

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

64 DWP 1, para 4.3.

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

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

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

Coalition operations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

98 DWP 1, para 3.5.

99 Qq 214–215

100 Q 80

101 HC Deb, 3 November 2003, col 518

102 Q 174

103 Q 257

104 Q 257

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

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

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

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

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

105 Q 257

106 Q 258