



UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

Our Armed Forces are over-stretched and under-resourced. In Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere they defend us and our national interests at great risk to themselves and too often at the cost of their lives.

The UKNDA – An Introduction

The UK National Defence Association (UKNDA) was launched in London, at the Churchill Museum, in November 2007. It was formed to campaign for **sufficient, appropriate and fully funded** Armed Forces that the Nation needs to defend effectively its people, their security and vital interests at home and worldwide. The UKNDA contends that:

- Defence is too low in the Nation's list of priorities and therefore the Armed Forces are under-resourced (under-funded) for the tasks they are set.
- This results in inter-Service wrangles over an inadequate budget.
- Over tasking and under resourcing leads to our Armed Forces being over-stretched and, from time to time, to suffer from equipment shortages and/or failures. These factors can, and do, result all too often in unnecessary casualties.
- All of the above lead to increasing pressures on the most important element of our Armed Forces – the serving men and women (and their families) who do the work, face the threats and risk their lives to defend us.



Photographed (left to right) at the launch of the UKNDA: Cdr John Muxworthy RN, Founder & CEO; The Rt. Hon. The Lord Owen, CH, Founder Patron; General Lord Guthrie GCB LVO OBE, Founder Patron; Winston S Churchill, Founder President; Marshal of the RAF Lord Craig GCB OBE, Founder Patron; Admiral Lord Boyce GCB OBE DL; Founder Patron. Our fifth Patron, The Rt. Hon. Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP joined our ranks after this photograph was taken.

Defence – The Facts:

- Over the past 26 years, since the Falklands War, the percentage of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) invested in Defence and the Armed Forces has been remorselessly reduced from over 5% to barely 2.0%.
- This translates into provision of inadequate numbers of personnel and equipment. Politicians of all parties chant the mantra that “Defence is the first priority of Government” – but the evidence shows otherwise. Defence is low, and steadily getting lower, in the Nation’s list of priorities.
- All of our Armed Forces have been repeatedly reduced in size and capability so that they are now chronically over-stretched for the tasks they have been given or that they may have to face over the next generation.
- The evidence for the above statements has been growing ever more clear and stark. The Falklands War was won by the narrowest of margins – “a damn close run thing”, as Wellington said after Waterloo!
- The ‘Peace Dividend’ at the supposed end of the Cold War has been taken not once, but repeatedly – and now elements of the old-style ‘Cold War’ are again rearing their heads, with the Russian government quadrupling their defence expenditure over the past five years.
- Despite in-depth Strategic Defence Reviews (1998 and supplemental reviews thereafter) their findings have been increasingly abandoned and their recommendations excessively ‘adjusted’, for which read ‘reduced’. The Royal Navy’s Destroyer and Frigate Forces have been reduced progressively from 50 to 32 (then declared to be the irreversible minimum) and are now down to 25 and still shrinking. SDR 98 stated that 12 of the new ‘world-leading’ Type 45 DARING class Destroyers were required. Almost 10 years later only six are on order, with a possible two more to come “if finances allow”.
- The Army, with a trained manpower strength now below 100,000, is grievously short of ‘boots on the ground’ – at least 3,000 short according to its Chief, General Dannatt – Infantry regiments being merged or disbanded entirely. The shortage of modern armoured helicopters is a constraint on operations, especially in Afghanistan.
- The RAF has an increasingly obsolete Transport Force and insufficient helicopters to provide the Army with adequate air to ground strike capability, force support and casualty evacuation. Lack of spares results in excessive ‘store-robbing’ from operational aircraft.
- ***Most crucially of all, many of our Armed Forces on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere are, as a direct result of insufficient funding and sometimes insufficient or inappropriate equipment, at greater risk of wounding or death than might otherwise be the case.***

And DEFENCE? A claimed 'real' increase of 10% over the past 10 year period – i.e. an average of 1% a year higher than the annual rate of Domestic Retail Price inflation. In reality, however, RPI was, and still is, significantly lower than the higher costs of 'Defence Inflation' currently running at between 6% & 8% p.a.

In practice, therefore, the true value of Defence funding has been falling by about 5% a year; this is the reason why, despite the assertions of politicians from both parties for the last 25 years that they were maintaining, or even increasing the 'real' value of funding for Defence, in reality it has been falling. This is the reason why the size and overall capability of our forces has fallen constantly.

The Defence of this Nation now takes less than 2.2% of GDP. This Country is not paying the appropriate premium for its Defence 'Insurance Policy'. The Defence of this Country is being sold short.

It may thus be seen that Defence is not – as frequently claimed by Ministers and politicians of all persuasions – “the first priority of Government” – but now lags way behind and is the poor relation to social services of all types. **The UKNDA contends that the first duty of any Government and the greatest essential 'social service' that can be provided – is the effective Defence of the Nation, its people, their security and vital interests at home and worldwide.**

What percentage of GDP should be allocated to Defence?

The UKNDA urges that 3% of GDP should be allocated to Defence. This is the minimum amount that should, in real terms (i.e. allowing for Defence Inflation) be sustained and adjusted as necessary to meet current National Defence Assumptions. The 2006 Budget for Defence is approximately £32 billion or about 2.2% of GDP. To raise the figure from 2.2% to 3% of GDP would increase the funding for Defence to approximately £44 billion.

How to pay for such an increase?

The decision as to “who will pay/how to pay” is a matter for the politicians and not for the UKNDA. However, for 50 years Defence Funding has, by the constant imposition of efficiency and economy measures (i.e. 'cuts') been reduced to pay for the increases in funding of other Government Departments. The time has come (and is long overdue) for that trend to be reversed.

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THREATS TO BE FACED

By Winston S. Churchill,
President, UKNDA

We live in a dangerous and unstable world and, following the demise of the Soviet threat, the direction and nature of future threats to the security of the UK and her interests worldwide are more diverse and even less predictable.

Looking back over the past 25 years, there were few who foresaw Argentina's attack on the Falkland Islands in 1982, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, or the *Al Qaeda* attack on the Twin Towers, provoking the Allied retaliation in Afghanistan and the liberation of that country from the Taliban, who are currently staging a fight-back.

Since the time required to bring into service major new equipment programmes, for either of the three Armed Forces, is in the range of 10-15 years, any future war or conflict will essentially have to be fought with the equipment ordered today. There will be no time to build & equip new divisions for the Army, new squadrons for the RAF or new ships for the Royal Navy – hence the vital necessity of the UK maintaining a serious, strong and balanced Defence capability.

Immediate & Near-Term Threats (up to 5 years):

The UK Homeland – The threat remains high, not merely from self-detonating *ihadis* in our cities, but from aerial or seaborne attack against our civilian population with chemical, biological, dirty-bomb or even nuclear devices. HM Coastguard does not begin to have the manpower or equipment to do the job its name implies, especially given our lengthy and exposed coastline. Nor indeed does the Royal Navy have more than a minimal capability deployed in coastal waters.

Continuing Conflicts in Iraq & Afghanistan – Operations continue at a high intensity against insurgents in Iraq and the resurgent *Taliban* in Afghanistan. Logistic and technological support by Iran to our enemies in both countries, especially with high-tech IEDs (improvised explosive devices) capable of penetrating anything other than the heaviest and most modern armour, is responsible for an increasing number of UK and US casualties.

Instability in Pakistan – Pakistan, Britain and America's somewhat ambivalent ally in the war on terror, rests on a knife-edge of instability. Should the military dictatorship of President Pervez Musharraf fall, there is a serious danger that Pakistan – proud, and for the time being, sole possessors of the '*Moslem Bomb*' – could fall to the friends of Bin Laden and the *Taliban*.

Iran – The unstable ‘mullocracy’, which already deploys missiles capable of striking US & UK bases in the Gulf, has the range to strike Tel Aviv, Istanbul or Athens, and is working flat out to acquire nuclear weapons to fit on them. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, not only denies that the Holocaust ever happened, but has described Israel as a ‘*disgraceful blot*’ that ‘*should be wiped off the face of the earth*’ (The *Guardian*, 27 October 2005). Not since Adolf Hitler has a national leader so brazenly paraded his evil intentions.

There is a serious likelihood that this may, in the near future, provoke the United States or Israel – or both – to attack Iran’s budding nuclear capability. In return Iran, which has armed forces far larger than Britain’s, would strike back at Allied forces and bases in the area, and block the Straits of Hormuz, through which pass some 40% of the West’s oil supplies.

Medium-term Threats (5-10 years):

Iran, in the absence of any decisive action to prevent its acquisition of a nuclear capability, will provide a grave and potent threat to its neighbours, including Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, no doubt provoking a Nuclear arms-race in the Middle East. There are signs of this already. If Iran were to carry out its President’s threats, 3-4 million Israelis and a couple of million Palestinians may well find themselves consumed in a modern-day *Holocaust*. Furthermore, the survival of London and all the cities of the EU will stand at the mercy of the Iranian mullahs, regardless of any retaliatory capability we may still possess.

North Korea, unless it sets itself firmly on the path of peace (as there is some indication it may be doing) will be a source not merely of regional instability but, if its nuclear ambitions are realised, a source of long-range missiles, radioactive materials, even nuclear weapons, perhaps even to terrorists.

Longer-term Threats (10 years+):

Here we are strictly in ‘crystal ball’ territory, though it must not be forgotten that the equipment we order today will, in the 2020s, be all we will then have to defend ourselves with should an emergency arise.

Russia, on the back of its vast energy reserves has, over the past 5 years, been dramatically increasing its Defence outlays. **China**, set on present trends to overtake the United States as the most powerful economy in the world, is also becoming a force to be reckoned with militarily.

Unless these goliaths come to espouse the path of democracy in the interim, there is the obvious danger that territorial ambitions, shortages of natural resources, or a dose of good old-fashioned imperialism – which both have demonstrated in the past – could lead to confrontation either with the world’s largest democracy, India, which is also nuclear-armed, or with the United States and Europe.

Meanwhile every city of the Western world will continue to be at risk from the nuclear-armed terrorist, armed with a bomb perhaps no larger than a briefcase or a backpack.

While hoping for the best, it is always prudent to prepare for the worst. Only thus can one be ready to face almost any eventuality. At least, following the ‘locust’ years of disarmament in the 1930s – thanks to the English Channel – we had a year or two’s breathing space to rebuild our defences before the full onslaught of the Nazi war-machine was upon us. The next major war will be strictly a ‘come-as-you-are’ party, with no time to repair the neglect of former years.