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British defence policy since 1997: background issues

This paper is intended to provide an insight into some of the broader contextual issues that have influenced British defence policy over the last ten years. Specifically it considers the parameters of defence policy planning and some of the dimensions of modern warfare that have shaped its direction. It also provides an explanation for the difficulties in assessing the nature and size of the UK defence budget.

It should be read as background to Library Research Paper RP08/57, *British defence policy since 1997.*

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Summary of main points

In order to understand how British defence policy has progressed since 1997 it is useful to examine some of the broader parameters that have shaped both the defence debate and the conduct of contemporary warfare more generally.

The central focus of defence policy is on the Armed Forces and the broad issues surrounding their use, size, structure, organisation, capabilities, and management. However, defence policy overlaps with other areas of Government, and in recent years such overlaps have been particularly pronounced as the distinction between domestic and foreign threats have become increasingly blurred, primarily with the increased threat from international terrorism.

At the heart of defence policy is the perennial and universal problem of matching commitments with resources, or bringing political ambitions and resources into balance. This is often described as being an iterative process or a constant dialogue between these two competing considerations. In simple terms, planned commitments, whether in terms of homeland defence or contingent operations overseas, shape decisions on military resources; but equally, available resources determine the level and type of possible commitments to be undertaken.

However, defence policy is also inherently complex in that it is a process of planning for the unknown. Often no precise threat can be accurately predicted and intricately prepared for, planners must make their decisions on the basis of imperfect 'likely' scenarios that may be rendered irrelevant by subsequent events. This uncertainty in threat assessment and planning has implications for the resources debate.

Since the end of the Cold War several dynamics have emerged which have altered the fundamental approach of the West to contemporary warfare. The most far reaching of those has been the 'revolution in military affairs' which has introduced large-scale technological advancement, thereby changing the very nature of warfare. The prevailing tendency toward Coalition warfare and the move towards 'joint operations' has also led to a re-assessment of the types of capabilities and force structure required to conduct contingent operations. Other dimensions which have also shaped the direction of defence policy have been the impact of privatisation; the increasing role of the media within the battlespace; changes in the public consciousness towards warfare and the Armed Forces more specifically, and the changing nature of the civil-military relationship.

All of these dynamics have been evident in the conduct of British defence policy over the last ten years.

This paper should be read as background to Library Research Paper, RP08/57, *British defence policy since 1997*.

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I Background to Defence Policy

In order to understand how British defence policy has progressed since 1997 it is useful to examine some of the broader parameters that have shaped both the defence debate and the conduct of contemporary warfare more generally.

A. Theoretical Context

1. Politics and Defence

The central focus of defence policy is on the Armed Forces and the broad issues surrounding their use, size, structure, organisation, capabilities, and management. However, defence policy overlaps with other areas of government, and in recent years such overlaps have been particularly pronounced as the distinction between domestic and foreign threats have become increasingly blurred, primarily with the increased threat from international terrorism.

Indeed the roles and priorities accorded to the military are a natural consequence of a government's foreign policies and to an extent its domestic home affairs and security agenda. As Clausewitz argued almost two centuries ago, "war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means".[1] All defence decisions, whether in regard to alliances, troop numbers, equipment or force structure, are subsequently a direct result of broader strategic-political objectives.

Defence should therefore be regarded an important aspect of the government's broader security toolkit, which, along with armed force, incorporates political, diplomatic, economic and law enforcement instruments. Security may be best provided through any one of these or various combinations of them. Also, as a number of commentators have made clear, the military is increasingly asked to deal with situations which it alone cannot solve, but which instead depend upon the concerted integration of political, economic and social policies.[2]

Of course, even the most perfectly formulated defence policy can never entirely guarantee success. Military outcomes are dependent on a number of other factors, both political and military, that pervade the battlespace. Nevertheless, excellence in defence policy can certainly significantly reduce the potential for failure and greatly enhance the chances of success. Colin Gray explains what he refers to as the 'economic and logistical dimension' of strategy:

> has a subordinate but enabling role vis-à-vis the political and operational dimensions. Generals, no matter how gifted as operational commanders, are constrained by the resources – human and material – available to them and their foe at the operational level of war. Almost every campaign and war is shaped in

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1 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* translated by Peter Paret and Michael Howard, 1993, p.731

2 For example see Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*. This was also reflected in the Government's national Security Strategy which was published in March 2008.

> its course and at least influenced in its outcome by the economic-logistical dimension.[3]

There is, of course, a matter of degree here as defence can never be the only consideration of government. It is one area of policy that must find its place, in both political and financial terms, among the other priorities that any functioning state hopes to deliver for its citizens. Except in overtly militaristic societies, or in times of existential crisis, defence concerns will rarely overshadow all else. Thus defence policy is a difficult matter of balancing the need for sufficient provision of security with the other myriad functions of government. Nevertheless, many would argue adequate defence and security is a fundamental precondition for the other objectives the state wishes to pursue. As Gwyn Prins and Robert Salisbury observed in a February 2008 article for the *RUSI Journal*:

> Security is not only a question for Chiefs of the Defence staff. It matters to every citizen of the United Kingdom. Security is the primary function of the state, for without it there can be no state, and no rule of law.[4]

2. The Commitment v. Resources Equation

At the heart of defence policy is the perennial and universal problem of matching commitments with resources or, stated differently, about bringing political ambitions and resources into balance. This is often described as being an iterative process or a constant dialogue between these two competing considerations. In simple terms, planned commitments, whether in terms of homeland defence or contingent operations overseas, shape decisions on military resources; but equally available resources determine the level and type of possible commitments that can be undertaken.

At a more detailed level, commitments relate primarily to the *ends* of government, including the demands of foreign policy and its political objectives, broader security concerns, threat assessment, planning assumptions, and the expected number, concurrency and intensity of operations. This area thus covers the issues surrounding the planned *uses* of the Armed Forces: why they are deemed necessary and what contingencies they will be required to deal with. The issue of resources is potentially more complex as the concept is not just concerned with amounts of available money, materiel or platforms, but also the nature of those resources, how they are distributed, structured, organised, and commanded. This side of the defence equation, concerned primarily with available *means*, involves such issues as procuring the necessary equipment, structuring and organising forces appropriately, developing robust doctrine, and providing the relevant training and conditions for military personnel. Of course, the amount of available resources is also heavily influenced by the constraints on central government spending, and pressures within government to generate efficiency savings.

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3 Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 1999, p.32

4 "Risk, threat and security", *RUSI Journal,* February 2008

3. Contingency in Defence Planning

Defence policy is inherently complex in that it is a process of planning for the unknown. Because often no precise threat can be accurately predicted and intricately prepared for, planners must make their decisions on the basis of imperfect 'likely' scenarios that may be rendered irrelevant by subsequent events.[5]

As Lawrence Freedman explains:

> Military planners must consider potential enemies from fanatical terrorists to disaffected great powers. They must prepare for hostile acts, which can cover the spectrum from the improvised explosive device in a shopping mall to guerrilla ambushes to traditional battle to nuclear exchanges, and perhaps even 'cyberwar' directed against critical information systems.[6]

He also notes that in order to deal with such eventualities, "Governments require a set of capabilities that can provide the flexibility and versatility to cope with this wide range of contingencies"[7] This uncertainty in threat assessment and planning also has implications for the resources debate. Steven Haines explains this dilemma:

> It is a truism that the basis for long term defence planning is a potentially unsound assessment of the nature of future security, the threats to it and what will be required in the way of equipment and trained personnel to combat those threats. There can be no certainty in this respect. History has demonstrated that if decisions are correct, it is probably down to a good dose of luck supported by what can at best be described as good judgement.
>
> It is also a truism that, given the cost of the future defence programme, those charged with providing the substantial investment necessary to support it require a convincing argument that such investment is necessary. Treasury officials and the political leaders for whom they work need convincing arguments that the levels of investment required are fully justified relative to the other demands on the Exchequer. These two truisms present a fundamental dilemma. The Government needs to be reasonably confident that its investment will be sound and yet it has no way of knowing at the point of decision whether it is or not.[8]

Defence policy shares with military strategy this element of what Clausewitz referred to as 'friction, chance and uncertainty'. As Gray notes, "Chance does not quite rule but is always a player, and friction can impede cumulatively the smooth performance of anything and everything".[9]

The uncertainty associated with defence policy, as with war, is also a function of the interplay of countless intangibles such as troop morale and foreign and domestic public and political opinion. Defence policy is often viewed as being an area concerned with distinctly material matters such as equipment orders or the organisation and structure of

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5 For example, military planners on the whole did not foresee the events of 9/11.
6 Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, p.76
7 Ibid, p.77
8 Steven Haines, "The real strategic environment", *RUSI Journal,* October 2007
9 Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 1999, p.41

the Services. Yet a critical consideration is the potential impact that decisions on these and other issues may have on the more psychological aspects of defence, which are themselves important preconditions for military effectiveness. Low troop morale can seriously undermine operational effectiveness, poor public perceptions of the Armed Forces can harm recruitment and retention rates, and critical international opinion can prompt unwanted changes in the policies of allies.

Defence policy is further complicated by the fact that there is often a notable time-lag in many areas. For example, those responsible for taking decisions on the operational deployment of forces may be significantly constrained by decisions taken many years previously on the procurement of equipment, the size of the Armed Forces and requisite force structure.[10] This is because once decisions on defence are taken, it is often much later (for a variety of reasons, such as lengthy procurement processes or bureaucratic inertia) before the actual outcome of those changes are realised. Often in that time period threats or scenarios on which those original decisions were based can either disappear or change beyond all recognition.[11]

4. Defence Policy and Military Strategy

There is a subtle yet important distinction, touched upon above, which exists between defence policy and military strategy. Defence policy does not automatically involve analysis of, or direct decisions regarding, the conduct of individual operations; that is, respectively, the realm of critical military analysis or military strategy. However, successful military strategy is heavily dependent on an effective defence policy, as soldiers must be recruited, clothed, fed, trained, led and equipped to a standard that is high enough for them to engage effectively in combat with the enemy or undertake any other tasks asked of them.

Actual military success is dependent on far more than defence policy alone can hope to cover, but that policy will always be a crucial basic determinant of success. In a similar vein, Colin Gray has noted, "Wars are not won directly by logisticians, but poor logisticians make it all but impossible even for operational military genius to exercise its talent effectively" while superior organisation also cannot "offset monumental operational incompetence or inadequate training of troops".[12]

From this perspective, defence policy is ultimately one crucial aspect of strategy: the notoriously difficult task of linking policy objectives with the military means available. Defence policy cannot do everything, but it can go a long way in providing the Armed Forces with the best possible chance of achieving its objectives:

> Just as strategy is 'done' by tactical activity, also it is, or should be, 'done' by a bureaucratic organisation that staffs alternatives critically, coordinates rival inputs,

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10 For example Michael Codner noted in evidence to the Defence Committee that the force structure envisaged by the SDR would not be realised fully until 2013 (Defence Select Committee, *UK Defence: Commitments and Resources: Uncorrected Oral Evidence*, HC 381-ii, Session 2006-07, Q.242

11 For example the Eurofighter Typhoon programme was originally conceived in the 1980s during the Cold War and was intended to address the threat of Soviet fighter aircraft.

12 Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 1999, p.33

> and oversees execution and feedback on the effect of execution. This is neither exciting nor heroic, but it is absolutely essential for superior strategic performance.[13]

B. Dimensions of Modern Warfare

In addition to the relationship between theory and practical application another useful angle to consider in assessing the progress of defence policy are the practical dimensions which have shaped modern warfare generally. The impact of technology, the prevailing tendency in the last decade toward Coalition warfare and developments such as the prominence of the media in war-reporting have all played an important role in influencing how defence policy has progressed.

The following section therefore briefly examines some of those more prominent dimensions of modern warfare, particularly as they relate to the West and its experience of war, and which have had an overt effect on British defence policy.

1. The 'Revolution in Military Affairs' and Network Enabled Capability

The debate on the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) is commonly centred around the impact that new technologies – primarily information and communications technology (ICT) but also modern weapons systems and other platforms – have on the conduct of warfare, or for some the nature of war itself. The RMA is primarily associated with developments in the United States[14] but it holds far-reaching implications for America's allies and potential enemies alike.

Important elements of what would ultimately come to comprise the RMA emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the 1970s, with developments in satellite, precision guidance and communications technology. However, the notion of revolutionary change only seriously took off during the 1990s. This was partly due to the rapid cumulative advancements in technical capabilities and know-how. However, given the existence of many vital systems, the crucial impetus for the development of the RMA has been considered more probably to be political, and associated with the opening up of opportunities generated by the end of the Cold War.[15] Additional impetus was provided by the Gulf War of 1991 during which many new advanced weapons systems were operationally tested for the first time.[16]

The material foundations of the RMA can be usefully divided into three central pillars:

- Sensors: intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets such as satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

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[13] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 1999, p.34

[14] Principally due to the large amount of US defence spending that goes towards research and development.

[15] For example less emphasis was given to the possibility of facing a possible Soviet invasion of Northern Europe. See Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, 1998

[16] Lawrence Freedman, *Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, 2006, p.13

- Information communication: such as computers, command and control centres and the internet which allow the relay of information in 'real time'.
- Advanced weapons and munitions such as smart bombs, precision guidance, and cruise missiles.[17]

However, it is the total integration of these systems, to produce what has been termed the 'system of systems', or the "sensor to shooter experience" that represents what is specifically novel about these changes. Taken together, C4ISTAR[18] systems hold out the potential for the seamless collection, assessment, and communication of information in 'real time', allowing force to be applied through advanced weapons systems with greater range, lethality and accuracy, in a directed and decisive manner. Force elements would thus be more agile, manoeuvrable and flexible, while the demands on logistics and supply organisations would be reduced.

Out of the initial and somewhat exploratory ideas associated with the RMA emerged the more doctrinally sophisticated and operationally orientated concept of Network Centric Warfare (NCW) in the US.[19] NCW essentially focuses on the prospect of achieving 'dominant battlespace knowledge' through effective and comprehensive systems integration. It advocates a move away from a quantitative assessment of force to one that is more qualitative and defined by the attainment of information superiority, enhanced situational awareness and massively improved mission effectiveness.[20] For the US these ideas are encapsulated in the concept of 'Full Spectrum Dominance.'[21]

As Paul Mitchell notes, "the end result of this sharing of information and awareness is the creation of additional combat power by enhancing the utility of information provided to decision-makers".[22] As the RMA and NCW have gradually worked their way into doctrine, these ideas have become key elements in the broad concept of force 'transformation'.

Proponents of the RMA have argued that these developments make progress toward overcoming the chance and uncertainty traditionally associated with war. Yet sceptics of the concept have questioned the purportedly revolutionary consequences of these developments. While the material advantages such technological changes have conferred have generally not been in doubt, the optimistic claim that the 'fog of war' could be dispelled is considered yet to be proven. As both Iraq and Afghanistan both demonstrated, friction in war undoubtedly remains.[23]

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17 What Freedman referred to as the "paradigmatic weapon of the RMA". See *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, 1998, p.70

18 Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance. Other versions exist such as C4ISR or C4I.

19 While the concept of networked operations, loosely conceived, had certainly been around since at least the Second World War, the development of NCW as an outgrowth of the RMA only truly emerged in the late 1990s.

20 In a number of possible respects including tempo, responsiveness, lower risk, lower costs and higher profits. See Paul Mitchell, *Network Centric Warfare,* Adelphi Paper 385, p.33

21 US Department of Defense, *Joint Vision 2010*. A copy is available online at: http://www.dtic.mil/jv2010/jv2010.pdf

22 Paul Mitchell, *Network Centric Warfare,* Adelphi Paper 385, p.34

23 Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, 1998, p.61

The main argument put forward by critics of RMA is that, regardless of technological advancement, the human element required to interpret information, prioritise it and then take decisions based upon it retains a source of fallibility for military decision making. Information overload on the part of individual commanders could potentially result from the speed of technology-enhanced intelligence gathering and communication; while the practicalities of implementation may also suffer. The ability of logistics and other support services to keep pace with rapid decision making has been highlighted.

It has also been argued that excessive focus on new technologies can lead to information dependence and distract attention away from crucial intangibles such as morale, the political position of allies, and domestic and international public opinion. As Colin Gray has outlined, this form of "strategic tunnel vision"[24] potentially downplays the unique value of human intelligence and perceptions of cultural and political ambiguities that are gleaned only from human interaction. Also, a misguided faith in the possibilities generated by new technologies may contribute to unrealistic military expectations, given that no direct causal link between better information and better military effects has been identified. Indeed, countries such as China have invested significant time and resources into the development of asymmetric technologies that would offset the qualitative information superiority of any enemy on the battlefield.[25]

The fundamental cause for scepticism over the RMA, however, relates to the inherent difficulty of turning technological sophistication into political effect. If indeed a revolution is taking place, it is principally occurring at the tactical and operational levels. Strategy on the other hand is far more complex and success is often dependent on much more than technological superiority. Advanced technology may certainly enable swift military victories against conventional forces but this by no means guarantees the successful translation of that success into the comprehensive attainment of political objectives. In Iraq, for example, the adoption of "Shock and awe" tactics at the outset of conflict was largely based on the advantages that technological superiority was perceived to confer. Yet the post-conflict phase of Iraqi reconstruction has been largely defined by a drawn-out insurgency which has led to criticisms of Coalition post-war planning and the re-assertion that "boots on the ground" is not an obsolete concept. As Freedman notes, "the real difficulty is that military power can only be truly judged against the political purposes it is intended to serve".[26] Colin Gray also notes the danger involved when technological overconfidence is allowed to determine political decisions: "Wise policy can be advanced by effective military power, but military power ceases to be strategically effective when in effect it is allowed into the driving seat of policy".[27]

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[24] Colin Gray, "The RMA and Intervention: A Sceptical View", in Colin McInnes and Nicholas Wheeler Eds, *Dimensions of Western Military Intervention*, 2002, p.55

[25] What some analysts have referred to as the ancient martial art of "pressure point warfare" and includes cyberwarfare and the development of capabilities such as anti-satellite ballistic missiles. See "pressure point warfare: China swings the assassin's mace", *RUSI Newsbrief,* March 2007

[26] Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, 1998, p.68

[27] Colin Gray, "The RMA and Intervention: A Sceptical View", in Colin McInnes and Nicholas Wheeler Eds, *Dimensions of Western Military Intervention*, 2002, p.57

a. The British Interpretation of the RMA and the Development of Network Enabled Capability

While the RMA is predominantly a US-led phenomenon, America's allies, not least the UK, have had to adapt to the consequences of its implications. At a technical level, policy has often been driven by the simple imperative not to get left behind. As Freedman observes "If there is too much of a gap between US capabilities and those of its allies…the US will not even be able to bestow these benefits because the recipients will be unable to take advantage of them".[28] Yet the motivation to keep pace has also been considered more political in nature. As Freedman has also noted:

> The most important allies of the US will make an effort to stay abreast of these technologies and to adopt them where possible, if only for purposes of interoperability and to gain access to US policy-making at times of crisis and war.[29]

British policy appears to have been driven primarily by such imperatives, and in recent years the UK has adopted a limited variant of the RMA that has come to be known as "Network Enabled Capability".[30] The UK's approach has essentially entailed procuring sufficient technological capabilities to "enable us to operate more effectively in the future strategic environment through the more efficient sharing and exploitation of information within the British Armed Forces and with our coalition partners".[31] Developing capabilities sufficiently to remain interoperable with the US has been a specific priority. In evidence to the Defence Select Committee in 2002 Admiral Sir Michael Boyce noted:

> we certainly do not have the sort of budget that would allow us to do probably as much as our United States friends, but what is going to be very important to do is to make sure that we do get inter-operable with the United States.[32]

However, in contrast to the US which has placed emphasis on the wholesale transformation of forces, the UK's emphasis, given the constraint on budget resources, has instead been on developing key enablers of operational effectiveness or, as the MOD has put it, "evolving the concept pragmatically".[33] Yet it has also been suggested that the reasons for the UK's more tailored approach is partly cultural in the sense that there is a "less enthusiastic approach to all-embracing technology as a way of solving a lot of problems…the network is not centric to what we do... It is a rather more pragmatic, and some would say a rather pedestrian approach, but in my opinion it suits the British psyche".[34]

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28 Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, 1998, p.72
29 Ibid
30 This has been reflected in successive policy reviews since the 1998 Strategic Defence Review.
31 Ministry of Defence, Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities, Cm 6269, Session 2003-04, p.5
32 Defence Select Committee, *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review,* HC 93-II, Session 2002-03, Ev.35
33 Ibid, Ev.2
34 Ibid, Ev.89

The *Strategic Defence Review* in 1998 was the first policy document to consider seriously the role that new technologies might have on military strategy, capability and operational effectiveness.[35] It noted the importance of developing command, control, communications and computers, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (C4ISTAR) capabilities to exploit information as a 'force multiplier'. These really constituted only exploratory commitments and the SDR talked more of the potential of these technologies rather than of developing a systematic conceptual or doctrinal framework for their use.

The idea of systematic integration of the new technologies into the Armed Forces was first comprehensively laid down in 2002 "New Chapter" to the SDR. That paper expected that the development of new technologies in the area of sensors, networks and strike assets would deliver greater precision in the control of operations and the application of force, as well as speed of effect and improved force protection.[36] While the New Chapter recognised the wider defence applicability of these technologies, it primarily presented them as contributing to improved effectiveness in counterterrorism operations.[37] As the MOD made clear in a memorandum to the Defence Committee in October 2002:

> The detailed implications…of a further shift in investment towards NCC for force structures and equipment programmes are being considered as part of the Department's normal planning process, and we expect to be able to reflect the outcome of this work in a further White Paper next year.[38]

The concept of NEC in a more developed, sophisticated and broader form subsequently emerged with the publication of the 2003 Defence White Paper and its 'Future Capabilities' chapter of 2004. Those documents placed significantly greater emphasis on networked capabilities and saw them as integral components of the recently developed effects based approach to defence planning.[39] The opportunities arising from NEC were more fully discussed in an accompanying MOD Handbook which explained that NEC:

> offers decisive advantage through the timely provision and exploitation of information and intelligence to enable effective decision-making and agile actions. NEC will be implemented through the coherent and progressive development of Defence equipment, software, processes, structures, and individual and collective training, underpinned by the development of a secure, robust and extensive network of networks.[40]

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35 See Library Research Paper 04/71, *The Defence White Paper*, p.10

36 Ministry of Defence, *SDR: A New Chapter*, Cm 5566, Session 2001-02, p.15

37 The New Chapter to the Strategic Defence review had initially been prompted by the developments of 11 September 2001.

38 Defence Select Committee, *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review,* HC 93-II, Session 2002-03, Ev.1. NCC refers to network centric capabilities which was the MOD's initial interpretation of this concept. NCC eventually became NEC – network enabled capabilities.

39 Effects based operations is examined in greater detail in section I B of Library Research Paper RP08/57.

40 MOD Handbook, *Network Enabled Capability*, Joint Service Publication 777, p.2

In the more recent Defence Plan 2008-2012, which was published by the MOD in June 2008, the delivery of NEC was recognised as a key objective over the next four years:

> Network Enabled Capability will deliver benefit by enabling decision superiority across both the battlespace and the business space. It is considerably more diverse than equipment and improved technical solutions; ultimately it is cultural with implications for doctrine, organisation, structure, training, tactics and procedures. It will enable situational awareness and the command and control required to plan, execute and co-ordinate precise and effective actions conducted as part of a comprehensive approach to operations, by providing the required degree of national, international and cross-departmental interoperability at all levels of command.[41]

Some commentators have feared that NEC development is a justification for platform cuts, based on the argument that fewer, more technologically advanced platforms are required to deliver the same level of intended effect. They have criticised this premise however on the grounds that qualitative improvements are irrelevant when a platform cannot be in two places at once and that such a trend is particularly dangerous when forces are expected to deploy on concurrent operations.[42]

Some concern has also been expressed about the ability of the UK to afford such an ambitious programme of change. In response to the publication of the 2003 White Paper, an editorial in the *Financial Times* noted:

> Intelligent networks to link fewer, more sophisticated military platforms are supposed to enable the new system to operate. But to think that can be done within a defence budget that is frozen in real terms is fanciful.[43]

These financial concerns are particularly acute given that the main NEC-enabling technologies are due to enter service at a time of peak expenditure in the defence equipment plan, with the introduction of some major platforms also expected in that period.[44] Many expect that, given these budgetary pressures, there will be a need for some form of trade-off between planned equipment procurements and investment in NEC-enabling technologies.[45]

However, concerns over NEC have not been restricted to financial matters. The intellectual and conceptual underpinnings of the ideas associated with the RMA more generally have also been subject to questioning within the context of NEC. As Bill Roberts has put it "network-enabled capabilities sometime promise far more than they

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41 Ministry of Defence, Defence Plan including Government Expenditure Plans 2008-2012, Cm7385, Session 2007-08

42 Defence Select Committee, *UK Defence: Commitments and Resources: Uncorrected Oral Evidence*, HC 381-ii, Session 2006-07

43 'Wanting it all – new military thinking means more cash or fewer options"', *The Financial Times*, 12 December 2003.

44 Such as the A400M strategic transport aircraft, the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, the two new aircraft carriers for the Royal Navy and the Future Rapid Effects System family of armoured vehicles.

45 This is examined in greater detail in section II D of RP08/57.

can deliver, because they appear to point to a bright upland, in which computers will do an awful lot more than actually they are able to do".[46]

2. The Privatisation of Conflict

One of the defining features of modern warfare has been the proliferation of private companies operating in the defence and security sector, largely in relation to the provision of military support services, although in some instances in relation to the provision of military force itself. Definitions of what constitutes a 'private military security company' (PMSC) have been consistently difficult to set down in any all-encompassing way. The profile of such companies has therefore tended toward the negative, with interest focusing on the activities of those companies that have provided combat and security forces rather than logistics support for the military.

Historically, the hiring of private military services was regarded as 'normal practice'[47] and, after widespread use in the middle ages, began to decline only with the growth of standing armies, the increased use of conscription, and the strengthening of the nation state in the late eighteenth century. While still prevalent in the nineteenth century, given the enthusiasm for economic liberalism, the scope for private providers of military services gradually declined until by the mid-twentieth century they had all but disappeared.[48] With the wars of decolonisation in the 1960s and 1970s there was a small but much publicised rise in private military provision and mercenary activity. The key development in their proliferation, however, was with the US military's growing reliance on complex technological systems and a concomitant reliance on contractors and firms to maintain and operate them. That trend intensified under the Reagan administration and thus served as the "contractual, conceptual and ideological baseline for the subcontracting boom of the 1990s".[49] During the Gulf War in 1990-1991, for example, the ratio of private contractors to military personnel in the US-led Coalition was estimated at one per 50 US personnel.[50]

David Shearer highlights a number of further reasons for the rapid proliferation of PMSC in the 1990s. The 'peace dividend' following the end of the Cold War dramatically reduced the size of Western armed forces, which both encouraged military establishments to offset these reductions by contracting out many support functions and flooded the private military labour market with ex-soldiers.[51] The declining standards of armed forces in the Third World also increased demand for capable combat forces and/or expert training and advice; while the spread of intra-state wars and civil conflict combined with a Western reluctance to intervene during this period compelled many governments to seek private military support.

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46 Defence Select Committee, *A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review,* HC 93-II, Session 2002-03, Q.512

47 David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention*, Adelphi Paper 316, p.13

48 Dominick Donald, *After the Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66, p.7

49 Ibid, p.8

50 "The business of war gets murkier", *The Financial Times,* 18 August 2003

51 David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention*, Adelphi Paper 316, p.27 and Dominick Donald, *After the Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66, p.8

Also, as Dominick Donald notes, the RMA only served to accelerate this trend of heavy reliance on specialised contractors, particularly in the US. Indeed by 2000 it had been argued that the US could not go to war without contractors.[52] In the US the public-private spheres had also become inextricably interwoven, with many company directors and board members having served previously in US administrations.[53]

In the UK, though many other areas of government were privatised, the military remained largely unaffected. British security companies had fewer commercial links to the UK's defence establishment. A number of security firms such as *Control Risks* had been engaged in the mining and energy sectors overseas, but the emergence of *Sandline International* and the publicity it attracted in the late 1990s[54] catapulted the issue of private military companies into the public realm.

Since the invasion of Iraq there has been a step change in the number, use and public awareness of private military and security companies. Again this has largely been a US phenomenon. Although reliable figures are hard to obtain, estimates by the US Central Command put the number of contractors operating in Iraq under US government contracts by December 2006 at over 100,000. Those personnel were supporting logistics provision, security for reconstruction, civilian reconstruction and, unique to the US, in the provision of military force.[55] Donald has referred to this significant rise in the use of private contractors associated with the conflict as the 'Iraq bubble.'[56] However, it has not been the commercialisation of many military roles that has been at the heart of the debate over the use of PMSCs, but the regulation, accountability, control, and legality of their activities. [57]

Concerns over the impact of PMSCs on military operations, ranging from tactical to strategic levels, have also been expressed recently. This has become particularly apparent in counter-insurgency operations, such as those in Iraq, where engagement with the local population is considered to have been undermined by the activities of some PMSCs operating with the Coalition.[58] Problems have also emerged over the extent to which they should be integrated in, or attached to, regular force components.[59]

Given the concerns noted above, organisations such as the British Association of Private Security Companies (BAPSC) have been launched "to promote, enhance and regulate

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52 Dominick Donald, *After the Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66, p.9

53 For example, Former CIA director and current Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, sat on the board of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a major defence contractor.

54 In 1997 Sandline International was involved in a $36 million contract with the government in Papua New Guinea and in 1998 the Arms to Africa affair arose based upon Sandline's sale of arms to the government of Sierra Leone. See Dominick Donald, *After the Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66, p.11

55 The use of PMSCs in Iraq is examined in greater detail in Library Standard note SN/IA/3120, *The Regulation of Private military and Security Companies and their Role in Iraq,* 31 May 2007.

56 Dominick Donald, After the Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66

57 Alistair Campbell, "Mercenaries" *World Today*, p.21

58 As Alistair Campbell noted in *The World Today*, "Blackwater had engaged in 195 'escalation of force' incidents since 2005, an average of 1.4 per week". (Alistair Campbell, "Mercenaries", *World Today*, p.21)

59 On all these points see Campbell's *World Today* article, p20-22.

the interests and activities of UK-based firms and companies that provide armed security services in countries outside the UK and to represent the interests and activities of Members in matters of proposed or actual legislation".[60] This has equated to a form of self-regulation and has been regarded largely as a reaction to events in Iraq. The current state of the sector in the UK has been usefully summarised by Dominick Donald:

> There is a British PSC sector, distinct from its US counterpart and for the moment largely dependent on a different revenue stream (commercial rather than governmental)…It is committed to being perceived as a legitimate, defensive actor acting in accordance with British and wider Western interests and operating under some kind of regulatory framework. It sees a return to the provision of combat services as commercial death…It believes it has substantial expertise that it would like to put at governments' wider disposal.[61]

However, as noted above, the privatisation of conflict has not merely been focused on the provision of combat or security forces. For over a decade the trend toward outsourcing military logistics provision as a means of achieving efficiency savings, "freeing up" essential military personnel for more frontline duties or reducing troop commitments overseas, has been prevalent. In the UK, the tendency toward the outsourcing of military logistics and support services first began in a meaningful way with the Conservative *Frontline First* review in 1994. At the time the desire to achieve efficiency savings coincided with the pressure to reap the "peace dividend" that came with the end of the Cold War. This trend accelerated under the Labour government and incorporated not only an increase in the private sector provision of military support services, but also an increase in the privatisation of certain sectors of the defence establishment[62] and, what has been considered more controversial, the move to outsource the provision of frontline operational services. The most high profile example of this has been the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) programme which is expected to deliver a privatised solution to air-to-air refuelling capabilities across the Services.

3. Coalition Warfare

Typically, when Western forces go to war in the modern context they do so as members of multinational coalitions. While by no means a new phenomenon, the trend towards coalition operations has greatly increased in recent years and particularly since the end of the Cold War. As Paul Mitchell notes, "coalitions are largely about scarcity, in terms of either resources or political legitimacy".[63] This dual scarcity perhaps explains why coalitions have become such a prominent feature of Western military operations. On the latter issue of political legitimacy, Michael Ignatieff explains that:

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60 See: http://www.bapsc.org.uk/key_documents-charter.asp

61 Dominick Donald, *After The Bubble: British Private Security Companies After Iraq*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 66, p.75

62 In 2001 the government part-privatised the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency which resulted in the flotation of QinetiQ in 2003. In 2006 the Government announced that the Defence Aviation and Repair Agency and the Army Base Repair Organisation would also be part-privatised.

63 Paul T. Mitchell, *Network Centric Warfare*, Adelphi Paper 385, p.8

> The legitimacy of…military operations overseas depends on persuading other states to join as coalition partners. Indeed, coalition warfare is increasingly seen as the future of war. It is a sign of how the political culture of international relations has changed in the era of the UN Charter that violence vested in the national interest of a single country is less likely to command the assent of the world than violence vested in a coalition.[64]

Coalition action, whether undertaken through formal institutional structures or through the very recent manifestation of 'coalitions of the willing', can bestow vital political legitimacy on the use of force when other formal avenues have been blocked for political reasons.

Another explanation for the increase in coalition operations in recent years lies in the new imperatives created by the emerging security environment and the increased pressure on both financial and capability resources.[65] The inherent complexity of modern warfare often means that there is a need for a wide variety of skills and competencies that cannot be provided by one nation alone. There is thus a requirement to pool capabilities and draw upon national specialisations. The expense of modern military operations is another powerful motivation, encouraging nations to spread the costs across the members of a coalition. Also, the exponential increase in the number of multinational United Nations peacekeeping missions since 1989 has placed a premium on developing the necessary levels of interoperability and burden sharing that coalition operations demand.

Even if coalitions are becoming the norm in most of the operations undertaken by Western Armed Forces, one underlying feature is that every coalition is unique: "they vary in composition, the degree to which they are legally underwritten and the nature and capability of their military structure".[66] This has been, and will continue to be, the case even if campaigns are conducted within the framework of an existing alliance system such as NATO or emerging frameworks such as the European Security and Defence Policy. Each operation will have a different political context and involve contributions by members of varying sizes and capabilities. The resultant strength of any coalition will therefore depend on a combination of different factors including the degree of political consensus amongst members, the power and influence of its leading nation or organisation, the breadth of international public support, and the military assets available to it.

However, coalition operations raise all sorts of problems "from the practical to the political and cultural".[67] The use of coalitions, while increasingly politically and operationally necessary in the modern context, can often lead to sub-optimal military outcomes as a result of the inherent need for compromise and the difficulties caused by working with other nations which may not be able to meet their force generation

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64 Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* 2000, p.205
65 See Paul T. Mitchell, *Network Centric Warfare*, Adelphi Paper 385, p.19
66 Christopher Dandeker, "Coalitions and the future of UK Security Policy" *RUSI Whitehall Paper*, 2000
67 Roger H. Palin, *Multinational Military Forces: Problems and Prospects*, Adelphi Paper 294

obligations or have placed caveats on the use of forces,[68] may not have the full domestic support of their electorates,[69] or may have different opinions on military tactics and targeting.[70] Furthermore, the length of time it takes to form a coalition, often resulting from a combination of all these issues, means the optimal or appropriate time for intervention may be missed.

Coalitions are therefore characterised by an ongoing process of cooperation, confrontation, competition and compromise among their members in order to find the necessary consensus from which to move forward and conduct operations. Any nation's influence and weight in such discussions is often based on the commitment of capabilities, whether they have a certain specialisation required by the coalition or whether they bring significant political or moral 'added value' to the campaign.

At the political level, there is also a difficulty in developing agreement among allies as to the nature of threats and how best to deal with them. This has been most clearly demonstrated by the different perceptions and analyses of the threat from international terrorism and how best to deal with it, between Europe on the one hand, which has emphasised measures aimed at addressing underlying root causes, and the US on the other, which has emphasised coercive action and the use of extraordinary powers. Such problems make the formation of coalitions politically difficult. This has been considered a particular dilemma for countries like the UK which has historically maintained a unique position, with the cultivation of the special relationship with the US on the one hand and the need to demonstrate an allegiance to Europe on the other.

A specific problem or – depending upon perception – an opportunity, is the impact of new technologies.[71] In many respects network centric warfare holds out the potential for greatly enhancing the ability of multinational coalitions to work together. However, the speed at which the US is developing high-tech networked systems threatens to leave other nations behind, thus jeopardising the ability to maintain interoperability with US operations and systems. This has strategic implications for the allies of the US, not least the UK. As Paul Mitchell comments: "It is axiomatic that the potential for failure in coalition operations exists should partners diverge too greatly in terms of their ability to operate together".[72] As noted above, it is this ability to retain interoperability and influence in US-led operations that has to a large degree underpinned the UK's approach to the development of Network Enabled Capability.

On a more general level the trend towards coalition operations has clear implications for the UK. Michael Codner remarked:

> When the British Government does decide to commit forces to operations abroad, they will in most cases operate in cooperation, coordination and in full

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68 For example the NATO-led ISAF operation in Afghanistan. This is examined in greater detail in sections I F and II B of RP08/57.

69 In 2004 for example Spain withdrew its forces from Iraq following the election of a new government under José Luis Zapatero.

70 For example during the Kosovo conflict in 1999. This is examined in greater detail in section I F of RP08/57.

71 The revolution in military affairs and network enabled capability is examined in section I B.

72 See Paul T. Mitchell, *Network Centric Warfare*, Adelphi Paper 385, p.46

> combination with Allies, Partners and friends. Coalition operations will be frequently ad hoc and coalitions of the willing will be the norm. Consequently the array of capabilities that will be present in a coalition force will not be predictable.[73]

The MOD's Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre (JDCC) noted:

> For nearly all war-fighting operations, the UK will be acting as a member of a coalition force. These coalitions may not always precisely reflect existing alliances. We should look to encourage capable and willing nations to develop complementary military capabilities, and develop training and other links with probable partners… Coalitions may include countries with disparate interests and perceptions. Decision-making processes during such operations may be slower and rules of engagement limited by public opinion across the coalition.[74]

As a RUSI Whitehall Paper has argued:

> Coalitions of the willing under the aegis and sponsorship of established and legitimate international organisations will be a fact of political and military life. Therefore, the UK must position itself in such a way as to have the greatest possible influence over the constitution and conduct of such coalitions.[75]

To this end the Whitehall Paper recommends that the UK maintains political influence in key institutions and procures enough capabilities to co-lead a coalition in which the US is not involved, or enough to influence US policy when it is. These considerations are considered vital for the UK's ability to 'shape' any coalition it finds itself in. Ensuring that the British Armed Forces are structured and equipped appropriately to this end has thus become a major aspect of defence policy.

4. The Development of "Jointery"

The development of 'jointery' is essentially the progress towards increased organisational, functional and operational integration between the individual armed services. In the UK it was a gradual process that began largely at higher Ministry levels and, towards the end of the 1990s, culminated in organisational changes at an operational and, in many instances, tactical level.

In many respects this is a continuation of the debate that developed throughout the second half of twentieth century, between those who argued for strong autonomous Service departments and those who looked to a single Ministry to bring about complete centralisation in the form of centralised control, functional organisation and tri-service planning.

As Matthew Uttley notes, "The period between 1945 and the end of the Cold War ushered in significant changes to the higher management of UK defence", which saw the

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73 Michael Codner, "The United Kingdom's Strategic Defence Review: Strategic Options", *RUSI Journal*, August 1997

74 Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence*, 2001

75 Christopher Dandeker, "Coalitions and the future of UK Security Policy" *RUSI Whitehall Paper*, 2000

"strengthened role of the MOD and the Defence Staff at the expense of the autonomy of the three armed services: a trend in response…to the growing complexity of military planning, the need for coordination including weapons acquisition and the imperative of reducing scope for inter-service rivalries for defence roles and missions".[76]

This trend intensified after the Cold War, and the move towards systematic integration was driven by two key factors. The first was financial, in the form of the downward trend of the defence budget and pressure from the Treasury to achieve cost savings by bringing the three services together into joint commands. The second was changing threat perceptions and, in particular, the demise of the potential for large-scale conflict in Europe and the rise of more diffuse threats on a global scale which required flexible forces capable of projecting power to meet the spectrum of new global risks.[77] In short, the development of a more joined-up approach was both a means of improving efficiency and a pragmatic reaction to the nature of modern operations.

In August 1997 Group Captain Campbell noted in the *RUSI Journal* that, since the end of the Cold War, "most operations have been joint and combined, or both, and there is widespread recognition that this will be the pattern in future… Even notionally single-service operations are likely to require significant support from at least one other service in future".[78]

In institutional terms, this trend toward 'jointery' progressed through changes implemented in the 1990s and was consolidated towards the end of the Major government by the creation of the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ),[79] the Joint Rapid Deployment Force (JRDF) and the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC). By the mid 1990s jointery had become orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the opportunity for the incoming Labour Government to consolidate, further develop, and accelerate the joint approach was noted.

The Strategic Defence Review in 1998 placed significant emphasis on the joint approach and gave greater direction to the process:

> While single-Service skills and ethos will remain the essential foundation of all our military capability, most future operations will be conducted by joint forces composed of fighting units from individual Services. These will be under joint (tri-Service) command and control, drawing on joint intelligence capabilities and with joint logistics. We must therefore also build the joint approach into our doctrine and our preparation and training for operations.[80]

Underlining this message, the Joint Vision Statement, outlined in the supporting essays, noted that "success in modern warfare depends on joint teamwork. Battles and wars are

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76 Matthew Uttley in Dorman et al, *Britain and Defence 1945-2000*, 2001, p.90
77 Matthew Uttley in Dorman et al, *Britain and Defence 1945-2000*, 2001, p.91
78 A. Campbell, "A British Joint General Staff – imperial throwback or strategic imperative?", *RUSI Journal,* August 1997
79 The PJHQ is based at Northwood.
80 Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review*, Cm 3999, Session 1997-98, p.21

won by maritime, ground and air forces operating effectively together in support of shared military objectives".[81]

At the capabilities level, the SDR replaced the JRDF with new Joint Rapid Reaction Forces which would provide a pool of readily-available, rapidly-deployable, high-capability forces from all three Services, designed to have enhanced firepower, mobility and protection.[82] These forces were designed to be available at short notice, composed of high-readiness forces (including a Special Forces component) for initial deployment and a pool of follow-up forces held at slightly less readiness. Among other joint initiatives, the SDR created a Joint Helicopter Command, a Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre[83] and a Joint Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defence Regiment.

There was also a recognised need for greater joint integration of command and control,[84] logistics[85] and transport[86] to reflect the operational demands of expeditionary warfare. Also, to prepare for joint operations, the SDR recognised the need for improved joint training and exercises.

In response to the proposals set out in the SDR, the Defence Committee noted that jointery is:

> generally an inevitable, as well as a welcome development…it must not however, be allowed to damage the single service ethos. Nor should it be allowed to become a mechanism by which the Services conduct their traditional horse trading on capabilities away from public scrutiny.[87]

The New Chapter to the SDR and the 2003 White Paper saw no deviation away from the concept of jointery, which was by then becoming institutionally and operationally enshrined. The development of the idea of network enabled capability and effects based operations served only to accelerate this process. Indeed jointery has not been confined to the capabilities or organisational sphere. The *Armed Forces Act 2006* adopted a "tri-service" approach to military law and subsequently consolidated the three existing Service Discipline Acts into a single system of Service law.[88]

While the development of jointery has been widely endorsed as a desirable process, it has, however raised a number of issues, the most important of which have been

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81 Ministry of Defence, The Strategic Defence Review: Supporting Essays, Cm3999, Session 1997-98, Essay 8-1

82 The SDR planned for the JRRFs to be operational in 2001.

83 This was set up on 1 September 1999 and is tasked with developing joint doctrine and the future joint vision.

84 To this end the responsibilities of the Chief of Joint Operations were increased (placing him on a similar budgetary level as the Service Chiefs) and a new post of Chief of Joint Operations and Training was established.

85 To this end the SDR planned for a new Joint Force Logistics Component Headquarters to be established and the separate Service logistics brought together under a new Chief of Defence Logistics.

86 To this end a new Joint Defence Transport and Movements organisation was created.

87 Defence Select Committee, *The Strategic Defence Review,* HC 138, Session 1997-98, para.424

88 Further information on the *Armed Forces Act 2006* is available in Library Research Papers RP05/75, *Background to the Forthcoming Armed Forces Bill,* 11 November 2005 and RP05/86, *The Armed Forces Bill,* 7 December 2005

succinctly expressed by Matthew Uttley. He notes that from an economic perspective jointery resembles cartel and monopoly, which "may enable the armed services to collude or entrench inefficient practices"; that jointery may not facilitate closer cooperation between the services but rather displace inter-service rivalries to other areas; that there is a risk of "minimalist jointery", whereby a tri-service approach is only adopted in peripheral military functions; and that the services "may use the mantra of jointery to obscure the flow of information to policy-makers on the costs and benefits of individual service procurement proposals that has traditionally been generated by overt inter-service competition".[89]

Despite the significant advances over the last decade, jointery is by no means considered a completed process and important questions remain over its precise nature and end point. In modern complex crises which subsequently entail a prolonged period of post-conflict reconstruction, the Armed Forces often find themselves working alongside a range of actors including other government departments and agencies, non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and humanitarian organisations. There is thus a growing pressure on the Armed Forces to not only cooperate and coordinate more effectively between the separate Services, but also with the other actors who play increasingly important roles in achieving political objectives. This has led to the emergence of the concept of the 'comprehensive approach' which an MOD Joint Discussion Note describes as:

> a conceptual framework which could be used to reinvigorate the existing, Cabinet Office-led, approach to coordinating the objectives and activities of Government Departments in identifying, analysing, planning and executing national responses to complex situations. Post-operational analysis of situations and crises at home and abroad has demonstrated the value and effectiveness of a joined-up and cross-discipline approach if lasting and desirable outcomes are to be identified and achieved… The realisation of national strategic objectives inevitably relies on a combination of diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power, together with an independent package of developmental and humanitarian activity and a customised, agile and sensitive influence and information effort. In seeking to strengthen, and hasten, the formation of these partnerships within an institutional framework and in support of collective ministerial decision-making, it is hoped that the CA [comprehensive approach] could help encourage, at the earliest opportunity, the forestalling, containment or permanent resolution of crises.[90]

Some analysts have suggested that, in the future, jointery will perhaps develop further along these lines in order to improve the effectiveness of the Armed Forces in the modern battlespace. Indeed, both reference to effects based operations in recent official defence documents and the development of the doctrine of the 'comprehensive approach' reflects these changes.

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89 Matthew Uttley in Dorman et al, *Britain and Defence 1945-2000*, 2001, p.91

90 Ministry of Defence, Joint Discussion Note 4/05, 'The Comprehensive Approach', January 2006. A copy of this document is available online at: http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/BEE7F0A4-C1DA-45F8-9FDC-7FBD25750EE3/0/dcdc21_jdn4_05.pdf

5. The Media and Conflict

For most of the twentieth century, media coverage of conflict has been tightly controlled, heavily censored and, in the case of some countries and organisations, used primarily as a propaganda tool. Vietnam was described as the first true media war, but since then there has been an obvious and exponential growth in media penetration of conflict, its conduct and its aftermath.

The increased access of the mass media represents one of the most important contexts in which modern wars are waged. Its most recognisable features are 24-hour satellite television news channels, live broadcasts from war zones, and journalists embedded with infantry units reporting from the frontline. Consequently the "conduct of war has become more transparent in the past 75 years, and the distance between home and the battlefield has diminished".[91] A number of scholars have observed that, for Western audiences, war has become something akin to a spectator-sport: a spectacle that arouses emotions but does not require any active participation.[92]

The role of the media can vary widely. It can be a means of prompting a military response to humanitarian emergencies (the so-called 'CNN effect'); a psychological weapon used by enemies; or a tool of governments seeking to arouse support for an intervention. In any of these roles it can play an increasingly important part in determining the course of war and how it is perceived. As Kenneth Payne has noted "Information and perception have become vitally important…the media are *in* the war".[93]

In many respects, the media itself has become "the decisive theatre of operations"[94] or a virtual battleground. As Michael Ignatieff states, "journalists [have been] turned, willing or otherwise, into combatants"[95] with the potential to affect greatly the course of events. The media has become the crucial intermediary between the actual operations on the ground, the wider public, and the political leadership. The importance of these developments is magnified in modern democracies, where public support or approval for military action "which sustains the will to fight"[96] can be a crucial determinant of strategic success.

For strategists and commanders this presents significant challenges. They not only have to worry about events on the front-line, but also about how those events are being presented to audiences at home. As Payne has observed, "combatants…have a vested interest in what journalists are saying".[97] Given modern standards of media impartiality, freedom of speech and independence from the state, commanders can never presume a wholly sympathetic and supportive press. Out of this mix a complex relationship of mutual dependence emerges. Commanders cannot escape the media presence and its

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91 Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* 2000, p.193
92 Colin McInnes, *Spectator Sport Warfare: The West and Contemporary Warfare*, 2002 and Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* 2000
93 Kenneth Payne, "The Media at War". *RUSI Journal,* February 2008, p.17
94 Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* 2000, p.191
95 Ibid, p.193
96 Ibid, p.192
97 Kenneth Payne, "The Media at War". *RUSI Journal,* February 2008

strategic importance, while journalists require the approval and protection of the military to allow them to report from the heart of a conflict. Strategists not only have to consider how to 'manage' the media, but also to think through the consequences of their actions and how they may be presented.

At the political and strategic level, the calculations may be of a different nature. Leaders must ensure their official proclamations broadly reflect reality, otherwise risk a loss of credibility should those claims be discredited subsequently by the media. As Smith notes, "never lie to the press, whether to deceive them or the opponent. You will in time be found out, with the result that your ability to communicate with the people will be jeopardised".[98]

These concerns are further complicated by the increasing use of the media as a weapon in the hands of the West's enemies. As Ignatieff recounts, during the Kosovo conflict in 1999 Milosevic sought to "use Western media to exploit grisly incidents and undermine popular support for the war at home".[99] Al Qaeda has also proved adept at manipulating the media through its *As Sahab Media* propaganda arm. This has represented one of the crucial transformations engendered by the media revolution. Western publics now have the ability to witness instantly the effect of the use of force by their own militaries, causing many to question its acceptability, even if images of suffering in foreign countries compelled them to demand intervention in the first place.

In order to deal with these problems, the concept of 'strategic communications' has emerged and has been discussed at length by Lawrence Freedman in his book *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*. His central point is the need for a convincing 'story' or 'narrative' that acts as a legitimising framework for Western interventions and which, even in the face of set-backs, mistakes, and rising civilian and military casualties, is able to sustain a critical mass of public acceptance and support. Freedman concludes that such a narrative should be based on liberal values. At a more practical level, this idea is adopted by Rupert Smith who argues that there is a need for a narrator who "explains to the audience what has happened, its significance and where events might lead".[100] Given that modern conflicts waged by democratic states can be won or lost in the minds of their publics, winning the 'narrative battle' has consequently become a vital strategic concern.

The importance of the media in modern warfare has been clearly recognised in the British military. For instance in evidence to the Defence Select Committee in March 2007 Air Chief Marshall Sir Brian Burridge noted that:

> I think that the capacity of any ministry of defence whose forces are in harms way to deal with a 24-hour international media that is vastly in excess of anything…in the past… The visual management of the images that come back from a theatre of war now takes almost as much effort as commanding the war itself if you want to do it properly.[101]

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98 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World, 2005*, p.393
99 Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* 2000, p.193
100 Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World, 2005*, p.391
101 Defence Select Committee, *UK Defence: Commitments and Resources: Uncorrected Oral Evidence,* HC381-ii, Session 2006-07

In a speech on the 'virtual battleground' at Kings College London in February 2006, former Defence Secretary John Reid stated:

> Technology has enabled, for the first time, real-time media scrutiny of war, on a scale and a level of intrusiveness inconceivable only a few decades ago… The actions of our armed forces, at home and abroad, have never been under greater scrutiny than they are today. Our forces are operating - in this hazardous new environment - under a microscope and that microscope is here to stay.[102]

In the UK 'media management' has grown in importance. Indeed, the MOD has published a 'Green Book' which outlines the procedures that the MOD will adopt when working with the media during military operations. As Richard Holmes has also observed, media contacts in the military have become increasingly centralised, with single-service one-star Directors of Corporate Communications removed from post for fear that these individuals might be "off-message".[103]

6. Public Attitudes to War

Historically, and in general terms, war had been seen as a natural and virtuous activity. This view was increasingly rejected, however, during the twentieth century following two World Wars and the prospect of nuclear confrontation in a cold war that lasted almost 45 years. This change of attitude, in particular in the latter half of the 20th century, was accompanied by post-war social trends including mass consumerism, shrinking family sizes, the decline of civic militarism, the democratisation of most areas of life, the reconceptualisation of masculinity, and the growth of an increasingly hedonistic and individualistic youth culture.[104] Ken Booth has summarised the effect of these changes:

> Historically, military force was a 'normal' aspect of international relations. However, questioning traditional assumptions about its utility has been one of the characteristic features of Western strategic discourse since the mid-1960s. In the light of a lost war in Vietnam, nuclear overkill, and endless struggle in Northern Ireland and a perceived Western failure to translate military power into diplomatic effectiveness, it has often been claimed that armed forces are not as useful as formerly. At best they are dismissed as 'intellectual time-lags'; at worst they are criticised as being counter-productive and dangerous.[105]

Also, as militaries in the West have become both smaller and more professionalised, the gap between civil society and the military has increased. The overriding dynamic is that the public has become increasingly detached from the experience of war, despite the extent of media exposure to it (examined above). This has led many commentators to point to the emergence of distinct divide between civil society and the military. In a speech in 2006 the then Defence Secretary John Reid noted that,

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[102] John Reid, 'The Challenges of Modern War', Speech at Kings College London, 20 February 2006.
[103] Richard Holmes, 'Soldiers and Society', Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives Annual Lecture, 10 May 2006, p.14
[104] Jeremy Black, *War and Disorder in the 21st Century*, 2004
[105] Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, 1979, p.76

> First of all, our context is a level of understanding about what soldiers do which has fallen amongst our civilian population over time. The last conscript left the British armed forces 45 years ago. There is an argument that even since then - despite seeing and reading more than ever about the work of the services - the public have a continually looser grasp of what it means to be a soldier in this new security environment than was the case a generation ago.[106]

As Colin McInnes notes, civilian publics "may empathise but do not experience; they may sympathise but do not suffer".[107] Michael Codner writing in the *RUSI Journal* in April 2007 discussed this need for a better understanding of the military among the general public:

> A fundamental element of the rebuilding of a national consensus over the military instrument is that the nation as a whole, and not just particular governments, accepts its responsibility for the wellbeing of its military and their dependents. And there needs to be a better understanding in the electorate of its military and the demands that are made on it. Education in this respect is not a matter simply for government or the Services. Representative politicians have a particularly important role to play in their communities as well as in Parliaments and councils.[108]

Such sentiments have been accompanied by advances in disease control and famine prevention, for instance, which have led to a rejection of fatalism and a widespread reluctance to accept the hazards of conflict.[109] This is reflected in the casualty sensitivity of the West, particularly when the probability of the success of a campaign is in question or when the war is fought out of choice, rather than necessity.

These cultural transformations – what Jeremy Black has termed the Revolution in Attitudes towards the Military,[110] - has led to a transformation in prevailing social values, beliefs and ethics. Other noticeable trends include the growing polarisation of religious belief, a growing concern for universal human rights, and the emergence of prosperity as the overriding socio-political value. The convergence of these social currents has led to the lowering of the threshold, or contraction of the public 'moral space,' for justifying the use of force. Consequently, politicians are often compelled to go to much greater lengths to secure legitimacy for the wars they want to fight, particularly with respect to large-scale and protracted campaigns.

It might be argued that there is little political leaders can do to alter the fact that, when they contemplate the use of force, they will be faced with a sceptical 'post-military' public who perhaps do not fully comprehend the necessity of using force, particularly for the purposes of enforcing international law or preventing crimes against humanity. For example, in an ICM poll for the BBC published in March 2008, 48 per cent of respondents opposed British involvement in Afghanistan (though this had fallen from 53 per cent in 2006 when ICM last asked the question).[111]

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[106] John Reid, 'The Challenges of Modern War', Speech at Kings College London, 20 February 2006.
[107] Colin McInnes, *Spectator Sport Warfare: The West and Contemporary Warfare*, 2002, p.29
[108] "British defence policy – rebuilding national consensus", *RUSI Journal,* April 2007
[109] Jeremy Black, The Dotted Red Line: Britain's Defence Policy in the Modern World, 2006, p.76-9
[110] Ibid, p.13-17
[111] "Afghan conflict support rises", *BBC News Online,* 14 March 2008

However, this has served to emphasise the importance of securing legitimacy, making the case for war clearly, transparently, and honestly, and ensuring decisions are reached through appropriate legal processes and institutions. This might not inevitably imply UN approval, as the Kosovo crisis revealed, but instead, broad international approval or alternative 'right authority' invested in institutions such as NATO. This need to secure legitimacy is also evident in the Government's current proposals to grant Parliament the general right to approve future deployments of British forces in situations of armed conflict.[112]

Conversely while the public's attitude to war may be less positive than before, public support for the armed forces has nevertheless generally remained consistently high. As DEMOS noted in its November 2007 study on the state of the British Armed Forces:

> The United Kingdom is rightly proud of its armed forces. The three services enjoy a high approval rating from the public. Eighty seven per cent of those surveyed for one polling company agreed that the British armed forces were 'among the best in the world' with 64 per cent having a 'very favourable' or 'mainly favourable' view of them.[113]

However, on several occasions in the last year the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt has expressed concern over what he considers to be a "growing gulf" between the Armed Forces and the general public. In a speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in September 2007 he stated:

> I have become increasingly concerned about the growing gulf between the Army and the Nation. I am not talking about the support that we get from Her Majesty's Government and to a large extent I am not talking about public finances. Rather, I am talking about how the Nation as a whole views the Army.
>
> The people who make up that Army are all volunteers and they fully understand that they join to fight and if necessary to put themselves in harms way to get the job done – we do not ask for sympathy when we are doing what we are paid to do. Now, a great deal has been made of the Military Covenant in recent weeks, mostly in terms of equipment and pay, but the real covenant is with the population at large – the Nation. The covenant says that we do what we do in your name; soldiers do not ask why; but they do ask for respect and honour for doing what they have been sent to do with courage and professionalism […]

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[112] This initiative was first introduced by the Brown government in July 2007 as part of its wider set of measures on the Governance of Britain. Although it foresees a general right for Parliament to approve the future deployment of the Armed Forces, the government has reserved the right to exempt itself from the need to obtain Parliamentary approval in emergency situations. Further detail on these proposals is available in Library Standard Note SN/IA/4335, *Parliamentary approval for deployment of the Armed Forces,* November 2007.

[113] Timothy Edmunds and Anthony Forster, *Out of Step: The case for change in the British Armed Forces,* DEMOS, November 2007, p.11

> As our operational commitments have become more intense, so has the need for support from the Nation. We must move from being a society that uses the military as a political football.[114]

Concerns over the relationship between the military and society have also been reflected in the focus of recent Government policies towards the Armed Forces. In December 2007 the Government announced that it had commissioned an independent study, to be led by Quentin Davies MP, into national recognition of the Armed Forces. Specifically, that review was intended to examine how a greater understanding and appreciation of the Armed Forces could be fostered among the general public.[115]

Author and Chief Political Commentator for *The Times,* Peter Riddell, has refuted the suggestion of a "social gulf" however. In an article for *RUSI Journal* in February 2008 he commented:

> The claim by General Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, that a large, and by implication, widening, gulf exists between the military and the public is a serious misreading of popular attitudes […] There is no shortage of media and public sympathy for the armed services at present. That is why Sir Richard Dannatt is wrong to talk of a gulf. It is certainly true that fewer members of the public have direct contact with the services than in the past […] but that does not mean any lack of support [,,,] Populus polls commissioned by the Army every quarter show a consistently high level of support for the forces, but also a large amount of ignorance about the organisation and functions of different parts of the services. Insofar as there is a gulf, it is of ignorance, not sympathy or support.[116]

7. Civil- Military Relations

In theoretical terms, strategy is the bridge that links military means and outcomes to political objectives. Translating military force into political effect is a notoriously difficult business because the two are so different in nature. At the practical level this difficulty is further complicated by the division of labour between political and military professionals. Given the complexity and size associated with modern governments and militaries, individuals will generally only be able to focus on one profession and, moreover, will be dependent on a large institutional support structure. Thus there will normally exist a distinct divide between the civilian and military areas of government. Making strategy becomes a difficult task of reconciling the perspectives of these two divergent professional bodies. As Colin Gray has noted:

> Between policymakers who must be competent domestic politicians and military commanders and advisers who must be successful soldiers, a systemic cultural inclination to miscommunicate is all but foreordained.[117]

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[114] A copy of this speech given to the International Institute for Strategic Studies on 21 September 2007 is available at: http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/People/Speeches/ChiefStaff/20070921AddressToTheInternationalInstituteForStrategicStudies.htm

[115] This review is examined in greater detail in section II C of Library Research Paper RP08/57.

[116] Peter Riddell, "Armed Forces, Media and the Public", *RUSI Journal,* February 2008, p.12-15

[117] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy,* 1999, p.63

It is axiomatic that, in liberal democratic states, the relationship will be one of military subordination to political masters. This is to a large extent derived from Clausewitz's insistence that war is nothing but an *instrument* of policy. However, as Clausewitz also maintained, for it to function effectively the relationship should not be wholly one-sided. As Gray notes, "above all else, the professional military person must be viewed by politicians and military subordinates as a repository of sound military advice. Politicians and the country as a whole have a right to expect senior military professionals to speak military, and hence probably strategic, truth to political power".[118] The military might not determine policy, but where the military instrument is called upon, they must inform it. As Strachan makes clear, "Effective civil-military relations in practice rely on a dialogue. Policy is ill conceived if it asks the armed forces to do things which are not consistent with their capabilities".[119]

These theoretical points broadly reflect the ideal of civil-military relations in the UK. Nevertheless, in practice, the precise nature of the relationship is often dependent on specific circumstances, individual personalities, and the impact of events. In the last ten years notable changes in the nature of civil-military relations have been witnessed within the British defence establishment, demonstrated, for example, by an increased willingness on the part of existing and/or retired senior military officials to speak publicly on issues relating to the governance of the Armed Forces.

Since the Nott-Lewin reforms of 1982 the Chief of the Defence Staff was designed to be the government's principal strategic advisor, but recent institutional developments – such as the expansion of the MOD and the creation of the Permanent Joint Headquarters– has meant that multiple centres of strategy have emerged and the space in which civilian and military professionals interact has become somewhat confused and unclear. The influence of the chiefs of staff is considered to have declined, with the military increasingly seen as simply accepting political direction, when ideally harmonisation not subordination should characterise the relationship. As Strachan notes:

> In Britain…the apparent strengthening of service advice through the establishment of the Chief of the Defence Staff as the principal strategic advisor to the Minister of Defence has proved a false dawn.[120]

As Richard Holmes has also observed:

> You can find a GP or surgeon, headmaster or primary teacher to give you an honest professional opinion about the state of the NHS or education on air. Yet you cannot find a general who is able to speak with the same freedom while he serving. The minute he has retired and can enter the fray he is written off by spin-doctors as yesterday's man, a dear soldier, but no longer quite the thing.[121]

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[118] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy,* 1999, p.61
[119] Hew Strachan, 'Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq', *Survival,* autumn 2006, p.67
[120] Hew Strachan, 'Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq', *Survival,* autumn 2006, p.77
[121] Richard Holmes, 'Soldiers and Society', Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives Annual Lecture, 10 May 2006, p15.

However, as Anthony Forster has argued, the military itself is also partly to blame. He considers that their response to greater government control and influence has often been weak, ill-considered and counterproductive and that they have often been too slow to embrace change and have side-stepped or ignored challenges to their authority. Forster argues that senior commanders need to contribute more to public debates about the service, that they should more clearly articulate the military's concerns in relation to requests from the political executive, and that they need to represent better the interests of the armed forces at senior levels of government.[122]

Many of the current problems associated with civil-military relations have either been caused by, or come to the fore as a result of, the Iraq conflict. It has been argued by some commentators that the decision to intervene in Iraq was taken despite warnings from some senior military commanders over the military feasibility, and even legality of the war. Reflecting the military concerns over the decision to invade Iraq, the Chief of Defence Staff approached the Attorney-General to ask for his opinion on the legality of the war; while in his memoirs, General Sir Mike Jackson, the then Chief of the General staff, describes how "notwithstanding the Attorney General's advice that the war was legal" he "decided to do my homework".[123] As Hew Strachan has also noted:

> In the lead-up to the Iraq War Britain's ministers were content simply to follow the lead of the United States, taking American ability to make strategy for granted, and not listening to the caveats of their own military advisors.[124]

In an interview with the *Daily Mail* in October 2006 the Chief of the General staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt, reportedly suggested that the UK's presence in Iraq was jeopardising British security interests around the world. As an article in *the Guardian* reported at the time:

> General Sir Richard Dannatt, the head of the army, dropped a political bombshell last night by saying that Britain must withdraw from Iraq "soon" or risk serious consequences for Iraqi and British society. In a blistering attack on Tony Blair's foreign policy, Gen Dannatt said the continuing military presence in Iraq was jeopardising British security and interests around the world. "I don't say that the difficulties we are experiencing round the world are caused by our presence in Iraq, but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them," […]
>
> Such an outspoken intervention by a British army chief is unprecedented in modern times and bound to increase pressure on the government to continue making its Iraq case against a backdrop of increasing mayhem on the ground.[125]

An article in *The Times* also commented:

> Although other senior figures in the Army have privately expressed concern about strategy in Iraq and, in particular, the lack of proper planning after the invasion

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[122] Anthony Forster, "Breaking to Covenant: Governance of the British Army in the Twenty First Century", *International Affairs,* Vol.82, 2006, p.1057
[123] General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier,* p.328-9
[124] Hew Strachan, 'Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq', *Survival,* autumn 2006, p.77
[125] "Army chief: British troops must pull out of Iraq soon", *The Guardian,* 13 October 2006

> had taken place in March 2003, no one as senior as Sir Richard has made such a personal attack on the Government's strategy […]
>
> Traditionally, Service chiefs who oppose government policy would be expected to step down.[126]

Yet strains in civil-military relations have not been confined to the operational sphere. In the last few years the level of criticism emerging from within military circles has risen in relation to issues such as defence spending, the quality of equipment issues to service personnel and the welfare and conditions of personnel and the support offered to their families and veterans. It is these latter issues which have led to accusations that the government is breaching its duty of care to personnel and undermining the principles of the Military Covenant.[127] In the *Daily Mail* interview in October 2006 General Sir Richard Dannatt expressed concern over several aspects of the terms and conditions of service personnel including accommodation, pay and allowances and healthcare. Criticisms over the level of defence spending have also been aired publicly by a number of ex-service chiefs in a debate in the House of Lords in November 2007 in what has been considered an unprecedented attack on the Government's defence policies.[128]

As Gwyn Prins and Robert Salisbury noted in an article for the *RUSI Journal* in February 2008:

> The security of the United Kingdom is at risk and under threat. The mismatch between the country's military commitments and the funding of its defence moved Lords Bramall, Boyce, Craig, Guthrie and Inge – five former Chiefs of the Defence Staff – to take the unusual step of raising their concerns publicly in a House of Lords defence debate on 22 November 2007 […]
>
> The former Chiefs of the Defence Staff have stepped outside their traditional reticence to speak on behalf of all.[129]

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126 "Army chief called in to explain 'quit Iraq' appeal", *The Times,* 13 October 2006

127 These issues are examined in greater detail in Section II C of Library Research Paper RP08/57, *British Defence Policy since 1997*

128 The Hansard extract for that debate is available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/71122-0002.htm#07112238000004

129 Gwyn Prins and Robert Salisbury, "Risk, Threat and Security", *RUSI Journal,* February 2008

II The Change to Resource Accounting

To understand the issues and trends examined in Library Research Paper RP08/57, *British defence policy since 1997,* it is necessary to be clear about how the defence budget is set up and the relevant terms and definitions. Of fundamental importance is the change from cash accounting to Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) which occurred in 2002. The change to RAB has had a significant effect on the defence budget, in terms of inflating the MOD's headline budget figures and affecting the time-series comparability of the data.

A. Defence Budget Framework

Until 1998/99, Government expenditure was accounted for on a cash basis, whereby revenues are recorded when cash was actually received and expenses were recorded when they were actually paid. In 1999/2000 and 2000/01 there was a transition across government to Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB): a form of accruals-basis accounting where costs are recorded when they are incurred, rather than when the cash is actually spent. During this time government departments continued to be controlled on a cash basis, but were required to produce consolidated resource accounts. The 2002 Spending Review delivered the full introduction of RAB. This change from cash accounting to RAB has had a significant effect on the defence budget, in terms of inflating the MOD's headline budget and affecting the time-series comparability of the data. These issues are discussed in more detail below.[130]

Departmental budgets are comprised of Departmental Expenditure Limits (a department's main budget) and Annually Managed Expenditure. Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) are firm plans for three years for a specific part of a department's expenditure (as set out in Government Spending Reviews). These are split into Resource DEL (operating costs defined by resource consumption) and Capital DEL (new investment by the department). Departments may carry forward unspent DEL from one year to the next, but it may be increased only in exceptional circumstances with the Treasury's agreement through a claim on the DEL reserve. In general DEL will cover all running costs and all programmed expenditure. The move to RAB requires that DEL now also include relevant non-cash costs, which are explained in more detail below.

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) relates to expenditure outside the DEL but included in Departmental Budgets. A programme is included in AME if it cannot reasonably be subject to firm three-year limits as for DEL. Defence budget AME includes programmes that are demand-led, such as War Pensions, and exceptionally volatile items that cannot be controlled by the Department, such as the financial provision for programmes related to the nuclear deterrent.

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[130] For a more comprehensive guide to this issue please see Annex B in *2002 Spending Review, New Public Spending Plans 2003-2006, Cm 5570*.

1. Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB)

The Government's introduction of resource accounting and budgeting was the most significant overhaul of the public finances for well over a century. In its 2002 Spending Review, the Government outlined the reasons behind the move to RAB, arguing that the previous cash system:

> failed to provide the right information and incentives, and in particular, contributed to a bias against essential long term investment ... Resource accounting applies the best financial reporting and disclosure practices of commercial accounting to central Government finance, and resource budgeting uses this as the basis for planning and controlling spending.[131]

Resource accounting provides a better measure of the costs of running services, since it captures the full economic costs of providing services. Costs are recorded when resources are consumed (or accrued) rather than when the cash is spent. In addition, resource budgeting captures non-cash costs of economic consumption such as:

- depreciation – the consumption of capital assets over their useful economic life;
- a cost of capital charge – the opportunity and financing costs of holding capital;
- provisions for future payments – for example compensation or early retirement liabilities.

RAB therefore provides better, more transparent information on the use of Government resources and departments' activities, assets and liabilities.

The inclusion of new non-cash costs in the departments' main budgets (DEL) is a significant change to the public spending control framework. The first of the main changes is that the main budget for current expenditure (the resource DEL) now includes charges for depreciation and impairments (using up or writing off capital assets), a cost-of-capital charge and provisions for future costs.

In addition, grants paid to the private sector are now managed through the resource rather than the capital budget. This reflects the fact that under RAB, spending is treated only as capital if it creates an asset on the government's balance sheet. Finally, so as to reflect the more commercial budgeting system for public corporations under RAB, investment by public corporations financed by their own resources no longer counts as part of the department's capital DEL.

In the past, it has been the practice to add resource and capital DELs together to give a single number for spending on a department. The inclusion of capital consumption costs (depreciation and impairments) in the resource DEL means that simply adding the resource and capital DELs together would be misleading. Capital would be counted twice

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[131] HM Treasury*: Opportunity and security for all: investing in an enterprising, fairer Britain. New Public spending plans 2003-06 (Spending Review 2002)*, Cm 5570, Session 2001-02

– once when the new investment was made and again as it is depreciated over its useful life.

In order to provide a single number for departmental spending, total DEL is presented net of the capital consumption costs. This measure of total annual spending under resource budgeting reflects the resources used to run public services plus the net investment in them.

Departmental Budgets

- **Direct Resource DEL**: This is a control aggregate within the resource budget. It excludes the non-cash items such as depreciation, cost of capital and movement in provisions. Direct Resource DEL is also known as 'near cash in the resource budget'.

- **Indirect Resource DEL**: This covers items such as depreciation, cost of capital charges, movement in provisions, and the notional auditors' fees for the National Audit Office (NAO). This is also known as non-cash.

- **Total Resource DEL** is the sum of the direct and indirect resource DEL.

- **Capital DEL**: This is for new investment by the department, including Capital additions, disposals, and the capital repayment of loans.

- **Total DEL** is the sum of Resource DEL and Capital DEL less depreciation in DEL.

- **Total AME** is the sum of Resource AME and Capital AME less depreciation in AME.

- **Total departmental spending** is the sum of the resource and capital budgets (DEL + AME) less depreciation.

2. Implications for Defence Expenditure

The move to RAB has had a large effect on defence expenditure. Because of the significant fixed capital base under the control of the Ministry of Defence (approximately one third of total central government assets), the Department incurs significant charges for holding and using capital. This means that the resources consumed by defence are higher than when measured under cash or near-cash budgeting:

> In general under resource budgeting, resource DELs are usually larger than under the old near cash system. Capital DELs are sometimes lower because some grant funded public investment is treated as resource rather than capital.[132]

[132] HM Treasury, *Opportunity and security for all: investing in an enterprising, fairer Britain. New Public spending plans 2003-06 (Spending Review 2002)*, Cm 5570, Session 2001-02

The table below shows the effect that the adjustments for resource budgeting have had on the MOD's Departmental Expenditure Limit.

DEL - adjustments for resource budgeting, £ billion

		DEL (previous basis)	Adjustments for full resource budgeting	DEL (new basis)
2001/02	prov	24.5	5.5	30.0
2002/03	plans	24.2	5.1	29.3
2003/04	CSR plans	25.6	5.3	30.9
2004/05	CSR plans	26.5	5.3	31.8
2005/06	CSR plans	27.4	5.4	32.8

Source: 2002 Spending Review, Cm 5570

It is clear that the switch to RAB increases MOD DELs by more than £5bn in each year.

Furthermore, the move to RAB has affected the time-series comparability of the expenditure data, with figures for DEL from 2001-02 onwards not directly comparable with earlier data. In order to facilitate comparison with earlier spending plans, a 'near cash' figure for defence spending that is consistent with the previous budgeting basis will continue to be produced each year. This is the total accrued expenditure spend and is equal to the sum of Direct Resource DEL (which does not include non-cash items such as depreciation and the cost of capital charge) and Capital DEL, in addition to near cash AME in the resource and capital budgets.

3. Request for Resources

The defence budget is split between three Requests for Resources (RfRs):

RfR1 – Provision of Defence Capability:
This provides for expenditure primarily to meet the MOD's operational support and logistics services costs and the costs of providing the equipment capability required by defence policy.

RfR2 – Conflict Prevention:
This provides primarily for the additional costs of operations. These are the net additional costs incurred: the costs that the Department would have incurred regardless of the operation taking place, such as wages and salaries, are recorded against RfR1.

RFR3 – War Pensions and Allowances:
This provides primarily for pensions and other payments/allowances for disablement or death arising out of war or service in the Armed Forces after 2 September 1939; awards to surviving members of British groups held prisoner by the Japanese during the Second World War (Far Eastern Prisoners of War) or their surviving spouse and pensions and other payments in respect of service in the Armed Forces at other times.

The following table gives figures for departmental spending by activity in resource terms between 2001-02 and 2007-08.[133] It is not possible to compare these figures with earlier periods due to the implementation of RAB.

Departmental spending by activity (resource basis)
£000

	2001-02 outturn	2002-03 outturn	2003-04 outturn	2004-05 outturn	2005-06 outturn	2006-07 outturn	2007-08 plans
Total departmental spending[1]	**35,348,168**	**35,451,386**	**35,884,242**	**37,448,230**	**38,576,899**	**39,303,013**	**39,713,191**
of which:							
Provision of Defence Capability (RfR1)	30,315,772	29,532,298	29,792,914	31,932,386	31,926,666	32,221,623	33,546,243
Conflict Prevention Costs (RfR2)	586,085	1,436,119	1,493,430	1,112,023	1,267,093	1,757,702	44,303
War Pensions & Allowances (RfR3)	1,237,535	1,165,411	1,116,047	1,109,521	1,068,595	1,039,950	1,027,007
Armed Forces Pay & Pensions (AFPS RfR1)	3,208,776	3,317,558	3,481,851	3,294,300	4,314,545	4,283,738	5,095,638

Notes:
1. Total departmental spending is the sum of the resource and capital budgets (DEL + AME) less depreciation

Source: The Government's Expenditure Plans 2007-08, Cm 7098

By far the largest proportion of the resources requested (over 80%) falls within the provision of defence capability (RfR1), which covers personnel, equipment and support costs for the Armed Forces.

While RfR2 for peacekeeping operations, including in Africa, are set out in the Department's Main Estimates, the additional cost of the UK's main military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans are not requested until the Supplementary Estimates.[134] These costs are covered by Treasury reserve funds and not from the defence main budget.

[133] A detailed breakdown by consumption of resources and capital spending by Top-Level Budget (TLB) is given in the statistical digest in section III.

[134] It is through a Department's Supply Estimates that government seeks Parliament's authority for its spending plans. A Department's Main Estimates start the supply procedure and are presented around the start of the financial year to which they relate. These are then followed by two Supplementary Estimates over the course of the financial year, which provide updates to a Department's cost forecasts and, where necessary, seek additional provision of funds. These are the Winter Supplementary Estimate and Spring Supplementary Estimate.

III Statistical Digest

The following statistical information supports the issues which are examined in the main Library Research Paper RP08/57, *British defence policy since 1997* and where possible cover the period 1997-2008.

A. Finance

Breakdown of top level budgets

a) Resource budget

Table 1. Resource Budget DEL and AME
£000

Consumption of resource by activity	2002-03 *outturn*	2003-04 *outturn*	2004-05 *outturn*	2005-06 *outturn*	2006-07 *outturn*	2007-08 *estimate*	2008-09 *plans*	2009-10 *plans*	2010-11 *plans*
Resource DEL									
Provision of Defence Capability	**35,344,649**	**30,143,079**	**30,377,555**	**32,406,129**	**32,042,452**	**33,547,935**	**33,533,755**	**35,171,403**	**36,708,947**
Commander-in-Chief Fleet [1]	4,416,927	3,037,456	3,325,192	3,304,503	1,772,195	1,826,418	2,171,671	1,900,859	2,003,914
2nd Sea lord / Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command [1]	624,107	592,796	684,288	667,076	-	-	-	-	-
Commander-in-Chief land Command	4,637,378	4,461,680	4,576,406	4,872,589	3,535,208	4,678,851	6,471,712	6,120,296	6,389,824
Adjutant General (Personnel and Training Command)	1,512,891	1,524,720	1,528,481	1,706,155	1,599,955	869,454	-	-	-
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland) [2]	617,349	568,242	531,495	498,011	298,752	-	-	-	-
Commander-in-Chief Strike Command	4,303,082	3,133,449	3,182,837	3,735,269	1,633,171	2,241,513	2,734,478	2,463,240	2,353,063
Commander-in-Chief Personnel and Training Command	925,480	861,609	973,155	770,291	622,361	-	-	-	-
Chief of Joint Operations	454,912	466,687	491,960	509,331	332,285	395,633	437,394	376,544	389,778
Central	4,359,261	4,663,999	5,563,982	5,134,022	4,173,133	4,446,307	4,057,955	4,653,441	4,391,707
Defence Estates	-	-	-	1,127,929	2,666,816	2,554,016	2,324,362	2,686,032	2,931,787
Defence Equipment & Support Agency [3]	-	-	-	-	-	15,993,474	14,712,464	16,295,569	17,609,315
Defence Procurement Agency [3]	2,807,275	2,848,906	2,542,345	2,266,978	2,302,796	-	-	-	-
Chief of Defence logistics [3]	10,261,169	7,565,041	6,470,145	7,315,114	12,584,338	-	-	-	-
Science Innovation Technology	424,818	418,494	507,269	498,861	521,442	542,269	621,427	675,422	639,559
Peacekeeping and Operations	**1,117,429**	**1,233,155**	**938,181**	**1,055,848**	**1,448,420**	**2,157,946**	**89,566**	**-**	**-**
Total Resource Budget DEL	**36,462,078**	**31,376,234**	**31,315,736**	**33,461,977**	**33,490,872**	**35,705,881**	**33,623,321**	**35,171,403**	**36,708,947**
Resource AME									
Provision of Defence Capability	**1,668,011**	**200,052**	**55,883**	**-202,568**	**-518,452**	**204,405**	**-130,217**	**-146,505**	**-143,588**
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	-8,771	-1,516	1,110	35,727	-	-	-	-	-
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	-427	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chief of Joint Operations	-	5,106	-3,147	-	9,200	-	-	-	-
Central	79,220	20,178	1,164	-2,175	231	-14	-12	-12	-12
Defence Estates	-	-	-	-	-	36,337	-	-	-
Defence Equipment & Support Agency [3]	-	-	-	-	-	16,162,082	-130,205	-146,493	-143,576
Defence Procurement Agency [3]	1,463,014	175,435	33,694	-239,733	-566,367	-	-	-	-
Chief of Defence logistics [3]	134,975	849	23,062	3,613	38,484	-	-	-	-
Armed Forces Pay and Pensions	**3,317,558**	**3,481,851**	**3,302,397**	**4,314,545**	**4,398,961**	**5,580,928**	**5,869,365**	**6,237,852**	**6,654,387**
War Pensions and Allowances, etc.	**1,165,411**	**1,116,047**	**1,109,521**	**1,068,595**	**1,038,073**	**1,014,126**	**1,015,090**	**911,815**	**964,403**
Total Resource Budget AME	**6,150,980**	**4,797,950**	**4,467,801**	**5,180,572**	**4,918,582**	**6,799,459**	**6,754,238**	**7,003,162**	**7,475,202**
Total Resource Budget	**42,613,058**	**36,174,184**	**35,783,537**	**38,642,549**	**38,409,454**	**42,505,340**	**40,377,559**	**42,174,565**	**44,184,149**

Notes:
1. In 2006/07 the two Royal Navy TLBs, Commander in Chief Fleet and 2nd Sea Lord were combined into a single TLB called 'Fleet'.
2. From 2007/08 the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland TLB and elements of the Adjutant General's TLB have been included in Land TLB.
3. From 2007/08 the Defence Procurement Agency and Defence Logistics Organisation have been merged to form Defence Equipment and Support.

Source: Defence Plan including the Government's Expenditure Plan 2008-2012, Cm 7385, MoD

b) Capital budget

Table 2. Capital Budget DEL and AME
£000

Capital spending by activity	2002-03 *outturn*	2003-04 *outturn*	2004-05 *outturn*	2005-06 *outturn*	2006-07 *outturn*	2007-08 *estimate*	2008-09 *plans*	2009-10 *plans*	2010-11 *plans*
Capital DEL									
Provision of Defence Capability	**5,795,992**	**5,741,250**	**6,526,781**	**6,198,939**	**6,721,565**	**6,938,680**	**7,870,896**	**8,186,928**	**8,870,854**
Commander-in-Chief Fleet [1]	15,941	37,391	17,000	24,136	13 ,893	-567	25,111	94,353	55,430
2nd Sea lord / Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command [1]	15,749	28,390	23,000	10,978	-	-	-	-	-
Commander-in-Chief land Command	30,132	185,673	153,000	60,489	75,441	120,311	261,758	385,116	324,264
AdjutantGeneral (Personnel and Training Command)	24,820	28,996	22,345	18,081	15,684	-18,353	-	-	-
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland) [2]	108,208	43,329	28,000	5,585	2,371	-	-	-	-
Commandercin-Chief Strike Command	68,544	40,367	28,000	18,420	7,083	1,500	111,675	128,992	139,106
Commander-in-Chief Personnel and Training Command	14,973	18,123	24,000	13,538	10,865	-	-	-	-
Chief of Joint Operations	28,429	27,643	25,967	18,609	4,322	34,095	68,258	116,786	43,524
Central	-101,450	-164,939	281,774	'368,056	48,012	42,303	74,973	99,121	106,532
Defence Estates	-	-	-	125,822	90,777	50,126	18,366	-126,079	-183,237
Defence Equipment & Support Agency [3]	-	-	-	-	-	6,708,906	7,310,755	7,488,639	8,385,235
Defence Procurement Agency [3]	4,381,242	4,295,538	4,614,557	5,252,492	5,283,045	-	-	-	-
Chief of Defence logistics [3]	1,209,404	1,200,739	1,309,138	1,018,845	1,169,954	-	-	-	-
Science Innovation Technology	-	-	-	-	118	359	-	-	-
Peace-Keeping and Operations	**318,690**	**260,275**	**173,842**	**211,243**	**348,198**	**836,358**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Total Capital Budget DEL	**6,114,682**	**6,001,525**	**6,700,623**	**6,410,182**	**7,069,763**	**7,775,038**	**7,870,896**	**8,186,928**	**8,870,854**
Capital AME									
Provision of Defence Capability	**-49,900**	**-4,214**	**-**	**-**	**12,843**	**-709,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Central	-49,900	-4,214							
Defence Estates						-709,000			
Defence Procurement Agency					12,843				
Total Capital Budget AME	**-49,900**	**-4,214**	**-**	**-**	**12,843**	**-709,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Total Capital Budget	**6,064,782**	**5,997,311**	**6,700,623**	**6,410,182**	**7,082,606**	**7,066,038**	**7,870,896**	**8,186,928**	**8,870,854**

Notes:

1. In 2006/07 the two Royal Navy TLBs, Commander in Chief Fleet and 2nd Sea Lord were combined into a single TLB called 'Fleet'.
2. From 2007/08 the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland TLB and elements of the Adjutant General's TLB have been included in Land TLB.
3. From 2007/08 the Defence Procurement Agency and Defence Logistics Organisation have been merged to form Defence Equipment and Support.

Source: Defence Plan including the Government's Expenditure Plan 2008-2012, Cm 7385, MoD

Defence spending since 1955

Table 3. Defence expenditure (a) : 1955/56 to 2006/07

	£ billion	£ billion at 2006/2007 prices (b)	£bn change over previous year in real terms	% change over previous year in real terms	As per cent of GDP
1955/56	1.4	26.9			7.1%
1956/57	1.5	27.6	0.7	2.5%	7.2%
1957/58	1.4	24.7	-2.8	-10.3%	6.4%
1958/59	1.5	24.7	0.0	-0.1%	6.3%
1959/60	1.5	24.6	-0.1	-0.4%	5.9%
1960/61	1.6	26.0	1.4	5.9%	6.1%
1961/62	1.7	26.8	0.7	2.8%	6.1%
1962/63	1.8	27.1	0.3	1.3%	6.1%
1963/64	1.8	27.1	0.0	-0.2%	5.8%
1964/65	1.9	27.5	0.5	1.8%	5.6%
1965/66	2.1	28.3	0.7	2.7%	5.7%
1966/67	2.1	27.9	-0.4	-1.3%	5.5%
1967/68	2.3	28.9	1.0	3.6%	5.5%
1968/69	2.2	27.3	-1.6	-5.5%	5.0%
1969/70	2.2	25.6	-1.7	-6.3%	4.6%
1970/71	2.5	26.6	1.0	3.8%	4.7%
1971/72	2.8	27.5	0.9	3.5%	4.7%
1972/73	2.9	26.2	-1.3	-4.9%	4.3%
1973/74	3.1	26.5	0.4	1.5%	4.2%
1974/75	4.2	30.1	3.5	13.3%	4.7%
1975/76	5.3	30.2	0.1	0.4%	4.8%
1976/77	6.2	30.6	0.5	1.5%	4.7%
1977/78	6.8	29.7	-0.9	-3.0%	4.5%
1978/79	7.5	29.4	-0.3	-1.1%	4.3%
1979/80	9.2	30.9	1.6	5.3%	4.4%
1980/81	11.2	31.9	1.0	3.1%	4.7%
1981/82	12.6	32.8	0.9	2.9%	4.9%
1982/83	14.4	35.0	2.2	6.7%	5.1%
1983/84	15.5	36.0	0.9	2.7%	5.0%
1984/85	17.1	37.8	1.8	5.0%	5.2%
1985/86	17.9	37.6	-0.2	-0.6%	4.9%
1986/87	18.2	36.8	-0.7	-2.0%	4.6%
1987/88	18.9	36.2	-0.6	-1.7%	4.3%
1988/89	19.1	34.2	-2.0	-5.5%	3.9%
1989/90	20.8	34.8	0.5	1.5%	3.9%
1990/91	22.3	34.6	-0.1	-0.4%	3.9%
1991/92	24.6	35.9	1.3	3.8%	4.1%
1992/93	23.8	33.7	-2.3	-6.3%	3.8%
1993/94	23.4	32.4	-1.3	-3.9%	3.6%
1994/95	22.5	30.6	-1.7	-5.3%	3.2%
1995/96	21.5	28.4	-2.2	-7.3%	2.9%
1996/97	22.0	28.2	-0.3	-0.9%	2.8%
1997/98	20.9	26.0	-2.2	-7.7%	2.5%
1998/99	22.5	27.2	1.2	4.7%	2.6%
1999/00	22.6	26.8	-0.4	-1.6%	2.4%
2000/01	23.6	27.6	0.8	2.9%	2.4%
2001/02	26.1	29.8	2.3	8.2%	2.6%
2002/03	27.3	30.3	0.5	1.6%	2.6%
2003/04	29.3	31.6	1.3	4.3%	2.6%
2004/05	29.5	30.9	-0.7	-2.1%	2.5%
2005/06	30.6	31.4	0.5	1.6%	2.5%
2006/07	31.5	31.5	0.0	0.0%	2.4%

Notes:
(a) Figures show the department's net cash requirement. This series allows for comparisons between pre and post RAB implementation

(b) Adjusted using the adjusted GDP deflator as at October 2007

(c) Total Managed Expenditure: Sum of total current and capital expenditure of the public sector

Sources: *British Historical Statistics, Mitchell - Up to and including 1974/75*
UK Defence Statistics, DASA (provided by DASA official) - From 1975/76
MOD Annual Report and Accounts
Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 2004, Cm 6201

B. Personnel

Strengths and requirements of each Service

Table 4. Strengths and requirements of UK Armed Forces[1]: at 1 April
Thousands

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Naval Service												
Trained requirement	42.9	41.9	40.9	39.9	39.9	39.2	38.5	38.7	38.2	36.8	36.8	36.3
Trained strength	41.7	40.4	39.1	38.9	38.5	37.5	37.6	37.5	36.3	35.5	34.9	35.1
Variation	-1.2	-1.5	-1.9	-1.0	-1.4	-1.7	-0.9	-1.3	-1.9	-1.3	-1.9	-1.2
Untrained strength	3.5	4.1	4.6	4.31	4.4	4.9	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0
Total UK regular forces	45.1	44.5	43.7	43.2	42.9	42.4	42.6	42.0	40.8	40.0	39.4	39.1
Army												
Trained requirement	106.4	105.8	105.3	106.4	107.0	107.0	107.0	106.7	104.2	101.8	101.8	101.8
Trained strength	101.5	101.1	99.7	100.3	100.4	100.9	102.1	103.8	102.4	100.6	99.4	98.3
Variation	-4.8	-4.7	-5.6	-6.1	-6.6	-6.1	-4.9	-3.0	-1.7	-1.2	-2.4	-3.5
Untrained strength	11.2	12.4	13.7	13.9	13.6	13.9	14.9	13.7	11.0	10.9	11.2	11.5
Total UK regular forces	113	113.5	113.3	114.2	114.0	114.8	117.0	117.4	113.4	111.4	110.5	109.8
Royal Air Force												
Trained requirement	56.4	54.5	53.0	52.2	51.6	50.0	49.6	49.9	48.7	47.3	45.0	41.2
Trained strength	54.2	52.7	51.8	51.2	50.1	49.2	48.9	49.1	49.2	46.9	43.6	40.6
Variation	-2.2	-1.8	-1.3	-1.0	-1.5	-0.8	-0.7	-0.8	+0.5	-0.4	-1.4	-0.6
Untrained strength	2.7	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.7	4.7	3.0	2.3	2.2	3.1
Total UK regular forces	56.9	55.9	55.2	54.9	54.0	53.3	53.6	53.8	52.2	47.7	45.7	43.8

Notes:

1. Full time personnel, including UK regulars, FTRS and Gurkhas

Source: DASA Statistical Bulletin TSP3

Manning balance

Table 5. Manning balance [1, 2]

	Navy [3]			Army			RAF		
	Requirement	Strength	%	Requirement	Strength	%	Requirement	Strength	%
1998	41,940	40,480	-3.5%	105,770	100,890	-4.6%	54,530	52,670	-3.4%
1999	40,950	39,330	-4.0%	105,270	99,900	-5.1%	53,030	51,910	-2.1%
2000	39,860	38,880	-2.5%	106,400	100,340	-5.7%	51,900	51,210	-1.3%
2001	39,900	38,540	-3.4%	106,970	100,420	-6.1%	51,600	50,100	-2.9%
2002	39,180	37,500	-4.3%	106,970	100,410	-6.1%	49,990	49,200	-1.6%
2003	38,500	37,620	-2.3%	106,980	102,000	-4.7%	49,640	48,890	-1.5%
2004	38,720	37,510	-3.1%	106,730	103,550	-3.0%	49,890	49,120	-1.5%
2005	38,190	36,400	-4.7%	104,180	102,440	-1.7%	48,730	49,210	1.0%
2006	36,830	35,620	-3.3%	101,800	100,620	-1.2%	47,290	46,940	-0.7%
2007	36,800	34,920	-5.1%	101,800	99,350	-2.4%	45,020	43,550	-3.3%
2008	36,260	35,070	-3.3%	101,800	98,270	-3.5%	41,210	40,620	-1.4%

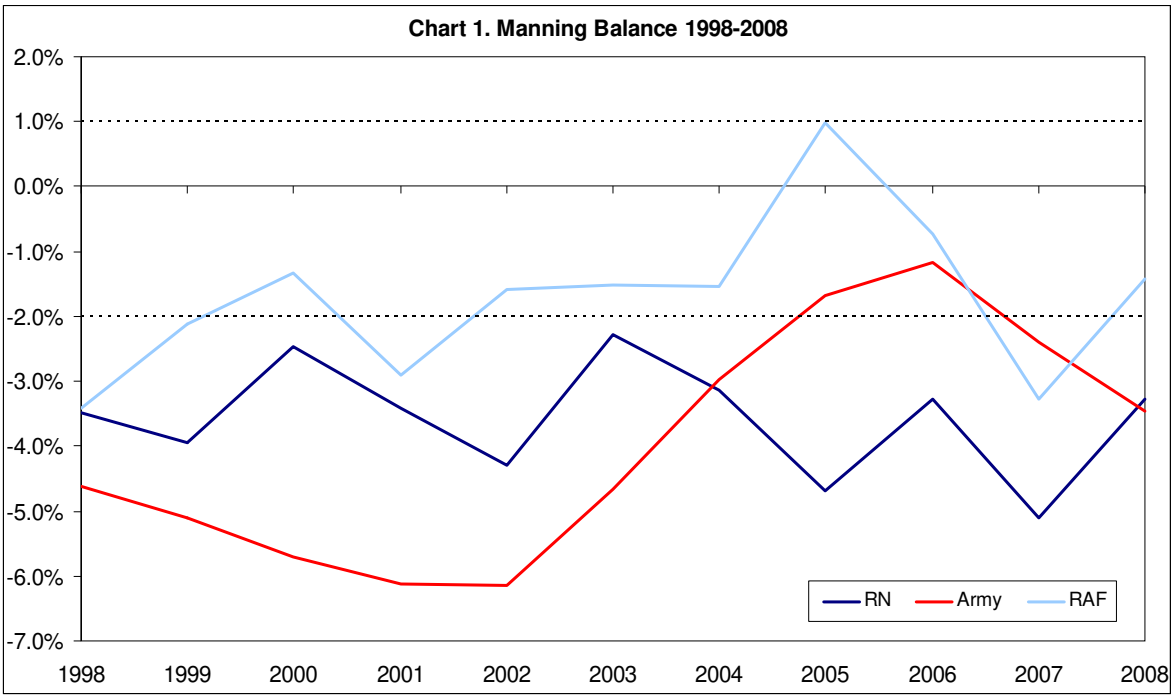
Notes:

1. Manning balance is defined as between -2% and +1% of the trained strength requirement, and is measured against the requirement prevailing at the time. Since that requirement is dynamic, the underlying baseline numerical target varies over the period.

2. As at April 01 each year

3. Including Royal Marines

Source: DASA



Intake/outflow

Table 6. UK Regular Armed Forces Manpower Flows, 12 months to 1st April

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Intake from civilian life											
Naval Service	4,600	4,770	4,950	4,620	5,010	5,220	4,120	3,690	3,940	3,770	3,860
Army	15,380	16,990	16,500	14,770	14,930	16,690	15,260	11,720	12,730	14,300	14,520
Royal Air Force	3,530	4,250	4,100	3,630	3,780	4,450	4,160	2,180	1,480	1,720	2,930
Total Regular Forces	23,510	26,000	25,550	23,020	23,720	26,350	23,540	17,590	18,150	19,790	21,310
Outflow from UK Regular Forces											
Naval Service	5,270	5,530	5,800	5,040	5,800	5,290	4,770	4,630	4,490	4,310	4,330
Army	14,380	17,040	16,170	15,210	14,380	14,560	14,600	15,070	14,190	15,770	15,320
Royal Air Force	4,610	4,890	4,620	4,680	4,530	4,250	4,040	3,730	4,590	5,070	5,020
Total Regular Forces	24,260	27,460	26,580	24,930	24,710	24,100	23,400	23,430	23,260	25,140	24,670

Notes:

Figures are for UK regular Forces (including both trained and untrained personnel), and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time reserve Service personnel, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists and Naval Activated Reser

All figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Due to the rounding methods used totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.

Sources: DASA Statistical Bulletin TSP 1

Reserves

Table 7. UK Reserves & Auxiliary Forces [1], as at 1 April

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Regular Reserve	**259,500**	**254,900**	**247,600**	**241,600**	**234,900**	**224,900**	**212,600**	**201,400**	**191,500**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Volunteer Reserve	**62,500**	**63,000**	**57,800**	**51,500**	**47,600**	**46,600**	**45,300**	**43,700**	**44,100**	**n/a**	**n/a**
of which:											
Naval Service	**27,700**	**28,500**	**28,500**	**28,300**	**27,600**	**27,600**	**27,300**	**27,000**	**30,900**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Royal Fleet Reserve	*10,000*	*10,600*	*10,600*	*10,100*	*9,800*	*10,200*	*10,300*	*10,700*	*10,500*	n/a	n/a
Individuals liable to recall	*14,100*	*14,200*	*14,100*	*14,000*	*13,800*	*13,400*	*12,800*	*12,000*	*11,600*	n/a	n/a
Total regular reserves	24,100	24,800	24,700	24,200	23,500	23,500	23,200	23,200	26,500	n/a	n/a
Volunteer Reserves & Auxiliary Forces [2]	3,600	3,700	3,800	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,100	3,800	4,400	n/a	n/a
Army	**247,700**	**243,800**	**232,800**	**221,100**	**211,380**	**202,000**	**191,110**	**179,940**	**171,450**	**166,050**	**158,610**
Army reserve	*41,200*	*36,800*	*34,900*	*34,500*	*33,630*	*33,400*	*32,400*	*31,090*	*31,420*	*32,060*	*33,760*
Individuals liable to recall	*148,900*	*149,300*	*145,600*	*141,000*	*136,030*	*127,700*	*119,100*	*110,720*	*102,770*	*95,520*	*88,060*
Total regular reserves	190,100	186,200	180,500	175,500	169,670	161,100	151,500	141,900	134,190	127,590	121,820
Volunteer Reserves (inc Territorial Army) [3]	57,600	57,600	52,300	45,600	41,720	40,900	39,610	38,120	37,260	38,460	36,790
Royal Air Force	**47,425**	**46,390**	**45,020**	**44,640**	**44,000**	**42,890**	**40,480**	**38,890**	**37,290**	**36,670**	**35,550**
Royal Air Force Reserve	*16,300*	*15,400*	*14,700*	*14,300*	*13,930*	*12,700*	*10,400*	*9,310*	*8,230*	*7,790*	*7,350*
Individuals liable to recall	*29,000*	*28,500*	*27,700*	*27,600*	*27,580*	*27,600*	*27,500*	*27,120*	*26,720*	*26,570*	*26,030*
Total regular reserves	45,400	43,900	42,400	41,900	41,600	40,300	37,900	36,600	35,200	34,360	33,380
Volunteer Reserves & Auxiliary Forces	2,025	2,490	2,620	2,740	2,480	2,590	2,580	2,460	2,450	2,300	2,160

Notes:

1. A new Reserve Forces Act came into force on 1st April 1997. The figures in this table have been re-aggregated to follow the new conventions set out in the Act

2. The Royal Naval Auxiliary Service are not included in this table. They were disbanded on 31 March 1994.

3. The figures for the TA include Non-Regular Permanent Staff of which there were around 1,400 at 1 April 2000.

4. Due to ongoing validation of data from a new Personnel Administration System, 2007 data for Army are as at 1 March 2007, for the Naval Service Regular Reserve data are currently unavailable and for the RAF data are provisional and subject to review.

Source: DASA Statistical Bulletin TSP 07

C. Assets

Army

Table 8. Army Equipment, by type

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Main Battle Tanks	541	545	542	616	636	594	543	543	543	386	386	386
Reconnaissance	453	462	462	481	467	475	475	475	475	475	475	475
Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle	998	586	539	538	575	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
Armoured Personnel Carrier	2,078	1,881	1,929	1,888	2,398	2,363	2,503	2,503	2,503	2,611	2,611	2,718
Artillery	461	549	425	457	475	457	407	407	877	877	877	877
Aircraft Reconnaissance	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6		3	3	4
Helicopters	270	281	281	254	258	270	274	274	274	324	324	299
UAV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8	8	8	8	192

Source: The Military Balance (various years)

Royal Air Force (RAF)

Table 9. Aircraft fleets by type of aircraft for the Royal Air Force Air Command including Operational Conversion Units and Training Aircraft
As at 01 April, FAF [1]

Aircraft Role	Aircraft type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Air - Combat	Tornado GR	128	128	110	110	110	110	110	110	101	106	106
	Jaguar GR1/A/3/3A	40	40	38	38	38	38	38	38	32	13	13 [2]
	Jaguar T2A/T4	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	3	-
	Harrier GR3/5/7	51	51	48	45 [3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Harrier T4/10/12	9	8	8	8 [3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Tornado F3	104	104	89	90	90	90	90	90	83 [4]	72	59
	Typhoon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	32
C4 and ISTAR	Nimrod R1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Canberra PR9	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	- [5]
	Canberra T4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	- [5]
	Sentry AEW	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Maritime	Nimrod MR2	24	24	23	22	20	20	20	20	14 [6]	14	14
Air Support	VC10 C1K	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
	VC10 K3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	VC10 K4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	2	2	2
	Sea King HAR3/3A [7]	19	19	19	19	19	19	21	21	23	23	23
	Tristar K1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Tristar KC1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Tristar C2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Hawk (100 Sqn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16 [8]	16	14
Logistics	BAe 125 CC3	7	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	BAe 146 CC2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	C-17	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Hercules C1/C3/C4/C5	50	50	50	50	50	50	51	51	50	50	44
Support Helicopters	Chinook	27	27	31	- [9]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Puma	33	33	33	- [9]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Wessex	17	11	10	- [9]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Training Aircraft												
Elementary Training [10]	Viking	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	87	72	72	82
	Vigilant	53	53	53	53	53	55	61	61	61	61	63
Basic Training [10]	Tucano	66	73	78	75	74	76	73	73	44 [11]	44	52
	Jetstream T1	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	11	-	-
	Dominie T1	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	7	9	9	8
Advanced Training [10]	Hawk T1/T1A/T1W	62	67	71	68	68	69	72	65	61 [8]	61	55
RAF Aerobatic Team												
(Red Arrows)	Hawk T1/T1A	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	13	13	13

Notes:

1.Forward Available Fleet is defined as the number of aircraft required to undertake the mandated task; including aircrew and ground crew training, 'in-work' rectification and operational / tactical trials.
2.Jaguar GR1A/3/3A were declared non-operational with effect from 30 April 07.
3.Harrier aircraft were transferred to the Joint Force Harrier on 1 April 2000.
4.Tornado F3 are reducing and due to be disbanded.
5.Canberra was declared non-operational with effect from July 2006.
6.The Nimrod MR2 are to be replaced by the Nimrod MRA4.
7.Excludes two Sea King aircraft attached to 78 Sqn (based in the Falkland Islands).
8.Prior to 2005, 100 Sqn were included under Personnel and Training Command.
9.Support helicopters were transferred to the Joint Helicopter Command on 1 October 1999.
10.Air Command also use Beechking Air 200, Tutor, Firefly, Squirrel and Griffin aircraft owned by a private contractor in training roles.
11.Reduction in Tucano ROF reflects maturing Resources and Management programmes.
12. Merlin replaced Wessex in 2002

Source: UKDS, Tables 3.9 and 3.10, DASA (various years)

Royal Navy

Table 10. Number of active vessels in the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxilary
As at 01 April each year

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Royal Navy submarines											
Trident / Polaris	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Fleet	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	11	11	10	9
Royal Navy ships											
Aircraft Carriers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
Landing Platform Docks / Helicopter	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	3
Destroyers	12	12	12	11	11	11	11	11	9	8	8
Frigates	23	23	23	21	21	21	20	20	19	17	17
Mine countermeasures vessels	19	19	20	21	23	22	22	19	16	16	16
Patrol ships and craft	34	28	24	23	23	23	22	26	26	22	22
Support ships	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Survey ships	6	5	5	6	6	3	3	5	5	5	5
Ice patrol ships	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service											
Tankers [1]	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	7	11	10	10
Fleet replenishment ships [1]	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	6	2	2	2
Aviation training ship	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Landing ships	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	3	4
Forward repair ships	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Roll-on Roll-off vessels	-	-	-	2	2	2	7	6	6	6	6

Notes:

1.Four Fleet replacement ships were re-categorised as Tankers between 01 April 2004 and 01 April 2005 to reflect their primary role.

Source: UKDS, Table 3.1, DASA

Joint Forces Command/Joint Helicopter Command

Table 11. Joint Helicopter Command and Joint Force Harrier

		Required Operating Fleet					FAF[1]	
Joint Helicopter Command	**Aircraft type**	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Royal Navy Helicopters	Sea King HC4 [2]	33	33	33	33	33	29	26
	Sea King HC6[3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
	Lynx AH7 [4]	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Gazelle [4]	9	9	8	8	-	-	-
Army Aviation Helicopters	Lynx	119	117	116	116	98 [5]	74	68
	Gazelle	122	117	113	113	91 [5]	57	45
	Apache	..	..	..	..	.. [5]	38	42
	Islander	6	6	6	6	6 [5]	5	5
	Defender 4000[6]	-	-	-	-	3 [5]	3	3
RAF Helicopters	Chinook HC2	31	31	31	31	31	27	27
	Puma HC1	37	37	37	37	37	26	24
	Merlin Mk 3	-	-	18 [7]	18	18	15	15
	Wessex HC1	8	8	- [7]	-	-	-	-
Joint Force Harrier								
Royal Navy Aircraft	Sea Harrier FA2[2]	26	26	26	17	8	- [8]	-
	Harrier T4 / T8	4	4	4	4	2	- [8]	-
RAF Aircraft (including OCUs[9])	Harrier GR	45	48	48	48	45	45	45
	Harrier T10 / T12	8	9	8	8	7	7	7

Notes:

1.Forward Available Fleet is defined as the number of aircraft required to undertake the mandated task; including aircrew and ground crew training, 'in-work' rectification and operational / tactical trials.

2.The Required Operational Fleet was the Aircraft Establishment plus the Air Engineering Pool (AEP). Sea King HC4 had an AEP of 4, and Sea Harrier FA2 an AEP of 2.

3.Sea King HC 6 introduced since 1 April 2006 to replace Sea King HC4 undergoing modification.

4.Operated by the Royal Navy, but owned by the Army and included in the Army Aviation Helicopter figures.

5.Reduction due to restructuring under medium term strategy plans and moving personnel to Attack Helicopters.

6.The In Service Date for the Defender 4000 was 24 December 2004.

7.Merlin replaced Wessex in 2002.

8.The Sea Harrier and Harrier T8 were docommisioned prior to 1 April 2006

9.Operational Conversion Units train qualified aircrew for different aircraft types. The RAF no longer identifies ROFs for OCUs separately from front line aircraft.

Source: UK Defence Statistics 2007, DASA