—for example the effective means by which to link “sensor to shooter” through Network Enabled Capabilities.⁶⁷

62. Furthermore, too often the debate about NEC is at the relatively straightforward end of the spectrum (weapons effects, decision times etc) rather than at the difficult end (political outcomes, coalition building, alliance management, government structures, the role of other government departments, and political-military interaction at grand strategic level). **We believe that this approach risks emphasising technology at the expense of a thorough consideration of the utility and application of military force and its judicious and appropriate use in effects-based operations. In our view the three critical elements identified by CDS (sensors, a network and shooters), which were previously set out in the New Chapter, will require a vital fourth element of effective decision-making, which is not a consequence of NEC but a requirement for the realisation of EBO.**

63. Decision-makers at higher levels will increasingly have information previously only available to those on the ground and in a form that may provide a more nuanced and complete picture than that available at the tactical level. They may then relate this picture to the effect that they are seeking and believe that their strategic vision should override the tactical and operational decision-making procedures. All of this could be occurring in near real time.

67 Walker, Michael, ‘Delivering Security in a Changing World: Annual Chief of Defence Staff Lecture, December 2003’, *RUSI Journal*, (February 2004), p 39.

64. The UK is at the start, not the end, of the process towards being able to carry out effects-based operations. Kinetic effects-based operations, drawing on information operations and non-destructive power of various sorts, remain an aspiration. Indeed it is still unclear how successful these were in Iraq, even for the US. Operations are increasingly going to be undertaken in non-traditional environments. The challenge is to understand how to operate in a “non-linear battlespace”—i.e. one that does not follow traditional chronological campaign stages. It may often be an urban environment which will require increasing discrimination and proportionality by all the services due to the close proximity of civilians. This will require as much development, or even transformation, of the human dimension, as of high profile technological advances. **We believe that MoD’s discussion of these emerging trends has not always distinguished sufficiently clearly between the concepts of network-enabled capability (NEC) and effects-based operations (EBO). NEC may contribute to the delivery of military effect in support of EBO, but it is not a prerequisite for it, or indeed, necessarily the main contributor towards an effects-based operational outcome.** This lack of clarity in much British discussion of these trends may not be unconnected to the question of platforms which we discuss below.

65. To date discussion of effects-based operations has focussed on shortening the time to achieve kinetic effects and reducing collateral and unnecessary damage to peripheral targets. The broader psychological effects have been exploited only to a limited extent in military activities. These effects are of course well understood by the asymmetric adversaries that the UK is likely to face in the future, especially terrorists, for whom psychological effect beyond the immediate target is generally more important than the precision and nature of the kinetic effect itself. Thus much of the network-enabled capability that attract the greatest attention are merely swifter ways to achieve more precise effect. But the implications of the White Paper are far greater. A concept that began as a way to achieve an effect that previously required direct physical destruction has been expanded to the political strategic level. Those “grand strategic” effects are increasingly being linked with tactical decisions by subordinate commanders on the ground.

66. The challenge is to define what effect is sought and for that goal to be resilient enough to survive the start and progress of operations. Moreover, while physical effect can be measured through techniques such as battle-damage assessment (BDA), the grander objectives of high-level effects-based operations are notoriously difficult to identify and measure meaningfully. In February 2003 during our SDR New Chapter inquiry, the Director General of the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre, Air Vice Marshal Iain McNicoll, told us that planning for effects-based operations “would involve understanding to a greater degree than I think is possible at the moment every aspect of the strategic environment in which both you and your opponents are operating”.⁶⁸

67. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were trumpeted as containing examples of transformational capabilities, do appear to have demonstrated some of the capabilities and potential of effects-based operations, but mostly still at the kinetic end of the spectrum. But even in Operation Telic assessing the effectiveness of the kinetic end of effect proved problematic for the UK. In its response to our Lessons of Iraq report, the Government admitted as much:

68 HC 93-I (2002–03), para 89.

We agree that time Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) is important. During Operation Telic, however, the scale of the air campaign meant there was insufficient resources available to carry out the BDA task during major combat operations.⁶⁹

The Government also warned that improvements in this vital area for effects-based operations were not to be taken for granted:

Technical and intelligence availability issues continue to limit our ability to conduct BDA as effectively as we would wish; future developments of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) platforms may alleviate this.⁷⁰

68. While the improvements in precision, accuracy and firepower are obvious, we have found less evidence that adequate resources have been devoted to the provision of the intelligence capabilities, including human intelligence, and cultural understanding which are essential to underpin these technological advances.

69. Furthermore, it remains, as one American commentator has noted, more an art than a science to judge what kinetic or non-kinetic activity will produce a particular effect.⁷¹ In our Lessons of Iraq inquiry we discussed some of these issues with the Director of Targeting and Information Operations during Operation Telic, Air Vice Marshal Mike Heath. He argued that the division or separation of kinetic from non-kinetic effects had to be removed:

The sooner we move away from information operations and kinetic operations, the better. What we are trying to deliver now is effects-based operations that embrace the whole gamut of military and cross government capability. I believe we have arrived and delivered a force multiplier—not the MoD but Whitehall—and it is important we understand that.⁷²

We agree and support the Government’s goal of better fusing all elements of national capability to strategic ends. However, we believe that the limits of what the military can achieve in effects-based operations on their own needs to be understood by all parts of the MoD and across Government departments.

Platforms

70. A focus on capabilities and platforms is in some ways understandable—in effects-based operations one needs to be able to forecast how the enemy will respond to kinetic and non-kinetic coercive effects. Given the difficulty in doing this, the tendency is to fall back on a focus on the kinetic end of the spectrum—i.e. shortening sensor to shooter times. The objective in effects-based operations is to attack the enemy’s coherence and ultimately the will to fight, through the exploitation of asymmetric advantages in knowledge and, precision and mobility. Furthermore, shortening sensor to shooter times is just one aspect

69 HC 635 (2003–04), para 33.

70 *Ibid.*

71 Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War, Strategy Tactics and Military Lessons*, (Washington, 2003) p 29.

72 HC 57-III (2003–2004), Q 1672.

of “knowledge superiority”—there may be occasions when shortening such times is not actually beneficial to effect based objectives, placing too much emphasis on rapidity which alone will not guarantee the desired effect. Presence can be as important an effect as traditional kinetic activities in some operational contexts.

71. It should also be remembered that asymmetry works both ways. Just as we seek to understand the enemy as a complex and adaptive system, so our opponents have at times been equally focussed on our system. The Secretary of State noted just how significant the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had been:

New York, Washington and Pennsylvania were a series of coordinated attacks on one day—and the yet the terrorists have changed the entire landscape of global security policies as a result.⁷³

72. In fact it could be argued that much of the thinking behind effects-based operations owes more than a passing nod to our strategic opponents of the moment—the terrorists. Effects-based planning essentially seeks to achieve mass effects without mass forces. This is exactly what terrorists have long sought, the ability to achieve mass effect, without having mass capability, usually by precise shocking attacks, designed to have psychological effects. (Although their capacity for strategic change has rarely if ever been achieved.) The difference is that MoD appears to have reversed the argument, and is using it as grounds for reducing existing mass capabilities. **We are not convinced that mass “effect” alone will be enough in meeting the challenges faced by the UK, since in many situations the UK will still require the capacity for mass “presence” as well.**

73. The suspicion has grown that the focus on agility, effect without mass and the move away from a platform focus has less to do with an intellectually coherent strategy of effects-based warfare than with the need to “cut our cloth” as best we can. Sir Kevin Tebbit, Permanent Under Secretary at MoD, told the Committee of Public Accounts that difficult choices must be made in framing the defence planning assumptions:

We fielded a force (to Iraq) in less time within the parameters of our Defence Planning Assumptions. We did better than we should have done notwithstanding the weaknesses...There were still deficiencies. How can we make those good? We have a lessons learned study...the implementation of those lessons if we really want to get much faster with this size of force...will cost a great deal of money. Twenty-five of our recommendations in those studies would each cost over £100 million and another 50 of them would cost between £1 million and £100 million. The cost of being able to put a force of this size, 46,000 people, into battle in anything less than what we achieved, in less than four and a half months would be enormous. You pay your money and you take your choice.

...to really be able to conduct expeditionary warfare with this size force more rapidly than we have managed on this occasion would be very expensive. That is not to say

73 Speech to Durham University Union Society (30 October 2003), http://news.mod.uk/news/press/news_press_notice.asp?newsItem_id=2859

we cannot do it with smaller packages, 9,000 brigade level, medium scale, but this was a very large open

Therefore costs are at the heart of these discussions, but no costs have been provided or even hinted at in the White Paper. **It is impossible to assess whether the application of NEC to fewer platforms will really produce greater (or even equal) effect, without any discussion of the costs of embracing these technologies and the structural implications for the armed services of such developments.**

74. If, however, agility, adaptability and precision can be provided with fewer platforms, as the White Paper indicates will be the result of current thinking, why not enhance the existing number of platforms that we currently possess? This would ensure that not only can the UK Armed Forces be agile, but also that they can actually be so in more than two and a half places at once. In recent times it has been clear that MoD has been unwilling to commit to new operations until existing commitments have been either scaled-back or relinquished—a function of the number of platforms (and troops) available, not simply their relative adaptability and capacity for precision. Therefore, reducing numbers of platforms simply because they are individually more capable does not necessarily make the UK Armed Forces able to do more. It might, in fact, leave the UK able to do fewer things—albeit more effectively. **We believe that a policy of reducing the existing number of platforms in advance of acquiring the new capabilities (and of demonstrating their effectiveness) is potentially dangerous.**

People

75. Sir Kevin Tebbit accepted in evidence to us that the Armed Forces have been asked to do a great deal in the period since the original SDR and that operational tempo has stretched service personnel.⁷⁵ It is therefore odd to find that the MoD solution is to say that platform numbers and people numbers are less important than before. Sir Kevin told us:

We need to move to a sense of defence effects, the effects we can create by our force structure rather than simply platform numbers and people numbers. It does not mean to say that numbers are not important, but they are no longer the driving measure of defence capability that they were.⁷⁶

76. The logic might be easier to accept if there was a sense, as there was after the end of the Cold War, that we had too many platforms with capabilities we no longer needed in such numbers. But in fact boots on the ground, ships off the littoral and airborne platforms overhead will need to be present to deliver the effect. The First Sea Lord commented:

...in the final analysis if you have got one of something it cannot be in two places at once it does become an issue in terms of numbers. [NEC] is not the absolute panacea to everything, there has to be a balance there.⁷⁷

74 Sir Kevin Tebbit to PAC, Q 171, HC 273-I (2003–04), 21 January 2004.

75 Defence Committee, *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts*, 12 May 2004, HC 589-I, Q 45.

76 Sir Kevin Tebbit, *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts*, 12 May 2004, Q 29.

77 Q 71

The former Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Boyce echoed these sentiments:

however clever the new technology, it does not allow a unit to be in two places at the same time...much of the future hi-tech that is given so much hype is not suited for what goes on operationally for the vast majority of the time...mundane, albeit important, low intensity peace keeping tasks.⁷⁸

77. We agree. The Committee has found no serving service personnel complaining of over supply of either platforms or numbers of personnel. Indeed, although the Secretary of State claimed in his appearance before us that Operation Fresco “had absolutely no effect on the numbers (of troops available for Iraq) at all”,⁷⁹ our inquiry into Operation Telic and the effect of the fire-fighters dispute revealed that the Armed Forces were at the limit of what they could achieve with the numbers that they had. Network-enabled capability would not have delivered the effect to the fire fighters dispute any better if the numbers of troops had not been available. We concluded that:

Although the Armed Forces commitment to Operation Fresco did not prevent them from putting together an effective force package for the operation in Iraq, it did limit the total numbers. It also adversely affected some elements of the force (by for example requiring high readiness units to move at short notice from fire-fighting to deploying to Iraq). In the longer term it could have undermined the Armed Forces’ ability to sustain combat operations.⁸⁰

Overall, the demands that Operation Telic placed on UK Armed Forces in the context of other operational requirements were very close to the maximum that they could sustain.⁸¹

Furthermore, during our recent visit to Iraq, we were told in no uncertain terms that the men and women of the Armed Forces believed that Operation Fresco combined with Operation Telic had placed unsustainable and unreasonable burdens on them and their families.

78. The Secretary of State denied that he was intending to reduce numbers as result of NEC. Rather the intention was to “enable those armed forces to conduct a greater range of tasks”.⁸² CGS however admitted to us that reductions in the size of the army were being looked at and would probably happen, although they would be “relatively marginal”.⁸³ However, in further questions it emerged just where the cuts could be expected—in the infantry. CGS told us:

The regimental system is bedrock to having the defining capability of the infantry which we have today...there is no guarantee...that the size of the infantry we have today is set forever...

78 HL Deb, 24 March 2004, col 726

79 Q 149

80 HC 57-I (2003–04), para 56

81 *Ibid.*, para 57

82 Q 106

83 Q 230

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State indicated to the Committee that he did not have the same attachment to the regimental system as some of his predecessors:

the titles of regiments have been changed over the years, there have been amalgamations. I come from the East Midlands and the Sherwood Foresters have a very proud tradition but these days people do not join the Sherwood Foresters *per se*. Elsewhere in the East Midlands we saw the establishment of the Anglians who have very quickly established a proud tradition which is strongly supported. We are talking about recruiting 17-, 18- and 19-year-olds and sometimes that is overlooked in the debate about regimental loyalty. They are loyal to the regiment they join and that is the basis on which their loyalty continues.⁸⁴

79. We accept that there is every justification in seeking to benefit from advances in technology to deliver decisive effect when it is required. However, we believe the UK's future security challenges, on the scale of effort envisaged, require the retention of the existing scale of forces, plus the benefits of network-enabling capabilities. Otherwise, the Armed Forces will be unable to operate without again placing unsustainable demands on service personnel.

80. Another important consideration appears to have been overlooked in much discussion of platforms—attrition. The UK has been fortunate not to have suffered significant losses in recent operations, but this is not something that should be assumed by defence planners. In the case of a relatively small-scale military such as the UK's this problem can rapidly become acute. If MoD continues to reduce the number of platforms to the bare minimum, the Armed Forces will become increasingly vulnerable to any significant losses. For example, if the Royal Navy was reduced to a fleet of destroyers and frigates in the low 20s, which may well be the result of the current review in MoD, it would only be able to provide a force of four or five vessels for regular deployment. In the Falklands campaign, the Royal Navy lost four ships sunk and four badly damaged, losses which today would be devastating. The First Sea Lord told us:

In terms of overall numbers...there are concerns if you go down below certain levels...If you get down to too low numbers and you have to get involved in something where [ships are lost] it becomes very significant.⁸⁵

During Operation Telic, the loss of two Sea King helicopters in a collision removed a significant capability at a crucial moment in operations which had to be filled by other coalition assets. We asked CAS about attrition rates on a smaller number of platforms, as single role aircraft were replaced in favour of multi-role aircraft. He told us this was always considered as part of deciding on force packaging for each specific task.⁸⁶

81. Below certain numbers of key platforms, force packaging for major operations would not leave enough for other enduring commitments if any significant attrition was suffered—a danger that should not be ignored. If today's Royal Navy suffered the sort of losses seen during the Falklands war during an operation, it appears to us that the UK

84 Q 137

85 Q 244

86 Q 208

would be left with a fleet that is not fully able to support existing operational commitments. **We believe that if the number of platforms in certain key areas (such as large surface ships) was significantly reduced, the UK Armed Forces would be vulnerable to any significant combat attrition in future operations. We have not seen evidence that this factor has been taken seriously enough into account by MoD in its approach to platform numbers.**

82. To date, the adoption of network-enabled capability has suggested that the tempo of operations may well increase and with it the pressures on commanders in the decision cycle. The effect on UK forces therefore will continue to be “stretching” rather than less demanding. We are concerned that MoD continues to focus on platform numbers—only in reverse.

83. The dangers of being seduced by concepts of “rapidity”, “tempo”, “deep fire” and “full-spectrum dominance” and allowing technology to drive doctrine and force structuring appear to us to be significant. Situational awareness (knowing where you, your allies and the enemy are) is easier to achieve on a conventional battlefield—far harder in the complex urban and cultural environments where we are increasingly likely to ask our troops to deploy.

84. **We believe MoD has not addressed the issue at the heart of effects-based operations—the difference between the “projection” of force and the “presence” of force. We fully support the idea of devoting further resources to enabling assets and achieving more deployable forces. We do not however believe this should be at the expense of reasonable scale. In high-tempo high-intensity operations (and in engaging targets of opportunity), projection forces may be sufficient. But as extensive peace support operational experience has demonstrated, the UK may also be called upon to provide presence and for that there is still no substitute for numbers. We believe that true effect is a product of quality and scale. Effects-based operations may in some circumstances reduce the required numbers of people and platforms, but they cannot be regarded as an all purpose substitute. Although there were no announced plans to reduce the size of the Army in the White Paper, the indications are that MoD is looking at cuts in the infantry and armoured units. We believe that any reduction in the establishment of the Army would be premature.**

The balance of skills

85. Traditionally the armed services have argued that the skills of the war-fighter best equip service personnel to “scale down” to do other tasks. CDS argued that training separately for peacekeeping operations and war-fighting risked a two-speed military. CGS was adamant that:

you can always adjust from that war fighting standard, you can come downwards for less demanding operations, the reverse is arguably not true...if commitments are high it makes making people available for that sort of training...more difficult.⁸⁷

86. We note the argument of the head of the Army, but believe that it highlights another problem with the White Paper. It articulates an overtly expeditionary strategy for the Armed Forces in the future, with an increasing emphasis on operational deployments, which are exactly the things that will make training cycles much harder to maintain in the absence of additional resources—which are unlikely to be provided. The result may well be a continuation of the post-SDR experience of excessive deployments breaching guidelines on avoiding excessive periods of deployed service, with resultant effects on stretch in the Armed Forces.

87. Effects-based operations will require a different approach to not only the centrality of war-fighting skills in the training cycle, but also the appropriate balance of skills provided in pre-deployment training before operations. The UK Armed Forces may have to be trained to scale up to (or at least across to) effects-based operations, not down from war-fighting. Effects-based operations will require skills not of a lower order than those associated with war fighting, but in addition to those war fighting skills—a point we do not believe has been sufficiently recognised.

88. We understand the necessity of placing high intensity war-fighting at the heart of military training, but question whether the continued emphasis on war-fighting skills is the correct way of approaching the challenges of effects-based operations. We recognise that while effects-based operations may alter the balance between capabilities, the concept does not do away with the need to have armed forces that can fight wars of the most demanding type. However, in the wider strategic context, effects-based operations place new demands on individuals at all levels to understand the impact of their actions. We question whether the current emphasis on training for war, supplemented by limited pre-deployment training which hone skills for peace support operations, are adequately equipping our service personnel for these much wider demands. The current preoccupation with speed, agility, parallel operations, decisiveness and tempo misses a vital human aspect of effects-based thinking, which has significant ramifications for the way we train our Armed Forces. We are not convinced that these have been adequately addressed by the White Paper.

89. Opponents initially defeated in conventional terms have often gone on to regroup and present a continuing threat prevail later. In what are likely to be increasingly complex, often urban operations, the “detering” and “coercing” described in the White Paper, will require a sophisticated understanding of the psychology of the enemy and the population within which they may be hiding. This understanding is less likely to be enhanced by rapid decision-making and urgent operational tempo, than by long, thorough, patient and careful engagement with the civilian population. The British have shown themselves capable of this sort of activity, for example in the tremendous work being undertaken by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, which have led the way in cross-department effects-based thinking. But they have depended upon resources on the ground, not technological solutions to political problems in an insecure environment. **Much of the talk about effects-based operations and network-enabled capability is still stuck in the world of kinetic effect and physical destruction, with the higher order psychological effects remaining elusive. The skills we are asking of our Armed Forces in support of these operations are of a significantly different and additional nature to what has previously been asked of them, even for war-fighting and to ignore this risks sending them unprepared into complex and dangerous situations.**

90. Effects-based operations are going to require whole scale changes in how militaries operate and structure themselves and while the White Paper hints at this, it offers little guidance on how it intends to get there. We were surprised to hear from CDS that he did not expect the White Paper to have significant consequences for how the Armed Forces approach recruitment and training:

I do not see the White Paper or anything that we intend to do is going to materially change the sort of things that we do at the moment...[provided] you have the right training regime and...the right training facilities, it is not difficult.⁸⁸

91. We believe that the advent of true effects-based operations may have very significant implications for the nature of military training and indeed on the structure of the Armed Forces.

5 Command Issues

Mission command

92. The practice in the UK's Armed Forces of devolving responsibility down to low levels of command is known as mission command. The commander's *intent* is shared with subordinates, who are told what to achieve and why, but are then left to decide how to achieve it. Subordinates are encouraged to use their judgement, initiative and intelligence in pursuit of the commander's goal.

93. Network-enabled capability could offer the opportunity to capitalise on the potential of new technologies to decentralise tactical command whilst centralising strategic command. As Air Vice Marshal McNicoll told us last year:

We are looking at how mission command in the information age can work. We are agreed that mission command encapsulates one of the best aspects out of the British approach to the use of military force, the ability for a commander to articulate his intent and for the people beneath him to decide on the best way of carrying that out. The information age should allow a much greater dissemination, a much clearer exposition, of the commander's intent. The question that we are looking at at the moment...is whether we need in some way to decouple more than we do at the moment the command and control functions.⁸⁹

94. Thus, mission command could be enhanced by the full exploitation of the benefits of network-enabled capability, with shared situational awareness and shared understanding of commanders' intent.. But it could also be undermined by it, both at the operational level and the grand strategic level of the political-military interface. There is a danger that mission command itself can encourage a preoccupation with goals (the commander's intent) rather than effects, which in the new operational environment could be undermined by the actions of those at the tactical level. Junior ranks become in effect strategic in their significance. It also raises the problem of the high level command looking down:

...if, for example, there was a small operation going on somewhere and something was happening in that operation that might have a strategic impact, it may be possible in future (and it is to some extent possible now) for people at the strategic or grand strategic level to reach across the operational and tactical levels of command and make a decision and alter what is occurring there...We do not see that that means that we get rid of the tactical and operational layers of command. There are still functions that these levels will have to carry out and the larger the operation the larger the burden on them because of the ability of somebody at the top of the tree to be able to see everything that is going on will obviously not be there regardless of how big the network is. This is one of the potential downsides of network-enabled capability, that it might allow what has been described as "long screwdrivers" to reach forward.⁹⁰

89 HC 93-I (2002-03), para 94

90 *Ibid.*

95. Effects-based operations are essentially a way of thinking, not a methodology. As Major General John McColl who commanded the ISAF Force in Afghanistan, recently put it:

The armed forces must fight hard to ensure that the traditional and well-proven methods of command and war-fighting are not undermined by NEC. This will take doctrine, training, self-discipline and determination to see it through...unhindered by process, technology, or stagnant thinking.⁹¹

Traditional and well-proven methods of command will however have to prove themselves relevant to the future as effects-based thinking takes hold.

96. Even if effects-based thinking offers strategic clarity, it also remains based on premises which are difficult to measure—the link between cause and effect and the mechanisms that tie tactical results to strategic effects. This requires unprecedented interaction between operational level commanders and other “stake-holders” in the campaign, who in an effects-based operation may include, as Air Vice Marshal Mike Heath explained, the whole of government.⁹²

97. Dangers could develop at both ends of the spectrum. Politicians will lack the capacity to exploit, or indeed, properly understand the network of sensors and shooters, which are operating on such tight time lines (in many cases in real time) and may be tempted to delegate authority downwards. Meanwhile, at the other end of the operational spectrum, ever more junior ranks will be called upon not only to understand the concept of effects-based operations, but to act with the full pressure of the strategic implications of their actions on the effects sought. This raises the prospect of the “long screwdriver” pushing decision-making up the chain of command and thereby undermining junior ranks’ confidence in their own decision-making powers. Decisions then become increasingly remote from the actual employment of force on the ground, with consequent dangers.⁹³ **It remains questionable whether these are reasonable demands to place on the people at the operational/tactical end of the spectrum, but we believe that this is a major implication of embracing effects-based operations. We are not convinced that these challenges have been properly grasped or addressed by the Defence White Paper.**

Higher command

98. British Defence Doctrine talks of the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war, in which instructions and objectives are passed down the chain of command from top to bottom, with each level given time to achieve certain goals. But in high tempo full spectrum effects-based operations, tactical activity can often have strategic effects, many of which may be occurring without an appreciation of what has been achieved before it is too late. The logic is that far flatter organisational structures, at least for operations, may have to be embraced. This may also see the levels of war begin to fold into one another, a trend identified and accepted in British Defence Doctrine:

91 McColl, John, ‘Adapting Command Hierarchies: Does NEC Pose a Threat or an Opportunity?’, *RUSI Journal* (February 2004) p 55.

92 Lessons of Iraq, HC 57-I (2003–04), para 443.

93 For a discussion of the question of micro-management dangers see Paul Cornish, ‘Cry Havoc and Let Slip the Managers of War—The Strategic, Military and Moral Hazards of Micro-Managed Warfare’, *NATO/EAPC Research Fellowship Paper*, NATO Website, (October 2002).

At times, the level of command may appear to be almost an irrelevance. While the strategic/tactical overlap may be inevitable, given the nature of some operations, it does threaten the essential command and control structure and can undermine the principles of mission command...

...pragmatism applied to the prevailing politico-military circumstances will be the key, although political and military leaders at the strategic level should be discouraged from attempting directly to influence tactical activity.⁹⁴

99. The challenge facing the UK military is that effects-based operations combined with network-enabled capability may not permit such pragmatism in the future because there simply may not be the time. Effects-based operations will not be linear or sequential and control of their environment will become more complex and difficult. The Secretary of State told an audience at RUSI that:

...everyone, from the section leader on the ground, to the pilots above him, to his commanders in the field, headquarters in the UK and sometimes even myself and the Prime Minister need to be able to assimilate and act on information together, rather than one after the other.⁹⁵

This also has important implications for command structures. As the Secretary of State indicated “the old decision-making structures ...will be too cumbersome and too slow in the years ahead”.⁹⁶

100. Additionally, the technology of network-enabling capabilities may encourage political leaders to believe that they have a better understanding of the battlespace than is actually the case. Civilian and even top level military control may become less, not more, effective. The results could be overwhelming and deeply confusing, as Major General McColl has pointed out:

The modern battlefield is already an information-rich environment ...How can this impending exponential rise in data be managed without obscuring or degrading a Commander’s strategic, operational and tactical appreciation of the battlespace? Will it become just another “friction of conflict?”⁹⁷

101. The network-enabled invasion forces that prevailed in the high intensity phase of operations in Iraq have subsequently appeared too small for rapid enough reconfiguration for the task of post-conflict stabilisation and occupation. Furthermore, a number of the coalition troops appeared unprepared for urban operations, counter insurgency or indeed the military responsibilities of an occupying power.

102. Public perception of how our fighting forces behave during operations will be an increasingly important factor in the successful pursuit of effects-based operations. For example, the argument that human rights abuses by coalition forces in Iraq were

94 MoD, JWP 0-01, *British Defence Doctrine 2nd Edition* (2001), p 1.4.

95 Speech to Royal United Services Institute (30 July 2002), http://news.mod.uk/news/press/news_press_notice.asp?newsItem_id=1886.

96 *Ibid.*

97 ‘Does NEC Pose a Threat or an Opportunity?’, *RUSI Journal*.

perpetrated by a few bad apples may be true, but is irrelevant. The broad effect of this relatively low-level mistreatment has been to undermine the good work of the many. **The command chain needs to address the implications of the actions of the few more comprehensively than it has done to date—to show that every possible step has been taken to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in future and such “effects” are not repeated. The fact that similar incidents occurred amongst coalition forces in Afghanistan before Iraq and in Somalia before that, should have warned senior military and civilian leaders as to the dangers. In effects-based operations, the Armed Forces need to rigorously enforce observance of acceptable standards of behaviour towards civilians, detainees and prisoners by their personnel.**

103. The SDR New Chapter noted that network-enabled capability was leading to greater precision in the control of operations and that this might have significant implications for the British way of warfare rooted as it is in the manoeuvrist approach and mission command. The British approach, with its emphasis on independence of mind and speed of judgement, places a high premium on individual initiative and the ability to exploit changes in circumstances (exactly what the White Paper says effects-based operations will do). It encourages the delegation of decision-making, with a consequent requirement for trust throughout the chain of command. Micro-management sits very badly with this approach, but will it be possible to avoid in effects-based operations? In strategic level effects-based operations, which include interaction between politicians, military commanders, diplomats, economists and all the cross-department activity that is required to achieve effect, who arbitrates the division of labour?

104. According to the MoD, the delivery of “military effect” now requires revised planning assumptions, to support high operational activity at all times—that is, not only has the military begun to move towards a permanent expeditionary posture, it also must expect to be used continuously. During the Cold War, when the Armed Forces prepared to fight a war that everyone hoped would never come, defence and politics were in some ways artificially separated. **The shift to high levels of expeditionary activity around the world in support of “effects” can be seen as evidence of the re-politicisation of defence policy. No longer can defence be seen as supporting ends somewhat detached from other aspects of foreign and domestic policy. Rather it will now have to operate as an integral part of that political process, with consequent changes in the position of the Armed Forces within the political process.**

105. The scrutiny of how the military identifies and achieves the “required” effects on individual operations is likely to increase beyond the professional experience of most of the UK Armed Forces commanders and their troops. The military perceived as being engaged in operations of *choice* rather than *requirement* are likely increasingly to be called upon to justify how and why they acted in certain situations, by distant commentators, with little or no background in, or knowledge of, military matters. Furthermore, the constant and intrusive attention of the media, along with the implications of international, as well as national, public opinion scrutinising every tactical action by individual service men and women is likely to place even greater strain on the political-military interface. It may also threaten the bond of trust that is required for mission command, as mistakes and errors become increasingly unacceptable when the media are all too ready to assign blame/responsibility. The challenges to commanders and their troops are likely to be significant.

106. We remain concerned that the demands of effects-based operations on higher command have not been fully appreciated by the MoD. We recommend that in their reply to this report the Government set out its understanding of these developments and their doctrinal implications.

Coalition operations

107. The White Paper has moved on significantly from the SDR and the New Chapter in its consideration of coalition operation. It notes that:

The most demanding expeditionary operations, involving intervention against state adversaries, can only plausibly be conducted if US forces are engaged.⁹⁸

This has prompted some to question why the UK is limiting itself in this way. CDS acknowledged that the assumption was that the UK would not engage in inter-state conflict on its own again.⁹⁹ Coalitions will be essential since the UK will no longer prepare to carry out any large scale operations alone, according to the Secretary of State, who told us:

we do not envisage needing to generate large-scale capabilities across the same spectrum, given that in the most demanding operations it is inconceivable that the United States will not be involved...¹⁰⁰

The language was very forceful and indicated a change in emphasis—in November 2003 the Secretary of State only referred to the possibility of the UK engaging in large-scale combat operations without the US as being “highly unlikely”.¹⁰¹

108. But as well as maintaining its connection with the US, the UK must also consider other allies. In embracing the new technology MoD says it is attempting to ensure that it leaves gateways available for allies to connect to later, when they acquire the capabilities to join the UK network. The Secretary of State denied that the UK was finding it hard to keep up with the US,¹⁰² but this was not the picture received from other contributors to our inquiry. In dealing with the US lead in areas of NEC, the defence chiefs told us that the UK would never be able to replicate the US capability, but attempts were being made to ensure that the UK could plug into the US network as required.¹⁰³ CAS told us that:

We are not actually trying to catch up because if one chased them then I think...one would never overhaul them. What we are trying to do is point ahead and get to the same capability at the same time...That does not mean ...we will buying the same things, but it does mean...that we will be working out protocols, processes and procedures to ensure that as these things come into service...we will be interoperable.¹⁰⁴

98 DWP 1, para 3.5.

99 Qq 214-215

100 Q 80

101 HC Deb, 3 November 2003, col 518

102 Q 174

103 Q 257

104 Q 257

CGS put it as follows: “we must be able to fight with the Americans. That does not equal we must fight as the Americans. **We remain to be convinced that in an era of effects-based operations and network-enabled capability this aim (to be able to plug into the US network as required) will be achievable, and we will watch this with interest.**

109. The biggest problem could be that the UK will not know in advance which countries will be able to bring which capability to operations of “coalitions of the willing”. A further complication is that different countries have different requirements and equipment, often with differing bandwidth capabilities. The UK is seeking to keep up with the US in order to share their picture, not copy their network. **We conclude that the implications of effects-based operations, utilising network-enabled capability, on coalition operations have not been properly addressed in the Defence White Paper.**

110. Difficulties could also arise over rules of engagement (ROE). Even today NATO ROE is open to different interpretations by separate national contingents on the same operations. When visiting British troops on a variety of operations in the past few years, we have regularly had raised with us the problem of national red-cards—that is caveats by national governments on what their troops can and cannot do—which is claimed to be a significant obstacle to making multinational coalition operations work effectively. This is especially so where there are small composite units from a number of countries, rather than organic independent national contingents capable of decisive action. CGS told us that such situations had to be carefully handled:

The degree to which you get cohesion in a multi-national force is to some extent at least a function of the degree of commitment of the national contingents to the task in hand...the whole question of a national red card...there is no easy answer...It goes back to... the level to which it is sensible to have a multinational force. If you are going to fight a war-fighting operation you need to be very careful as to how far down these routes you allow a multinational force...¹⁰⁶

111. We are concerned that as the pressure grows towards the UK sending smaller and smaller force packages on coalition operations as articulated in the White Paper, the danger of the resultant force’s effectiveness being dependent on the caveats of some of the smallest contributors will increase. We have repeatedly seen that while British forces often contribute the most effective capability to coalition operations, the limited size of our contributions can mean that we are dependent on forces from countries that do not share our doctrinal, or indeed political approach. The ambition of successful effects-based operations in a coalition context is we believe well beyond the current political and military capabilities of our alliance structures. **We have identified some of the reasons why we believe that effects-based operations are going to be a huge challenge for the UK Armed Forces. Unless the question of national red-cards and caveats is urgently reviewed by NATO and the European Union, the potential for ineffectual coalition deployments is significant. The UK should beware of planning for operations in which small UK force packages operating as part of a coalition are assumed to be capable of achieving “effect”. If they must rely on coalition partners, there must be robust agreement on the**

105 Q 257

106 Q 258

“effects” sought. This programme has the potential to undermine the UK’s approach to composite coalition operations.

6 Force Structures and Personnel Issues

Equipment

112. We discussed the equipment implications of network-enabled capability in our SDR New Chapter report, noting that much of the equipment identified by the New Chapter as supporting NEC either predated or arose from the original SDR work.¹⁰⁷ Programmes that MoD identified as supporting the goal of more flexible and rapidly deployable expeditionary forces included the future aircraft carriers and the Future Joint Combat Aircraft (now focussed on the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)), the Watchkeeper UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) programme, the Future Rapid Effects System (or FRES - a family of medium weight armoured vehicles), and a variety of strike assets including cruise missiles such as Storm Shadow and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles. We concluded that we had seen “little evidence of the urgency that the MoD has claimed to be devoting to acquiring new capabilities and embracing new technologies”.¹⁰⁸ We have seen no reason to revise this judgement in the past year.

113. Sir Kevin Tebbit told us that the most important programmes that were going forward at present towards the realisation of NEC were the Bowman digitisation of Army communications, the Watchkeeper programme, the arrival of ASTOR, (an airborne stand-off radar and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, or ISR, system), and FRES.¹⁰⁹ **We continue to be surprised at the slow pace with which UAV technology is being embraced by the UK Armed Forces. It does not seem that many of the effects-based operational capabilities that the MoD indicated it was exploring in the New Chapter have been significantly advanced since, although we welcome the introduction of Bowman ahead of its (albeit revised) in-service date. A number of the key programmes identified at that time have either slipped further or remain unchanged. We are concerned that the UK still does not have sufficient secure data links to allow it to integrate with United States forces, especially in the land environment.**

Force Structures

114. During the New Chapter inquiry we were promised more detail on force structures once the White Paper was published. However, in the event the White Paper was short on specifics, and now we have been told that further detail on equipment and force structures will come out “later in the summer”.¹¹⁰ We concluded in our New Chapter inquiry that:

the MoD’s approach appears to be that the UK’s armed forces should primarily be involved at the start and at the end of operations, offering agile expeditionary forces which can change their operational focus very quickly. So far, however, the Committee has seen little indication of what specific choices and trade-offs are likely

107 HC 93-I (2002–03), para 107

108 *Ibid.*

109 Qq 100–103

110 Q 79

to be involved in process which, the MoD insists, is underway but still at a relatively early stage

115. Other than the decision to create an additional medium brigade from a heavy brigade, announced in the White Paper, there has been little evidence of further progress since our conclusion of 2003. We also concluded in our SDR New Chapter report that the MoD had not addressed the risk of over-commitment leading to overstretch and we urged the MoD to consider these issues “in an open and inclusive manner”.¹¹² **In evidence, the Secretary of State and the Chief of Defence Staff refused to discuss the current MoD work streams in which a range of issues including future force structures are being considered.**¹¹³ **We have been disappointed at the lack of openness by MoD witnesses during this inquiry in responding to what we believe have been reasonable and appropriate questions.**

116. The decision to move towards more medium-weight forces, at the expense of certain heavy formations may appear strange so soon after the largest deployment of heavy forces for many years, but according to CGS, was based on an analysis of what the Army had been doing for some time:

When you...see what the Army has been required to do...it is quite striking the relative frequency with which the heavy end, the heavy armoured end, is used as compared to the light end. It is the latter which has been called on very much more frequently...So there was an imbalance...of use and it meant...that we were having one part of the army being over-used, and...another part being relatively underused.¹¹⁴

In the longer term, he said, the solution would be FRES, although he could offer no certainty about when it might be available and accepted that the current target of 2009/10 was “challenging”.¹¹⁵ **We are surprised that the Army is prepared to do away with, as yet, unspecified quantities of heavy armoured forces when their replacement remains a concept which has not even left the assessment phase.**

117. One of the structural changes already seen in operational deployments in recent years, and likely to accelerate as a result of the focus on effects-based operations, is the commitment of advanced intelligence capabilities down to battle group level, a significant change from traditional practices and potentially a force driver towards flatter hierarchies. In the past, significant intelligence capabilities would be given to brigade-sized forces and above, but only exceptionally to smaller force packages. Intelligence Corps personnel can now routinely be attached to relatively small units designed to achieve “effects” previously expected only of larger formations. We saw evidence of this on recent visits which demonstrated the importance of supporting tactical level operations with operational level assets such as intelligence.

111 HC 93-I (2002–03), para 118

112 *Ibid.*, para 123

113 Qq 17–19 & 88–114

114 Q 221

115 Qq 222–227

Air-land integration

118. The key to successful effects-based operations is the fusion of the various operational realms into one seamless battlespace in which effect can be delivered. One area of deficiency in this respect that was revealed by Operation Telic (and which we discussed in our Lessons of Iraq inquiry) was that of air-land integration. A prime lesson of Operation Telic was the importance of close air support, in particular “kill box interdiction-close air support” (KI-CAS) and the need for the RAF to practise it more widely. We also received reports of a lack of air-land communications capability on the part of British forces during Operation Telic.

119. We were told that UK forces had been better at air-land integration in the Cold War and needed to practise it in relevant environments with future coalition partners. In our Lessons of Iraq report we concluded:

We feel that the shortcomings in the practice and training of close air support by the RAF and Land Forces which have emerged in recent operations must be urgently addressed. This will require a reassessment of the numbers of and equipment for Forward Air Controllers, both on the ground and in the air, the provision of adequate targeting pods for individual aircraft and significantly greater exercising of these capabilities in a joint environment. Such exercises are likely to have to take place overseas since, as we understand it, no UK based facility exists for such training.¹¹⁶

CAS agreed with this analysis and told us that, “where it worked extremely well...was because those involved were practised, understood the procedures, understood one another and had done it before they actually got to theatre”.¹¹⁷ MoD told us that additional targeting pods had been judged desirable but “unaffordable at the time”.¹¹⁸

120. Given that the solution is understood, we were disappointed to learn that even where it is practised, the lack of effects-based thinking throughout the command chain can obviate such efforts. For example, during this inquiry we learned that even where air-land training is undertaken it may not be carried through to operational deployments. The Royal Marines were trained in using air support properly in exercises including Saif Sareea, but when they were deployed to Afghanistan, a decision was taken not to send a UK Air Wing with them, with the result that they had to learn from scratch how to work with the US Air Force.

121. The requirement is not only for forward air controllers to practise with the air component, but also for embedded command and control elements of sufficient numbers of personnel practised in air-land integration to be present in land headquarters—an expensive capability and one which appears unlikely to be adequately resourced under current plans. MoD told us that they had created “additional TACPs (Tactical Air Control Parties) in each Division and (were) working to establish further teams in each manoeuvre Brigade.”¹¹⁹ Forward air controllers are planned to be equipped with tactical satellite

116 HC 57-I (2003–04), para 104

117 Q 210

118 Government Response to Lessons of Iraq Report, HC 635 (2003–04), para 31.

119 *Ibid.*

communications from January 2005 according to MoD.¹²⁰ The CDS accepted that air-land integration was an area of priority. He told us that they were “trying to make sure that those who are going to be taking part in these sorts of operation are going to have the right training but I do not think we have put the package together finally yet.”¹²¹ A study by the Army and RAF on the air-land interface was underway CGS added.¹²² CGS also told us that “the day of the forward air controller is most certainly not over.”¹²³

122. We were told during our Lessons of Iraq inquiry that the intention was to increase the involvement of the RAF in the BATUS training centre in Canada where large mechanised forces from the British Army train.¹²⁴ But BATUS can only exercise one battlegroup at a time and because of operational commitments it is unlikely that the RAF will be able to train with Army formations at battlegroup level this year. Furthermore, the introduction of Bowman means that such training will be even harder to arrange for the next few years, as individual Brigades are taken out for conversion to Bowman. Even so, CDS told us that he did not think BATUS was the solution because it was not large-scale enough, arguing that co-ordination of the air effort had to be at the divisional or corps level.¹²⁵ Since the White Paper envisages increasing operational deployments at the “small” to “medium” scale (both below divisional level) we are not convinced by this explanation.

123. The future challenge of close air support, demonstrated by Afghanistan and repeated in Iraq, is how to supply timely and precise air support to small numbers of friendly forces in non-linear engagements, not how to destroy large enemy divisions such as Saddam’s Republican Guards. It is a problem that does not appear to have been resolved by MoD. Given the repeated references to “jointery” in official policy documents policy we are surprised that the operational practice of air-land integration has been so slow to change. We recommend that MoD addresses this question with much greater urgency than has been displayed to date.

Readiness

124. The SDR did not balk at using the terms “overstretch” and “undermanning” (unlike the current White Paper) and set itself the target of “full manning”. It optimistically stated: “the review has designed a future force structure matched to the level of commitments we plan to be able to undertake. These structural changes, combined with measures to increase recruiting and retention, will ease overstretch”.¹²⁶ This is not what has happened in the last six years, however, with commitments regularly outstripping resources. The Defence White Paper for its part does not suggest that things will become less busy for the Armed Forces:

120 Government Response to Lessons of Iraq Report, HC 635 (2003–04), para 31.

121 Q 209

122 Q 209. The Coningham/Keyes Study by Land and Strike Command.

123 Q 212

124 HC57-I (2003–04), para 101.

125 Q 210

126 Strategic Defence Review, Vol 1, p 32

our armed forces a broader range and frequency of tasks than assumed in SDR, across a greater geographical area. This operational tempo will maintain the pressures and demands on our service men and women...flexibility and rapid mobility will therefore remain key requirements.¹²⁷

125. In this high tempo environment, expectations will rise about the way in which the management of readiness cycles will be handled, to ensure that sustained operations are possible. CDS told us that the strains of conducting operations in Iraq in 2003 were such that the UK would not be able to mount a similar large-scale operation before the end of the decade—2008 or 2009—unless it was an emergency.¹²⁸ He also told an audience at the Royal United Services Institute that:

The norm for Service Personnel will be individual mobility with frequent deployments and consequent separation from families...it is important that we pay attention to the “deal” we offer to our Service personnel.¹²⁹

126. CDS described to us what that deal means for each service:

We plan to what we call harmony guidelines...the tour interval for the Army...was to try and make sure that somebody had a two year period after his operational tour to recover, to do his training and prepare himself for the next one. Traditionally the Navy have had a much harder one...660 days expected away in three years, which is a long time. The air force is 198 or 192 over two years...that is what people sign up for when they join the organisation.¹³⁰

However, we were told that in the case of the Army these 24 month tour intervals were not being met. In some cases it appears the average was under 10 months between tours and on occasion no more than two months. The Royal Navy target of no more than 660 separated days in three years, or 220 in any single year, was broken during Operation Telic for almost 100 personnel. The RAF is working towards a harmony basis of rotations of 4 months followed by 20 months at home, with the goal of 4 months deployment followed by 24 months at home and also hopes to ensure that no-one would be asked to do more than 140 nights away from home, in any one year—as a number have been required to do recently.

127. The White Paper was depressingly short on detail about how the challenges on excess stretch and tempo of operations are to be tackled:

The recent levels of commitments faced by all three services has imposed demands on some of our people and assets that are not sustainable on a routine basis.¹³¹

It describes the dangers (Supporting Essays para 5.10–5.13) but only notes that “we are currently gathering data on separation for all service personnel as excessive levels of separation are demoralising and retention-negative. This data will help us identify and

127 DWP 2, para 5.1

128 Qq 66–67

129 ‘Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture, December 2003’, *RUSI Journal*, p 39.

130 Q 31. See also Ev 78–82 & 84.

131 DWP 1, para 4.24.

introduce alleviating measures. ¹³² CDS told us that they were “looking at the degrees of readiness of the various element parts of the force elements that make up the [JRRF] concept, making sure that the force packages...are robust enough to take account of the experience we have had over the last five/six years”.¹³³ **We believe work on dealing with excess stretch is urgently required and represents one of the greatest weaknesses of the SDR implementation to date.**

128. One initiative for improving the balance in the Navy is called Topmast. Under this, each vessel is crewed not to 100% but rather 130%, allowing for time ashore, training and career development to be planned by the ship’s captain and not constantly knocked out by operational requirements.¹³⁴

129. In the Army the “formation readiness cycle” is the way in which training is organised for the Army’s six non-specialist brigades (a significant proportion of the Army’s fighting strength) to ensure that sufficient forces are available at any one time to meet the planning assumptions for sustainable operations. The problem has been that the operational tempo in the past few years has exceeded those guidelines on a number of occasions. In the coming years this is going to be complicated by the introduction of Bowman through the Army, which will in effect remove one brigade from that cycle at a time. Furthermore, with the creation of a mechanised brigade and a light brigade through the loss of one of the heavy brigades, the availability of heavy brigades at appropriate readiness for operations will become less frequent. Given that these changes and commitments will undermine the formation readiness cycle and that a large part of the Army does not work to this cycle, the challenge for the immediate future is to create a training and deployment plan that will enable the Army to meet its commitments, both current and unforeseen, keep to harmony guidelines that enhance retention and maintain its war fighting skills at an acceptable level.

130. CGS acknowledged that the future army structure depends on addressing the problem of units being undermanned and then requiring “backfilling” when sent on operations. The Army Board is seeking to readjust this through the Future Army Step 2 programme. We asked how this initiative would work. **We were disappointed that the Chief of the Defence Staff prevented the Chief of the General Staff from answering this very reasonable question.**¹³⁵ **We regret the level of secrecy that has met our repeated requests for detail on the implications of the White Paper for force structures and personnel, and urge Ministers to review their approach to parliamentary oversight of these matters.**

131. We have concluded that many of the individuals required for operations are at present not replaceable by network-enabled capability. Operational tempo is the key to the provision of these forces and it is clear from our inquiries that elements of the services are only just managing to cope with the tempo of current operations—a situation that has been tolerated for too long. The burden of further operations could place an intolerable strain on these people.

¹³² DWP 2, para 5.28.

¹³³ Q 196

¹³⁴ Q 35

¹³⁵ Qq 231–233

132. Now that the Armed Forces exist primarily to be used on operations, as the White Paper suggests, the robustness of planning assumptions and questions of sustainability increase. Despite our repeated requests for detail about the likely changes in readiness assumptions and the evolution of the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces (JRRF) concept we were told that work on these matters had not been completed. We find it odd that a policy document as significant as the White Paper can be issued before conclusions on force structure and readiness, issues which lie at its heart, have been reached. **Since the SDR, the MoD's own harmony guidelines have too often not been achieved in terms of the work life-balance of Armed Forces personnel. We have seen no evidence in the White Paper that the demanding operational tempo of the past six years and consequent stretch on too many of our service personnel will not be repeated. We urge MoD to place the achievement of harmony guidelines at the top of its list of priorities.**

Manning

133. The total size of the Armed Services (about 200,00) was judged by CDS as about right. He argued that the demographic base of the United Kingdom was unlikely to be able to support a significantly larger structure. Furthermore, while the number of 16–24 year olds is likely to stay steady until 2009, thereafter the number will tail off significantly.¹³⁶ Thus not only do the Armed Forces have to find better ways to recruit people for the demanding operational outlook set out in the White Paper, but there will be an increasing premium on retaining as many as possible and developing the skilled workforce that network-enabled capabilities will require. Financial incentives have been used for certain specialisms, with some success, but as CDS argued:

there are always going to be a number of pinch points and I do not think the answer is to make the armed services bigger, we have just got to make all efforts we can to ensure that those who come in as specialists are retained for as long as we can...¹³⁷

134. Although technology has allowed for a reduction in manpower in many areas, for example in the Navy whose ship's complements have fallen significantly in recent years, the advent of asymmetric challenges is beginning to reverse this trend. The First Sea Lord told us that "we [are no longer] able to drive those numbers down as much as we want to in our ships and our platforms because we need sentries, we need people to go on board and search ships, we need to leave, for want of a better word, prize crews on board...all of this adds to the numbers".¹³⁸ Instead, reductions in manpower by the Navy have been ashore, where tasks that do not require a uniformed specialist have been contractorised.

135. We met a number of junior and senior ratings during our recent visit to Iraq. They argued very forcefully that the loss of shore jobs meant that they were being required to spend longer periods at sea. This disrupted their home life, and, they believed, was likely to lead to significant retention problems. We were very struck by the level of discontent expressed by these groups of service personnel, which was significantly greater than we have previously encountered.

136 Q 32

137 *Ibid.*

138 Q 35

136. According to MoD statistics as of April 2004, the Navy was 1,980 (5%) short of its trained strength requirements for regulars, the Army 3,900 (3.8%) and the RAF 830 (1.7%).¹³⁹ In the case of the Navy we were told this headline figure masked “serious gaps”.¹⁴⁰ We were also told that in the Navy retention would be acceptable if they were not under strength, but as they are, so the pressure on retention is even greater. The same problem of gaps applied to the RAF, but skills shortages often reflected shortages in the national pool, not merely in the services.¹⁴¹ In the Army, as of December 2003, the Royal Logistics Corps was 6% under trained strength, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers 7%, the Army Air Corps 13%, and the Queen Alexandra’s Royal Army Nursing Corps 23%.¹⁴² Furthermore, many of the skills required to operate the technologically more sophisticated equipment are exactly those most sought after in the private sector, with a consequent impact on retention.¹⁴³ Many of the key enabler specialists had been trained by the services themselves having joined with limited or no qualifications. Significant gaps remain in Defence Medical Services, intelligence officers, communications experts and some engineering specialisms.¹⁴⁴ However, the real challenge, as CAS told us, is how to identify which critical enablers are likely to be required in the future and to train them in sufficient numbers in advance.¹⁴⁵

137. We believe that manpower shortages and the resultant practice of “gapping” (not filling posts deemed non-essential) must be tackled seriously and urgently by the MoD. Achieving full manning levels must be a priority for the Armed Forces in an era of regular deployments.

Volunteer Reserves

138. Gaps in manning are, of course, regularly filled by reservists. Since 1995, the Reserves have provided between 10–14% of UK forces in the former Yugoslavia (5,400 members of the Territorial Army and over 2,100 ex-Regular Army Reserves).¹⁴⁶ Reservists also served in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, East Timor and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this period, as well as more recently in Iraq. They also support the work of military training teams in over 30 countries.

139. The White Paper talks about ever-closer integration of regular and reserve forces, and as the regulars are restructured, so the reserves will also have to be integrated with whatever emerges.¹⁴⁷ Since the SDR it has become clear that reserves will not only be used to augment the regulars for occasional large scale operations (with longer lead times) but for all operations. Furthermore, we received evidence that in a number of cases the armed services were forced to fill a number of the “key enabler” gaps with reservists in Operation

139 DASA, *Strength of UK Regulars and Requirements TSP03*, April 2004, www.dasa.mod.uk.

140 Q 35

141 Q 36

142 HC Deb, 20 January 2004, col 1120W

143 Q 37

144 Qq 34–40

145 Q 39

146 DWP 2, p 11

147 Q 45

Telic—hence the need for short notice sometimes. As CAS put it “we could not have done without them”.¹⁴⁸ One senior officer told us that the future use and structure of the reserves was the most important strategic question facing the Armed Forces post-Operation Telic.

140. The most dramatic recent change has been the use of compulsory call-out orders. These were first used following the attacks of 11 September 2001 to call-up intelligence specialists and RAF movements personnel—the first compulsory call-out since the 1950s.¹⁴⁹ During Operation Telic 1 (i.e. the major combat phase) some 7,500 reservists were compulsorily mobilised for service in Iraq and many continue to serve in a variety of deployments today, for example there were some 1,600 on Operation Telic 3 in March 2004.¹⁵⁰ Under the Reserve Forces Act 1996 there are specific limits for mobilised service under different call-out orders: under section 52 (national danger, great emergency or attack on the UK) reservists may be called on to serve for three years in five; under section 54 (warlike operations) one year in three; and under section 56 (peacekeeping and disaster relief) nine months in 27.¹⁵¹ Before Operation Telic, MoD came “perilously close” to having to use compulsory mobilisation for operations in the Balkans.¹⁵² Since Telic, because of operational demands, 140 compulsory call-out orders have also had to be used for reserves to support operations in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁵³

141. Although to date the system of compulsory mobilisation has worked well, there are concerns that due to the high turnover of personnel in the TA, the trained strength of the volunteer reserves may not be as large as suggested by the total establishment figures and therefore the pool available for operations that much smaller. Furthermore, having come down from 55,000 to a target of 40,000 under SDR, the TA as of December 2003 was under strength by over 2,000 at 37,750.¹⁵⁴ Operation Telic revealed marked differences between the various services—the Royal Auxiliary Air Force for example mobilised 85% of its actual strength, while for the Royal Navy Reserve the figure was 10%, with 33% of the Royal Marine Reserve called up.

142. CAS noted that the RAF tended to rely too much on reserves to provide specialist capabilities and this meant that they were hit very hard during times of great need. This is the heart of the problem—should reserves act as an augmentation element of the regulars, or as the providers of essential specialist capabilities? Either way in an era of regular operations, what it means to serve in the reserves is changing and this will need to be understood by the reservists themselves and their employers.

143. The Secretary of State acknowledged that in the future MoD needed to give employers more information and needed to be more responsive to the effect that the removal of individuals could have on smaller companies. He also acknowledged the importance of

148 Q 47

149 DWP 2, p 11

150 Q 158

151 HC Deb, 29 January 2004, 505W

152 Q 156

153 Letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, MoD, to the Chairman of the Committee, 1 April 2004. Not printed.

154 HC Deb, 26 January 2004, col 11. See also Q 46.

notice periods before call-outs. We reported in our Lessons of Iraq report that almost all those called-up for Telic 1 were given 14 days or less notice to report, despite the target figure of 21 days or more and called upon “MoD to ensure that the appropriate lessons are learned to avoid the need for such short notice to report, and to recognise the impact of this on reservists, their families and their employers”.¹⁵⁵ In its response, the Government noted that for Operation Telic II & III, 21 days notice to report was generally given and for Telic IV, MoD generally achieved over 28 days. However, it warned that operational circumstances meant that a set period of notice could not be guaranteed.¹⁵⁶

144. We are surprised that in a whole chapter on the reserves in the Supporting Essays Volume of the White Paper, there is not a single reference to the families of reservists.¹⁵⁷ This despite the main White Paper referring to the need for “a commitment to improve the relationship between the services, the reservists themselves, their families and their employers”.¹⁵⁸ CGS accepted that MoD could not be complacent, lest the good will of reservists and their employers was lost. **Given that many reservists are mobilised for service in units that are not close to their homes, we are concerned that MoD should be seen to be prioritising effective methods of welfare support to the families of mobilised reservists, who in many cases receive extremely short notice of call-out.**

145. It appears that the MoD still has not decided how best to deploy reservists—as specialists or as formed units. Efforts are under way to draw up databases of skill-sets that the MoD can draw on, but the Secretary of State told us that not all reserves want to use their specialisms, adding, “we should not in principle mobilise people because of their civilian skills”.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, we understand that the Territorial Army is considering whether to use reserves as formed units or as back-fillers for gaps in the future. In the Royal Navy all reservists are used as individual back fillers, although following a decision taken in 2002 to restructure the reserves to provide niche capabilities where gaps existed, some fill specific specialisms such as in psychological operations and civil-military co-operation.¹⁶⁰ A longer-term question is whether reserve units should train with their regular partners so as to integrate better operationally, a question that we have not had answered as yet.

146. Another factor to be considered is the welfare of the individuals concerned and their families. Some have argued that reservists tend to be better supported if they serve in their own units, which can provide an established structure of pastoral care. But given the patchy “footprint” of the reserves around the country, many reservists do not have the extended family relationship with their regiments enjoyed by regulars. This point was accepted by the Secretary of State who told us MoD needed to do more to alleviate such problems:

...individuals...may not actually live anywhere near a unit or a base. Their particular unit may have its headquarters a long way from their home. We have to do more to make sure that family members in particular are informed as to where they are and

155 HC 57-I (2003–04), para 116

156 HC 635 (2003–04), paras 34–36.

157 DWP 2, Essay 3—Developing the Reserves, pp 8–11.

158 DWP 1, para 4.25

159 Q 160

160 Q 47

what they are doing...the kind of support ...a regiment would provide. Given the nature of reservists and where they live and how they operate, that is actually quite an important factor.

147. **However it is achieved, in an era of reliance on the reserves to support operational deployments, there will be an increasing requirement for MoD to look after reservists and their families. Although there is no detailed information on this matter in the White Paper, we were pleased to note some attention to this problem in the Government's response to our Lessons of Iraq report.¹⁶² We recommend that MoD considers mobilising Welfare Officers across all the services where reservists are deployed.**

148. In our Lessons of Iraq report we also noted pressure on reservists to carry out tasks of a civilian rather than a military nature:

We are concerned about the continuing requirement on the ground for specialists from the military in areas which would under other circumstances be provided by civilian organisations. Many of these specialists will be reservists, and their prolonged deployment may have adverse consequences for retention in specialisms which are already suffering from undermanning.¹⁶³

Sir Kevin Tebbit told us that, rather than accept the increasing use of reservists to fill specialist gaps, notably for post-conflict reconstruction work, the focus was now on creating a pool of experts from various departments, companies and non-governmental organisations ready to contribute to such operations at short notice.¹⁶⁴ A cross departmental working group (MoD, DFID and FCO) has been established to consider ways in improving UK planning, co-ordination and management of post-conflict reconstruction activities.¹⁶⁵ **We welcome these initiatives as important steps towards the realisation of true cross-departmental effects-based operations and look forward to being updated on their progress.**

149. We are also concerned that the establishment of the Civil Contingency Reaction Forces in each brigade district may have implications for future mobilisation policies, especially if the move is towards the deployment of composite units. We understand that out of the headline figure of 500 CCRF troops per brigade district, no more than 350 are actually expected to turn up in time if called out. This may not matter as much when the odd dozen have been mobilised as individuals, but could be significant if whole units are deployed overseas, especially as those who have volunteered for the CCRFs may, in many cases, be not only fit for role, but also the keenest members of the volunteer reserves.

150. Sir Kevin Tebbit, denied that this might be a problem:

161 Q 158

162 HC 635 (2003–04), para 148

163 HC 57-I (2003–04), para 411

164 Q 153

165 HC 635 (2003–04), para 194

Some of the individuals who might be in the CCRFs might also at certain times be reservists who would be called up to engage in operations overseas, but my understanding is in very small numbers, very small proportions...I am not aware of a significant issue there.¹⁶⁶

In fact, the numbers concerned were not small—as of March 2004, some 852 members of the CCRFs were mobilised overseas or were on active service in the UK.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the total figures can mask significant regional disparities with consequences of exactly the sort we warned about in our earlier SDR New Chapter report. In January 2004, 150 members of the London Regiment CCRF (the district which faces the greatest likelihood of call out) were deployed on Operation Telic. They were still there in May 2004 when members of the regiment escorted us during our visit to Iraq. In addition, 147 members of the 15 North East Brigade (S) CCRF, 126 members of the 49 East of England Brigade CCRF and 99 members of the 15 North East Brigade (N) CCRF were also deployed at the same time.¹⁶⁸ It is clear from these figures that during a period when the British consulate in Istanbul was bombed and Madrid suffered its worst terror attacks ever, the capital's flagship reinforcement unit, the London district CCRF had deployed a third of its trained strength to Iraq. Furthermore, these figures do not include reservists serving on other operations.

151. We conclude that MoD has still not taken seriously enough the need for a “predictable” element to be available for civil emergencies at home. We remain to be convinced that the MoD has adequately thought through the use of reserve forces at home and away in an era of constant operational commitments and a significant threat to the UK.

152. The employers of reservists are extremely varied and include many small companies. Among the largest employers are the public services which all-together employ 30% of all volunteer reservists.¹⁶⁹ One of the main issues that needs to be addressed is whether the mobilisation requirements enshrined in the Reserve Forces Act 1996, are now, in an era of mass compulsory call-outs and repeated operational deployments, too onerous for reservists and employers alike. At the time of enactment, these requirements were rather more theoretical than is the case today. CGS told us that this was a problem he took very seriously:

I think we need to be careful. It would be, I think, a mistake to assume that we could use the reserves at the tempo at which we have been using them over the last year. The Reserve Forces Act [1996] says once in every three years and certainly that is the law, but I personally think that may be a bit too often.¹⁷⁰

153. Solutions being considered include a possible “new deal” on compulsory mobilisation and a possible return to voluntary mobilisation if at all possible. A new arrangement with employers could be that, notwithstanding the Reserve Forces Act 1996, the normal goal

166 Q 123

167 HC Deb, 24 March 2004, 270WH

168 HC Deb, 26 January 2004, 71W

169 Q 158 (Sir Kevin Tebbit)

170 Q 46

would be for no more than one mobilisation year in five in the future. Another possibility is for reservists to be offered, as it were, career breaks from their service, when they could know they would not be called up. There is also the question of the reimbursement of employers for the full cost of having to replace staff when they are mobilised, which, we were told, is not always covered under the current arrangements. In our Lessons of Iraq report we criticised the way in which MoD had decided to require reservists to inform their employers (and prospective employers) of their membership of the volunteer reserves, which could have negative implications for the employment prospects of some reservists.¹⁷¹ In its reply, the Government argued that employers were automatically informed of employees' membership of the reserves upon mobilisation and did "not expect routine employers notification to have a significant impact on employer support".¹⁷² This did not answer our actual point about the interests of the reservists themselves.

154. We are pleased to note that the MoD is taking seriously the pressures that have been placed on the reserves in recent years. We welcome this, but we would urge the MoD to avoid exploiting the commitment and dedication of the reserves through overuse. If the reserves are intended to fulfil an ever increasing role in the Armed Forces, this will require fundamental structural changes in the relationship between the regulars and reserves. We await detailed proposals from the MoD on how it intends to improve the terms and conditions of reserve service, both for the reservists themselves and their families as well as their employers.

171 HC 57-I (2003–04), para 132

172 HC 635 (2003–04), para 52

7 Conclusion

155. The Defence White Paper flows directly from initiatives articulated in the original Strategic Defence Review of 1998. Since then much has changed in the strategic environment. Following the events of 11 September 2001, the world has entered a new era of terrorism with the potential for strategic effect. When the SDR was produced there was believed to be no direct *conventional* threat to the UK. This belief has been repeated by CDS in discussing the implications of the White Paper.¹⁷³ We continue to be concerned that MoD has not significantly altered its approach to dealing with such a terrorist threat beyond the articulation of an expeditionary policy for fighting terrorists at distance. This approach has informed all the MoD's work on policy since the attacks on the United States. It relies on the terrorists agreeing to fight us on our terms rather than theirs.

156. Given the strategic agility demonstrated by global-reach terrorism in the past four years, we remain to be convinced that the MoD has sufficiently addressed the question of the military's role in defending against strategic effect terrorism at home as well as abroad.

157. The Defence White Paper emphasises more clearly than ever before in policy statements the centrality of effects-based thinking in force planning and we welcome this. While conceptually not new, effects-based operations do provide a way of thinking which should allow for a clear focus on ends sought rather than the means available. One crucial enabler of this will be the development of network-enabled capability, which offers the prospect of the better allocation of resources and holds out the potential for precise delivery of effect at greater speed. However, we believe it is essential that the important differences between effects-based operations and network-enabled capability are emphasised rather than obscured. An example of the latter is the way in which discussion of effects-based operations and the relevance of "redundant" platforms has been blurred with the implications of network-enabled capability. While such capability can be a useful tool in the realisation of effects-based operations, it is not a pre-requisite for them and may in some cases play only a supporting role in the delivery of the desired effect.

158. The White Paper remains disappointingly vague about numerous areas of relevance to these questions, including future force structures, manning levels, equipment choices and the costs of embracing new technologies. It refers to the possibility of making reductions in "redundant" capabilities, but goes into no detail about what these might be. We were unable to elicit any further information from the Secretary of State, the Permanent Under Secretary, or the Chiefs of Staff about the likely direction of these changes.

159. This raises important questions about the usefulness of policy statements such as the Defence White Paper. The intention appears to be increasingly to focus on the provision of medium weight forces which are more deployable and therefore appropriate to those tasks identified in the White Paper as likely to be required of the Armed Forces. We remain concerned that the decision to give up heavy-weight forces in favour of lighter capabilities is being implemented long in advance of their medium-weight replacements becoming available. The FRES family of vehicles for example remains a distant prospect, not a specific programme with predictable delivery dates. Overall, we remain alarmed at the slow pace of

173 'Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture, December 2003', *RUSI Journal*, p 37.

embracing network-enabled capability—in contrast to the apparently swift capacity for the renunciation of existing capability deemed “redundant”.

160. We do not believe that effects-based operations and network-enabled capability justify a reduction in the current scale of the UK’s Armed Forces. The policy of reducing existing numbers of platforms in advance of acquiring new capabilities is potentially dangerous. At a scale of forces significantly below that which we currently possess, the Armed Forces would be vulnerable to attrition (losses) during operations. This could undermine our capacity to meet enduring obligations and still be capable of mounting medium and large-scale operations in the future. The White Paper tends to emphasise the projection of force, often at the expense of the presence of force. True effect is a product of quality and scale.

161. We were told by one senior officer that the future of the reserves was one of the most important strategic questions facing the Armed Services following Operation Telic. From what we have seen during this inquiry this question has not as yet been sufficiently thought through by MoD. The White Paper offered little in the way of clarification. Over the past six years the reserves have been used to plug gaps in the regulars. Consistently around 10 per cent of deployed forces have been reservists. This has had significant implications for how the reserves are structured and their relationship with the regulars, but also placed at centre stage the whole question of how the MoD supports reservists and their families and the relationship with employers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the demands of Operation Telic 1 and subsequent post-conflict operations (Operation Telic 2, 3 and 4) have now led to problems of over-stretch amongst the reserves themselves.

162. The White Paper has not properly considered possible innovations in the way the reserves might contribute to effects-based operations in the future. MoD’s primary focus appears to have been on the implications of network-enabling technologies on the structure of the Armed Forces and their equipment programmes, not on the manpower and training implications of effects-based operations. Given the demanding and increasingly cross-government nature of effects-based thinking, it may be that the volunteer reserves could play a crucial part in expanding the capacity of the Armed Forces to deal with future challenges. The wider strategic implications of effects-based operations, which place increasing demands on the individuals involved to understand the impact of their actions, may require specialised forces, able to operate with, but not necessarily as, regular high-intensity war-fighting troops. Whether reservists could offer this specialised capability remains to be seen, but we believe that a truly innovative approach to the use and nature of the volunteer reserves will need to be at the centre of future work on realising effects-based operational capability.

163. The reserves could not only offer specialised skills that would be uneconomic to keep permanently employed in regular forces, but they could also widen the pool of personnel available for the UK. This could point the way forward for a military contribution not only to effects-based operations at a distance from the UK, but also, in time, to an enhanced contribution to its defence. Innovative and specialised contributions by volunteer reserves could allow for the engagement of a wider pool of citizens in fighting the threat of terrorism. In this way what have been termed “unlikely counter terrorists” (in essence non-traditional elements of British society contributing to homeland security) could be better integrated with pan-Whitehall counter-terrorist policies, within the context of existing military structures. We were concerned to hear that the Home Secretary was unwilling to

consider any significantly enhanced role for the Armed Forces in home defence. He emphasised the need for clear divisions in evidence to us and the Home Affairs Committee:

I think we need to retain...the very clear separation between military and civilian forces, the primacy domestically of the civilian authorities seeking the help of and calling on the military but not seeing those as taking over their role and for the public to have confidence in that so that we are very clear where the boundary lies in a democracy. It has worked very well for us and I think we would be wise to retain that distinction.¹⁷⁴

A novel approach to the nature and potential capacity of the reserves to support effects-based operations at home (and abroad) could be part of a solution to the Whitehall departmentalism that we believe has undermined the British response to the implications of 11 September 2001.

164. Since the SDR of 1998, it has been apparent that the Armed Forces have been over-stretched and not simply in a few specialisms as claimed by MoD. The White Paper is depressingly short on detail about how the challenges of excess stretch and the tempo of operational commitments will be addressed and we believe that this crucial failing in the implementation of the original SDR continues to be the area of greatest weakness in MoD policy. We have seen little evidence during our inquiry that the demanding operational tempo of the past six years and consequent stretch on service personnel will not be repeated. MoD must place this issue at the top of its priorities.

165. While on the surface the Defence White Paper represents only another small incremental step from the original Strategic Defence Review and its successor publications, taken together the steps of the past six years signal the prospect of profound changes in the Armed Forces. We are not clear why the MoD has not made these significant implications more explicit, but believe that the time for obfuscation is now past. CDS told an audience at RUSI that “one of the reasons for the excellent reputation of the UK’s Armed Forces is the professionalism of the troops that serve in them and we intend to maintain and maximise this advantage”.¹⁷⁵ To ensure this advantage we believe the Armed Forces should be openly and honestly appraised of the implications of MoD thinking and the likely changes that will effect their professional lives, not only so that they feel true engagement with the process, but also so that they can contribute to the process.

166. Finally, we believe that the implications of effects-based operations, utilising network enabled capability, on the relationship between political and military leaders has been inadequately considered by MoD. The fact that the British political-military interface worked effectively during Operation Telic, as we were told during our inquiry into the Lessons of Iraq, should not promote a sense of complacency in MoD and in Whitehall more generally. Technological advances, the growth of a culture of 24-hour news and the increasingly non-linear nature of conflict suggest to us profoundly different and potentially more intense strains on the political-military interface than previously experienced. The existing structures may not be capable of supporting the rapid and politicised pressures of

174 HC 417-I (2003–04), 2 March 2004, Q 84.

175 ‘Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture, December 2003’, *RUSI Journal*, p 39.

effects-based operations
major challenge, not du

context. They should be reviewed in advance of the next

Conclusions and recommendations

Background to the Defence White Paper 2003

1. As the post-conflict stage in Iraq has shown, a great deal more is required to achieve the objectives of an effects-based operation, than advanced military technologies in the hands of numerically small forces. (Paragraph 21)
2. We recommend that the MoD should explain more fully how UK forces have supported the United Nations (UN); how the UK expects to continue to do so; and how defence planners see the UK's military role within the UN system in relation to its roles within NATO and the European Union. (Paragraph 25)
3. While we note the co-operation between MoD and FCO at the policy level (such as on Conflict Prevention Pools) we believe that the future operational demands of effects-based thinking will require even greater collaboration. (Paragraph 31)

Strategic Environment

4. We are disappointed that a policy document that could have far reaching implications has been presented with little or no detail on the relevant procurement decisions, funding questions or likely changes in force structures and consequent effect on personnel. (Paragraph 35)
5. What has emerged in the past six years is the extent to which the Armed Forces have been operating at the limits of what they can achieve. The Strategic Defence Review's (SDR) planning assumptions provided relatively little resilience to enable the services to re-orientate when called upon to do so. (Paragraph 37)
6. It may be rash of the White Paper to state that "we expect to see a similar pattern of operations in the future", just after its predecessor document—the Strategic Defence Review—has had to be substantially amended, not least because unforeseen developments in the security environment have led to changes in operational demands. We are not convinced that expecting things to follow a similar pattern to the recent past is the best way to shape UK defence policy in an era of rapid change. (Paragraph 42)
7. We are left wondering whether the Defence White Paper is properly set in the strategic context of Britain's security circumstances, or whether it is more a reflection of what the UK has actually been doing for the last three years, and the existence of a number of legacy systems of whose continuing importance the MoD is uncertain. In other words it is far from clear whether the review process has actually been effects-led, or rather resource driven. (Paragraph 46)
8. We are not convinced that an essentially reactive approach to defence of the UK homeland is satisfactory given the nature of the threat to the UK today. (Paragraph 48)

9. The approach of errorism at distance has informed all of the MoD's work since 11 September 2001, but ultimately assumes that terrorists will agree to fight on our terms and in places of our choosing. As UK Ministers and officials regularly warn, they may choose to bring the campaign closer to our region, or indeed to the UK itself. In the context of repeated attacks on the UK we do not think that MoD's assumption would be sustainable. (Paragraph 49)

Effects-based operations

10. We note that MoD has only "begun to develop" capabilities to provide a range of options other than having to resort to traditional attritional warfare methods. We are disappointed at the apparent lack of progress in developing capabilities to provide non-kinetic options. (Paragraph 52)
11. We believe that focussing on network-enabled capability risks emphasising technology at the expense of a thorough consideration of the utility and application of military force and its judicious and appropriate use in effects-based operations. In our view the three critical elements identified by Chief of the Defence Staff (sensors, a network and shooters), which were previously set out in the SDR New Chapter, will require a vital fourth element of effective decision-making, which is not a consequence of NEC but a requirement for the realisation of effects-based operations. (Paragraph 62)
12. We believe that MoD's discussion of the evolution of warfare has not always distinguished sufficiently clearly between the concepts of network-enabled capability (NEC) and effects-based operations (EBO). NEC may contribute to the delivery of military effect in support of EBO, but it is not a prerequisite for it, or indeed, necessarily the main contributor towards an effects-based operational outcome. (Paragraph 64)
13. While the improvements in precision, accuracy and firepower are obvious, we have found less evidence that adequate resources have been devoted to the provision of the intelligence capabilities, including human intelligence, and cultural understanding which are essential to underpin these technological advances. (Paragraph 68)
14. We agree that effects-based operations should embrace the whole gamut of military and cross government capability and support the Government's goal of better fusing all elements of national capability to strategic ends. However, we believe that the limits of what the military can achieve in effects-based operations on their own needs to be understood by all parts of the MoD and across Government departments. (Paragraph 69)
15. We are not convinced that mass "effect" alone will be enough in meeting the challenges faced by UK, since in many situations we will still require the capacity for mass "presence" as well. (Paragraph 72)
16. It is impossible to assess whether the application of network-enabled capability to fewer platforms will really produce greater (or even equal) effect, without any

discussion of the costs of embracing these technologies and the structural implications for the armed services of such developments. (Paragraph 73)

17. We believe that a policy of reducing the existing number of platforms in advance of acquiring the new capabilities (and of demonstrating their effectiveness) is potentially dangerous. (Paragraph 74)
18. We accept that there is every justification in seeking to benefit from advances in technology to deliver decisive effect when it is required. However, we believe the UK's future security challenges, on the scale of effort envisaged, require the retention of the existing scale of forces, plus the benefits of network-enabling capabilities. Otherwise, the Armed Forces will be unable to operate without again placing unsustainable demands on service personnel. (Paragraph 79)
19. We believe that if the number of platforms in certain key areas (such as large surface ships) was significantly reduced, the UK Armed Forces would be vulnerable to any significant combat attrition in future operations. We have not seen evidence that this factor has been taken seriously enough into account by MoD in its approach to platform numbers. (Paragraph 81)
20. We believe MoD has not addressed the issue at the heart of effects-based operations—the difference between the “projection” of force and the “presence” of force. We fully support the idea of devoting further resources to enabling assets and achieving more deployable forces. We do not however believe this should be at the expense of reasonable scale. In high-tempo high-intensity operations (and in engaging targets of opportunity), projection forces may be sufficient. But as extensive peace support operational experience has demonstrated, the UK may also be called upon to provide presence and for that there is still no substitute for numbers. We believe that true effect is a product of quality and scale. We believe that any reduction in the establishment of the Army would be premature. (Paragraph 84)
21. We understand the necessity of placing high intensity war-fighting at the heart of military training, but question whether the continued emphasis on war-fighting skills is the correct way of approaching the challenges of effects-based operations. We recognise that while effects-based operations may alter the balance between capabilities, the concept does not do away with the need to have armed forces that can fight wars of the most demanding type. However, in the wider strategic context, effects-based operations place new demands on individuals at all levels to understand the impact of their actions. We question whether the current emphasis on training for war, supplemented by limited pre-deployment training which hone skills for peace support operations, are adequately equipping our service personnel for these much wider demands. The current preoccupation with speed, agility, parallel operations, decisiveness and tempo misses a vital human aspect of effects-based thinking, which has significant ramifications for the way we train our Armed Forces. We are not convinced that these have been adequately addressed by the White Paper. (Paragraph 88)
22. Much of the talk about effects-based operations and network-enabled capability is still stuck in the world of kinetic effect and physical destruction, with the higher

order psychological risks remaining elusive. The skills we are asking of our Armed Forces in support of these operations are of a significantly different and additional nature to what has previously been asked of them, even for war-fighting and to ignore this risks sending them unprepared into complex and dangerous situations. (Paragraph 89)

23. We believe that the advent of true effects-based operations may have very significant implications for the nature of military training and indeed on the structure of the Armed Forces. (Paragraph 91)

Command Issues

24. We question whether it is reasonable to expect people at the operational/tactical end of the spectrum to consider constantly the full implications of their actions on the effects sought, but we believe that this is a major implication of embracing effects-based operations. We are not convinced that these challenges have been properly grasped or addressed by the Defence White Paper. (Paragraph 97)
25. The command chain needs to address the implications of the actions of the few (in human rights abuse cases) more comprehensively than it has done to date—to show that every possible step has been taken to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in future and such “effects” are not repeated. The fact that similar incidents occurred amongst coalition forces in Afghanistan before Iraq and in Somalia before that, should have warned senior military and civilian leaders as to the dangers. In effects-based operations, the Armed Forces need to place the enforcement of acceptable standards behaviour towards civilians, detainees and prisoners at the centre of their efforts. (Paragraph 102)
26. The shift to high levels of expeditionary activity around the world in support of “effects” can be seen as evidence of the re-politicisation of defence policy. No longer can defence be seen as supporting ends somewhat detached from other aspects of foreign and domestic policy. Rather it will now have to operate as an integral part of that political process, with consequent changes in the position of the Armed Forces within the political process. (Paragraph 104)
27. We remain concerned that the demands of effects-based operations on the higher command have not been fully appreciated by the MoD. We recommend that in their reply to this report the Government set out its understanding of these developments and their doctrinal implications. (Paragraph 106)
28. We remain to be convinced that in an era of effects-based operations and network-enabled capability this aim (to be able to plug into the US network as required) will be achievable, and we will watch this with interest. (Paragraph 108)
29. We conclude that the implications of effects-based operations, utilising network enabled capability on coalition operations have not been properly addressed in the Defence White Paper. (Paragraph 109)
30. We have identified some of the reasons why we believe that effects-based operations are going to be a huge challenge for the UK Armed Forces. Unless the question of

national red-cards and caveats is urgently reviewed by NATO and the European Union, the potential for ineffectual coalition deployments is significant. The UK should beware of planning for operations in which small UK force packages operating as part of a coalition are assumed to be capable of achieving “effect”. If they must rely on coalition partners, there must be robust agreement on the “effects” sought. This problem has the potential to undermine the UK’s approach to composite coalition operations. (Paragraph 111)

Force Structures and Personnel

31. We continue to be surprised at the slow pace with which unmanned aerial vehicle technology is being embraced by the UK Armed Forces. It does not seem that many of the effects-based operational capabilities that the MoD indicated it was exploring in the New Chapter have been significantly advanced since, although we welcome the introduction of Bowman radio ahead of its (albeit revised) in-service date. A number of the key programmes identified in the SDR New Chapter have either slipped further or remain unchanged. We are concerned that the UK still does not have sufficient secure data links to allow it to integrate with United States forces, especially in the land environment. (Paragraph 113)
32. In evidence, the Secretary of State and the Chief of Defence Staff refused to discuss the current MoD work streams in which a range of issues including future force structures are being considered. We have been disappointed at the lack of openness by MoD witnesses during this inquiry in responding to what we believe have been reasonable and appropriate questions. (Paragraph 115)
33. We are surprised that the Army is prepared to do away with, as yet unspecified, quantities of heavy armoured forces when their replacement (FRES) remains a concept which has not even left the assessment phase. (Paragraph 116)
34. The future challenge of close air support, demonstrated by Afghanistan and repeated in Iraq, is how to supply timely and precise air support to small numbers of friendly forces in non-linear engagements, not how to destroy large enemy divisions such as Saddam’s Republican Guards. It is a problem that does not appear to have been resolved by MoD. Given the repeated references to “jointery” in official policy documents we are surprised that the operational practice of air-land integration has been so slow to change. We recommend that MoD addresses this question with much greater urgency than has been displayed to date. (Paragraph 123)
35. We believe work on dealing with excess stretch is urgently required and represents one of the greatest weaknesses of the Strategic Defence Review implementation to date. (Paragraph 127)
36. We were disappointed that the Chief of the Defence Staff prevented the Chief of the General Staff from answering a question on future Army Step 2. We regret the level of secrecy that has met our repeated requests for detail on the implications of the White Paper for force structures, and personnel and urge Ministers to review their approach to parliamentary oversight of these matters. (Paragraph 130)

37. Since the Strategic Defence Review, the MoD's own harmony guidelines have too often not been achieved in terms of the work life-balance of Armed Forces personnel. We have seen no evidence in the White Paper that the demanding operational tempo of the past six years and consequent stretch on too many of our service personnel will not be repeated. We urge MoD to place the achievement of harmony guidelines at the top of its list of priorities. (Paragraph 132)
38. We believe that manpower shortages and the resultant practice of "gapping" (not filling posts deemed non-essential) must be tackled seriously and urgently by the MoD. Achieving full manning levels must be a priority for the Armed Forces in an era of regular deployments. (Paragraph 137)
39. Given that many reservists are mobilised for service in units that are not close to their homes, we are concerned that MoD should be seen to be prioritising effective methods of welfare support to the families of mobilised reservists, who in many cases receive extremely short notice of call-out. (Paragraph 144)
40. In an era of reliance on the reserves to support operational deployments, there will be an increasing requirement for MoD to look after reservists and their families. Although there is no detailed information on this matter in the White Paper, we were pleased to note some attention to this problem in the Government's response to our Lessons of Iraq report. We recommend that MoD considers mobilising Welfare Officers across all the services where reservists are deployed. (Paragraph 147)
41. We welcome initiatives such as creating pools of specialists ready to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction work as important steps towards the realisation of true cross-departmental effects-based operations and look forward to being updated on their progress. (Paragraph 148)
42. We conclude that MoD has still not taken seriously enough the need for a "predictable" element to be available for civil emergencies at home. We remain to be convinced that the MoD has adequately thought through the use of reserve forces at home and away in an era of constant operational commitments and a significant threat to the UK. (Paragraph 151)
43. We are pleased to note that the MoD is taking seriously the pressures that have been placed on the reserves in recent years. We welcome this, but we would urge the MoD to avoid exploiting the commitment and dedication of the reserves through overuse. If the reserves are intended to fulfil an ever increasing role in the Armed Forces, this will require fundamental structural changes in the relationship between the regulars and reserves. We await detailed proposals from the MoD on how it intends to improve the terms and conditions of reserve service, both for the reservists themselves and their families as well as their employers. (Paragraph 154)

Annex: List of Abbreviations

BATUS	British Army Training Unit, Suffield (Canada)
BDA	Battle-Damage Assessment
CAS	Chief of the Air Staff
CCRF	Civil Contingency Reaction Force
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CPP	Conflict Prevention Pools
DFID	Department for International Development
EBO	Effects-Based Operations
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FRES	Future Rapid Effects System
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
ISTAR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance
JRRF	Joint Rapid Reaction Forces
JSF	Joint Strike Fighter
KI-CAS	Kill Box Interdiction-Close Air Support
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCC	Network Centric Capability
NEC	Network-Enabled Capability
PGM	Precision Guided Munition
PUS	Permanent Under Secretary
RAF	Royal Air Force
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SDR	Strategic Defence Review
TACPs	Tactical Air Control Parties

UAV	Unmanned	Vehicle
UN	United Nations	
UK	United Kingdom	
US	United States	

Formal minutes

Wednesday 23 June 2004

Members present:

Mr Crispin Blunt
Mike Gapes
Mr Dai Havard

Mr Frank Roy
Rachel Squire
Mr Peter Viggers

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Peter Viggers was called to the Chair.

The Committee deliberated.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report (Defence White Paper) be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 166 read and agreed to.

Annexes [Summary and List of Abbreviations] agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That Mr Peter Viggers do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (select committees (reports)) be applied to the Report.

Ordered, That the Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee be reported to the House.

Ordered, That several memoranda be reported to the House.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 30 June at 2.30 pm]

Witnesses

Volume II

Wednesday 24 March 2004

Page

General Sir Michael Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen, Chief of the Defence Staff, **Admiral Sir Alan West GCB DSC ADC**, First Sea Lord, **General Sir Mike Jackson KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen**, Chief of the General Staff, and **Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup KCB AFC ADC**, Chief of the Air Staff

Ev 1

Wednesday 31 March 2004

Rt Hon Geoffrey Hoon, a Member of the House, Secretary of State for Defence, and **Sir Kevin Tebbit KCB CMG**, Permanent Undersecretary, Ministry of Defence

Ev 24

Tuesday 20 April 2004

General Sir Michael Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen, Chief of the Defence Staff, **Admiral Sir Alan West GCB DSC ADC**, First Sea Lord, **General Sir Mike Jackson KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen**, Chief of the General Staff, and **Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup KCB AFC ADC**, Chief of the Air Staff

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List of written evidence

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Quaker Peace & Social Witness	Ev 74
United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ev 77
Ministry of Defence (Readiness Assumptions)	Ev 78
Further memorandum	Ev 82

List of unprinted written evidence

Additional papers have been received from the following and have been reported to the House but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Record Office, House of Lords and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to the Record Office, House of Lords, London SW1 (Tel 020 7219 3074); hours of inspection are from 9:30am to 5:00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Nuclear Information Service

West Midlands Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Aldermaston Women's Peace Campaign

Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition CND

World Court Project UK

Reports from the Defence Committee since 2001

Session 2003–04

First Report	Armed Forces Pensions and Compensation	HC 96–I & II
Second Report	Annual Report for 2003	HC 293
Third Report	Lessons of Iraq	HC 57-I, II & III (<i>HC 635</i>)
Fourth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2002, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 390

Session 2002–03

First Report	Missile Defence	HC 290 (<i>HC 411</i>)
Second Report	Annual Report for 2002	HC 378
Third Report	Arms Control and Disarmament (Inspections) Bill	HC 321 (<i>HC 754</i>)
Fourth Report	The Government's Proposals for Secondary Legislation under the Export Control Act	HC 620 (<i>Cm 5988</i>)
Fifth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2001, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 474 (<i>Cm 5943</i>)
Sixth Report	A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review	HC 93–I & II (<i>HC 975</i>)
Seventh Report	Draft Civil Contingencies Bill	HC 557 (<i>Cm 6078</i>)
Eighth Report	Defence Procurement	HC 694 (<i>HC 1194</i>)

Session 2001–02

First Report	Ministry of Defence Police: Changes in jurisdiction proposed under the Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Bill 2001	HC 382 (<i>HC 621</i>)
Second Report	The Threat from Terrorism	HC 348 (<i>HC 667</i>)
Third Report	The Ministry of Defence Reviews of Armed Forces' Pension and Compensation Arrangements	HC 666 (<i>HC 115</i>)
Fourth Report	Major Procurement Projects	HC 779 (<i>HC 1229</i>)
Fifth Report	The Government's Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny (Joint with Foreign Affairs Committee, International Development Committee and Trade and Industry Committee)	HC 718 (<i>Cm 5629</i>)
Sixth Report	Defence and Security in the UK	HC 518 (<i>HC 1230</i>)
Seventh Report	The Future of NATO	HC 914 (<i>HC 1231</i>)

Government Responses to Defence Committee reports are published as Special Reports from the Committee (or as Command papers). They are listed here in brackets by the HC (or Cm) No. after the report they relate to.