



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

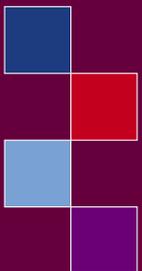
**Future Capabilities :
Factsheet 1
The Policy Baseline -
Why We Need To Change**



The new Defence Command Paper: 'Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities' sets out a modernised force structure for the UK Armed Forces. This fact sheet is one of a set summarising these changes and the background to them.



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The policy baseline - why we need to change

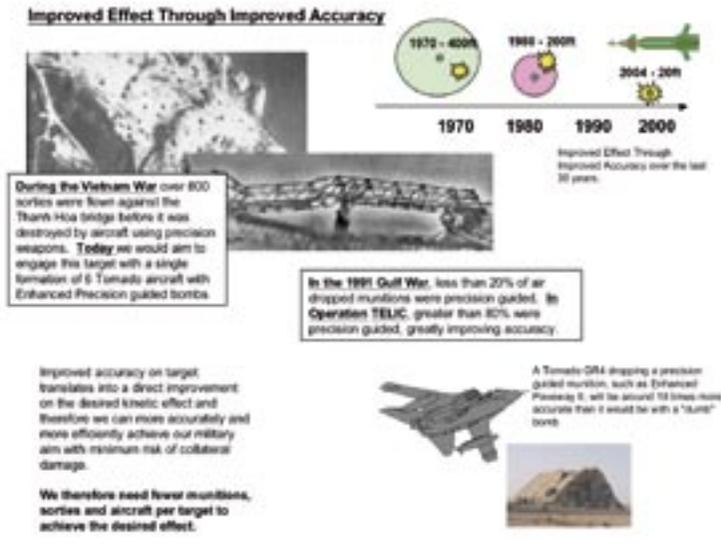
In December 2003 the Defence Secretary published a White Paper called Delivering Security in a Changing World. This looked at the UK's strategic priorities around the world, and the threats we face today and in the future. It concluded that our defence planning and force structures needed to change to meet the new threats and challenges of international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and weak and failing states. It also recognised that, despite much modernisation, the armed forces needed to evolve further to face these emerging threats.

Its key conclusions for the UK's Armed Forces were that:

- They need to be capable of meeting the demands of three simultaneous and enduring operations of small and medium scale - for example, the commitment we made to Afghanistan in 2001.
- The UK should be able to lead medium-sized European (and other coalition) operations where the US is not engaged: we therefore need to maintain the full range of operational capabilities needed to achieve that.
- The most complex large scale operations (like Operation Telic in Iraq) are only likely to be conducted as part of a US-led coalition. In such cases our priority should be to maximise our influence over the operation, including its planning and aftermath. Our force structure at large scale therefore needs to focus on those capabilities that will add real weight to the campaign, and hence to the UK's ability to influence its outcome.
- The potential threat from hostile submarines to most future UK operations is much reduced, as is the air threat to our deployed forces.
- The more favourable security situation in Northern Ireland allows further reductions in the forces permanently committed there.

Having established why we need to change in December's document, we are now in a position to explain how we are going to achieve this. This is detailed in the new Defence White Paper, "Future Capabilities". There are three themes:

- Effectiveness - concentrating on improving the effect our systems and forces have, rather the number of systems involved. For example, think of the accuracy of today's modern munitions compared with the 'dumb' bombs of yesteryear, or the huge battlefield coverage provided by our new Apache Longbow attack helicopters. We therefore need fewer aircraft, flying fewer sorties and dropping fewer bombs to deliver the same effect - and fewer innocent casualties.



- Technology - exploiting the latest advances to improve everything from communication to strike capability on land, in the air and at sea. Particularly important are systems contributing to what we call Network Enabled Capability, or NEC, which link all elements of our forces together in real time, from aircraft carriers to individual soldiers on the ground.
- Efficiency - the need to both spend our money wisely, and to make savings where we can to divert funds to "front line" capabilities. That means being honest in our assessment of less effective, older systems and introducing new, better working practices. We are committed to making 2.5% efficiency savings in each of the next three years. This equates to £2.8 billion by 2007/8. All this money will be re-invested in Defence.

This is just a brief overview. The following fact-sheets explain in greater detail what we are doing, and the full White Paper is available from HM Stationery Office or online at www.mod.uk

