

UKNDA Submission - Modernising Defence Programme

1. Despite assurances from successive governments that the Defence of the UK, and by implication the Overseas Territories and the resources of the Exclusive Economic Zone (the world's 5th largest), is the Government's first priority, the current state of the Armed Forces is inadequate. There is considerable doubt that defence of the Realm has any priority at all and is an 'easy target', as with the Home Office and the Windrush immigrants, for Treasury imposed cuts.

2. Carrier Enabled Power Projection (CEPP) is the UK's carrier strike capability delivered by the QEC, F35B, Merlin Crowsnest, supporting shipborne ASW aircraft, T45 destroyers, T23/26 frigates, SSN in direct support and new logistical RFA tankers and supply ships. It is at the centre of the Government's power projection policy that provides strategic political and military influence, dealing with current and future political, military and economic threats world-wide. The carriers provide a comprehensive maritime (ie including air) and land capability to meet national aims. To realise the full potential of this investment requires also the ability to deliver ground forces by amphibious operations and thereby a transition to land operations. For CEPP to provide the flexibility of a credible modern conventional deterrent world-wide requires both carrier and amphibious task groups. This needs joint investment from maritime, land and air budgets to focus on the delivery of CEPP. It also requires continued investment in 5th and future generation aircraft (F35 etc), secure communications and data links, modern long range land attack missiles (ship, aircraft and submarine launched), self defence systems (EW, ASW, SAM etc) long range anti-ship missiles and UAVs. This is a joint enterprise for all three Services, who may yet still have to operate in sea-air and land-air environment. It is a nonsense to reduce spending on the front-line combat forces and associated equipment that support this policy. It is a nonsense to argue that fixed land-based facilities are less vulnerable to attack than those at sea - land bases are fixed, maritime bases move. It is a nonsense to jeopardise the success of the project by reducing the F35 buy, specialist amphibious ships and the elite amphibious 3 Cdo Bde (RM and supporting Army formations).

3. UK military operations have not been subjected to sustained – if any – hostile air attack since the Falklands War in 1982. This has coloured military thinking in regard to equipment requirements and defensive weapons. For example, other than Manpads, UK ground forces have, since the withdrawal of Rapier (Shorad), no anti-air weapons at all; this is a unique situation in modern western armed forces. The UK has no SAM or ABM system at all, also unique situation in western nations' equipment orbit.

4. Maintaining a full spectrum of capability, including a nuclear deterrent, has spread the resources required so thinly that the UK, one of five declared nuclear weapon states (NWS) and one of same five states to hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council, is militarily unable to threaten conventional deterrence, let alone defend against nations who have built up such a capability – eg Russia. Placing the programme costs for delivery of the Dreadnought SSBNs directly on the Naval Budget has skewed the equipment budget. Reversing that decision for the cost to be borne by central funds must be a priority.

5. There are significant gaps in capability for which there appears to be no plan to fill and there is such a reduced capability in some warfare areas as to be of little value in either offence or defence. Introducing Cyber Warfare defence as a new issue indicates that in government there is little or no understanding of Electronic Warfare (EW). Cyber Warfare is a very serious advance in Electronic Attack (or ECM) and would certainly be used in any conventional form of aggression along with more traditional form of EA / ECM. Resources need to be provided to manage this threat but these resources should be additional to those already provided, not transferred from other aspects of EW (ESM, ECCM) or other areas of warfare.

6. Orders for the replacement of time expired equipment are no longer timely, leaving the industrial base devoid of work such that military-industrial engineering sites are closed and a highly skilled workforce diluted. The delay between delivering the last T23 and ordering the first T26 frigate was fifteen years and between the last Trafalgar Class SSN and the first Astute SSN was 10 years. The Typhoon programme was launched in 1983, the first prototype flew in 1994, RAF Training started in 2003 and the first RAF Sdn 'stood up' in 2007 – twenty four years. No replacement is on the drawing board and the aircraft will be obsolete by 2030.

7. Work share on major programmes with other nations, especially in Europe, is of high risk due to political interference and changing member state priorities. These factors alone often incur increasingly high costs (eg A400 Atlas and Typhoon). This has affected, typically, aerospace programmes and even when the resulting aircraft is considered first class the time delays, mounting costs and lack of an

alternative back up system place the Services in an invidious position militarily and financially. The recent proposal for a new Airbus/Dassault 'EU' combat aircraft suggests, from experience, that it will not reach IOC for over 20 years. In respect of UK ship building some nineteen shipyards have closed since 1982, leaving just five warship and one merchant ship yards. All other yards are defunct save those few, such as Harland and Wolff, that have taken on ship repair.

8. Recruitment and retention statistics are dire and whilst there would appear to be sufficient applications, the digitisation of applications and first sift by a private company coupled with delays in moving forward to interviews and recruit tests (RT) is overly long. Applicants lose interest and need employment/income. There is some doubt in the efficacy of the RT in that younger candidates (age 16-18) who fail may well move on to achieve academic qualifications at GCSE, A level and 1st degree that would qualify them educationally for a commission – however two failures at RT disqualifies the candidate for ever. Poor retention figures can be directly linked to undermanned units finding themselves working harder and for longer hours to sustain the high levels of Operational Capability (OC) required; morale suffers and service personnel leave. Service housing and barrack accommodation is not good and does not inspire belief that the MoD 'cares' or that the 'Military Covenant' works.

9. Military operations, including disaster relief as well as combat, are manpower intensive – a seemingly dwindling resource as manpower numbers are reduced to make 'savings'. Wars are won, still, by the infantry supported by smart weapons for offence and defence. As the Vietcong, Taliban, al Qaeda and ISIS have demonstrated, unsupported and determined ground forces can achieve considerable victory without their own air support and under regular air attack. The FAA, AAC and RAF provide battlefield combat support by way of Close Air Support (CAS) Apaches, helicopter lift (Chinook and Merlin), heavy lift (amphibious shipping) and fast light lift (A400 Atlas and C130J). EW support, including Cyber Warfare defence, is critical. Operation Ellamy in 2011 required considerable, if not intensive, EW support from USN and USAF specialist aircraft in support of RAF proactive ground attack operations, which also required continuous AAR support. Carrier and amphibious task groups closer to the area of operations can provide all these elements as well as reactive CAS and ground attack to calls for support from forward observers.

10. There is a fallacious argument that more advanced 'platforms' with smarter sensors and weapons can achieve more than the 'platforms' they replace and therefore fewer are needed. A ship, tank or aircraft can only be in one place at one time. If it becomes a casualty of war there are fewer 'platforms' to replace it. Battles are fought with what a commander has under command – fewer targets, however 'smart', are easily overwhelmed. Russian conventional deterrent relies on overwhelming enemy defences with very large salvos of missiles, supported by Electronic (including cyber) Attack.

11. Deficiencies

a. No ground based Air Defence (SAM) or Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) systems to provide defence against cruise and short to intermediate range tactical ballistic missiles. A land-based version of the CAMM (Sea Ceptor in the RN) is being delivered, but for the Falkland Islands only. The only possible, with investment, UK ABM system is Sea Viper carried by the T45 destroyers.

b. No Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles for launch by maritime aircraft (F35 / P8), helicopters (Merlin), ships (T45 / T23 / T26 / T31) or submarines (Astute Class).

c. No long-range Land Attack cruise missiles for launch by aircraft, maritime aircraft and surface ships. Storm Shadow, itself not an entirely reliable weapon, has a much shorter range than Tomahawk (300nm against 1,000nm depending on variant), which in the UK is launched from SSNs only. Fitting Storm Shadow to the F35B will remove 'stealth' qualities. New stand-off missiles are being proposed / tested for the F35 internal bay. These may provide a better and cheaper alternative than equipping FAA & RAF F35B with Storm Shadow. SPEAR Cap 3 CEPP seems to provide an interim capability, can be carried in the F35 internal bay, but has a relatively small warhead and short range (>70nm)

d. No Suppression of Enemy Aid Defence (SEAD) weapons – critical when projecting power over enemy territory

e. No Close Air Support aircraft, save the Apache helicopter

- f. Limited Electronic Attack (EA /ECM) from ground and air platforms. Limited cyber defence (ECCM)
- g. Limited MMA / MPA – 9 P8 Poseidon aircraft are insufficient for multi-mission maritime patrol.
- h. Limited ASW resources – submarines are the best ASW platforms and 7 Astute class SSNs are insufficient for Carrier protection, area ASW and intelligence activities. Not enough Merlin ASW helicopters for ASW screening of Carrier and Amphibious Task Groups.
- i. Replacement of the E3-D Sentry is required. But note that long range air defence weapons, such as Russian S-300 / S-400 and long range AD aircraft, eg SU27 with a range of 2,000nm, place these and other large reconnaissance / intelligence aircraft in jeopardy particularly when deployed close to an area of operations.
- j. Insufficient tactical air transport lift
- k. Insufficient attack helicopters (Apache)
- l. Battlefield communications have limited data and voice capacity and vulnerable to Electronic Attack (EA / ECM) including cyber attack.
- m. Low numbers of heavy armoured fighting vehicles (tanks, self-propelled artillery). Limited numbers of amphibious assault vehicles.
- n. Insufficient reserve stocks of weapons, spare parts.
- o. Reduced operational training
- p. Reduced arctic warfare training and thereby capability
- q. Requirement for defensive systems to counter hypersonic missile

4. Answering the House of Commons Defence Committee (HoCDC) Modernising Defence Programme (MDP) consultation questions:

4a. Is the Government correct in its assessment that state-based threats now pose the greatest risk to the United Kingdom?

Yes – Russia and China have built credible conventional deterrent forces supported by smart tactical ballistic and long-range land attack / anti-ship missiles that can be launched from ranges beyond that of UK Combat Air Patrol aircraft – even supported by Air to Air Refuelling (AAR). Any aggressive action, military or economic will be supported by Electronic Attack (ECM), which will include Cyber attacks.

4b. What should the MDP mean for the size and shape of the Armed Forces?

The MDP should recognise that the size of the Armed Forces is insufficient to meet national (including Crown and Overseas Territories), EEZ, NATO, 5-Power Agreement & Commonwealth tasking. The MDP should seek to determine what size of joint combat, patrol and reconnaissance forces are required to guarantee military defence and overall security of the UKs' maritime and land areas. These roles are best undertaken by military forces but should also support the task of the Joint Intelligence Organisation which in turn supports the National Security Council and the Joint Intelligence Committee, particularly in counter terrorism and cyber-security.

4c. What are the implications of examining Defence separately from the wider consideration of national security capabilities?

'Defence' is a wider remit than just 'homeland security', which in itself includes criminal and state sponsored espionage, counter terrorism and (infrastructure / economic / Govt) cyber attack. The Armed Forces, diminished as they are, remain the only resource that can provide military support in strength (particularly by the SF) to the National Security Council (NSC). However the NSC is a forum for

discussing national security and how such security is best delivered to Ministers / Govt Departments. The CDS and the Chiefs of Staff are not permanent members of the NSC, which indicates that Defence (ie the Armed Forces) have a wider (military) task than just supporting the NSC. Thus the Armed Forces not only need funding for military defence but also for security tasks in support of the NSC.

4d. Should the MoD be seeking further increases in defence spending?

Yes – the current funding formula is too simplistic and undercuts the investment needed to meet the task. Equipment budgets should focus on supporting (joint) warfare tasks (eg CEPP) rather than single service ‘wish lists’.

4e. Which capabilities should the MDP be seeking to retain and augment? Which should it be seeking to restructure or dispose of?

MDP should seek to secure and enhance CEPP and other offensive maritime and land/air capabilities. It should seek to provide ground-based AD and ABM systems. Formations whose task is solely defensive formations (eg RAF Regt) should be transferred to bolster Army infantry.

4f. How can the MoD reform itself to improve its business, commercial and procurement practices? How can it set realistic efficiency targets?

- a. Dispense with cost plus contracts – return to fixed-price contracts with penalty clauses.
- b. Dispense with annual ‘bringing-to-book’ accountancy for long term equipment programmes.
- c. Use bulk orders for equipment and spares.
- d. Don’t allow politicians to delay delivery to save in-year costs – eg 18 month delay to QEC delivery added £1.8Bn to the cost.
- e. Efficiency targets do not mean personnel reductions. Military operations are manpower intensive.
- f. Make greater use of short term (eg 3 year) FTRS contracts employing former (trained) personnel in gapped billets / positions.

4g. Who should the MoD be consulting externally?

- a. Defence Business Communities – eg ADS.
- b. Defence companies – large, medium, small.
- c. Research and Development companies.
- d. Academia – especially younger PhDs in Defence Studies.
- e. Serving Unit Commanders of OF4 / OF5 rank.

4h. What lessons can be learned from past defence reviews to inform and improve the outcome of the MDP?

Review the impact and reverse the decision(s) if Operational Capability (OC) has been degraded. Capabilities once lost (eg MMA/MPA, CAS, Heavy Armour, Shorad, SSK) are very hard to replace.