

## Overseas Operations

27. British military doctrine (which draws together a wealth of historical experience and examines how we can use this for future operations) sets out that it is usually better to seek to engage an enemy at longer range - before they are able to mount an assault on our interests. Not only is this more effective than waiting to be attacked at a point and timing of an enemy's choice, it can have a deterrent effect. We must therefore continue to be ready and willing to deploy significant forces overseas to act against terrorists and those who harbour them. It is of the nature of terrorists and those using asymmetric means that those threatening the UK will be hard to find, may present only fleeting opportunities to attack them and can often choose inaccessible areas for training and planning. In many circumstances, therefore we will need to be able to strike very rapidly.

28. The Strategic Defence Review concluded that in today's world we would need to be able to conduct "frequent, often simultaneous and sometimes prolonged operations" overseas. It recognised that rapid deployment is highly demanding, and places a premium on the flexibility of our Armed Forces. Usually we will be acting in coalition with others and, while in some circumstances we may choose to play a leading role, other nations - particularly the US - will also have very significant contributions to make and in most circumstances will have the lead roles. Mindful of the burden commitments place on our Armed Forces - and their families - we cannot ask or expect them to operate at an excessive tempo. But we must ensure that they have the posture, training and skills, structures and capabilities to do what we need them to do, and to act as appropriate to combat international terrorism and asymmetric threats. The SDR set in hand a range of measures to give our Armed Forces the right posture and capabilities, which have stood us in good stead since 11 September. But it is right to examine whether we need to make further adjustments.

29. In order to do so, it is important to understand what our Armed Forces can achieve in countering threats abroad, and what sort of operations they might be engaged in. In assessing them, we must recognise that we have a range of powerful non-military tools which will often be the first choice to help achieve these aims, but that there will be circumstances where we need to back these up with military force. We believe that we might assume five broad, conceptual aims.

## Engaging the Causes

30. We can try to **prevent** the conditions that allow international terrorist organisations to operate. We can help less capable states build better capabilities to counter terrorism themselves through our conflict prevention and Defence Diplomacy activities. By undertaking peace support operations, usually in coalition with others, we can prevent instability or assist in stabilisation. And by training other states' armed forces, we can transfer our military skills so that they can eventually do the job themselves. Where prevention has failed and we have engaged in coercive or destructive activities, we should be prepared to assist in the post-conflict recovery, to help create the conditions for stability, thereby reducing the likelihood of the state supporting or harbouring terrorists in the future. The Government has already recognised the importance of improved conflict prevention, management and resolution through the establishment of inter-Department conflict prevention pooled budgets, to which it has committed significant additional resources. The UK has a particular expertise and experience in leading initial short duration peace support operations in higher risk environments, encouraging others to take over once the conditions for stabilisation are set (an example is the operation in Macedonia in 2001). By keeping our contributions to a short duration, we can regroup to prepare and conduct other strike and stabilisation operations.

31. We can **deter** would-be attackers by making sure that international terrorist groups, and those that actively sponsor or harbour them, are aware of our capability, readiness and willingness to act against them. It is vital to effective deterrence that we continue to ensure that we have an appropriate range of capabilities, and the will to respond to threats or attacks. In seeking to deter, what we say can have a crucial role in preventing threats from emerging. We are therefore considering how we might set out more clearly, and communicate more effectively, our intention to hold to account regimes which directly support or condone international terrorist groups, or allow their presence within their borders. We are also looking at what more we could do to detect and deter the development or use of improvised chemical, biological



and radiological weapons as well as nuclear devices and, importantly, dissuade those who spread such weapons.

**32.** We may need to **coerce** regimes and states which harbour or support international terrorism with the threat and, ultimately, the use of military force in the event that diplomatic and other means fail. We are looking at a range of technologies to see if they offer more effective and precise options.

**33.** We can try to **disrupt** the activities that support international terrorist groups by interdicting their sources and flows of materiel, finance and freedom of movement, whether on the land, sea or in the air.

**34.** We might need, ultimately, to act to **destroy** active terrorist cells with military action such as find and strike raids on key terrorist facilities. More widely, we want to develop the techniques, and ensure we have the necessary capabilities, to collapse whole terrorist organisations, which may be widely spread geographically and not just individual cells.

**35.** The action we take in response to any particular threat will depend on its nature. In some cases, peace support operations or Defence Diplomacy might prevent a problem from emerging in the first place. In other circumstances a robust military response might be necessary and justified.

**36.** Where use of force is justified, it is important that the conduct of military action is in accordance with our obligations under international law, in particular our obligation in relation to civilians and civilian property. Invariably we want to try to win the hearts and minds of the local populace away from supporting the terrorists, through effective information operations.

**37.** We are examining what is needed to give us the capabilities to perform these roles. The SDR is already moving us in the right direction. For example our plans for two new aircraft carriers will eventually give us more flexibility in basing arrangements for forward deployment in a crisis: basing on land may not always be possible (or desirable since it can in some cases itself generate an adverse reaction). But we need to assess, after 11 September, whether our planned capabilities are the right ones.

**38.** There may be areas where we should do more. We want to assure ourselves that we have the right shape and balance of rapidly deployable forces, and the ability to integrate them with the intelligence and tight command and control needed to mount precision operations with high levels of confidence. This applies to peace support operations but perhaps most of all to combat situations – we are looking closely at whether we need more of our forces at high readiness, the necessary enablers (for example, command and control, ISTAR (intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance) and transport), and how we explain better our actions and intentions to the local population.

- Do we need to make adjustments to our forces, to give more weight to the threat of international terrorism and other asymmetric threats? Do the new challenges mean we should be placing less weight on other military tasks identified in the SDR?
- Are the 5 conceptual aims (prevent, deter, coerce, disrupt, destroy) the right framework for the military role in countering terrorism abroad?
- Within this framework, what is the right balance between operations to disrupt potential threats, find/strike operations and stabilisation operations? Should the UK continue to plan to participate in these types of operation?
- Do we need to be able to deploy more of our forces more rapidly to counter terrorism worldwide? Should the UK aim to specialise in particular forms of capability or operation as a contribution to operations with allies or concentrate on particular geographic areas?



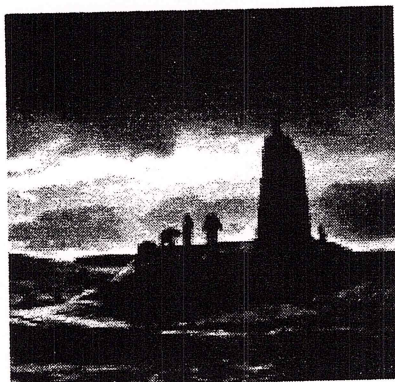
*New Chapter*

**CCRF**

The concept was first set out in a discussion paper in June 2002, with final decisions announced in October 2002. It was welcomed by the emergency services, local authorities, the public and the Volunteer Reserves themselves. The CCRFs will provide a pool of approximately 500 trained volunteers drawn from all three Services in each region to provide, on request, assistance to the local authorities and emergency services whether the problem arose from terrorist attack, accident, or natural disaster.

An Initial Operating Capability was declared on 31 December 2002 with the plan to achieve Full Operating Capability by 31 December 2003. The process of recruiting and training to achieve this goal is well underway. At the end of September, some 5,230 Volunteer Reserves had signed up for the CCRFs. This represents 75% of planned strength, although the geographical distribution is at present still uneven.

CCRF training has focused on the likely roles that individuals and units are likely to undertake in assisting the emergency services, such as access control. Volunteers receive training to familiarise them with their mobilisation process as well as the organisation and procedures used by the emergency services. The command and control of CCRFs has been explored through the participation of Regional Headquarters in contingency planning exercises with the civil authorities. Within each region, a series of practical exercises that include call-out, mobilisation and deployment is now taking place to demonstrate that CCRFs have achieved their Full Operating Capability.



3.10 In liaising with the civil authorities, we learned from the foot and mouth crisis – reinforced by the New Chapter process – that we needed to provide a single point of contact for local and regional authorities and agencies, with the capacity to support round-the-clock operations in the UK when necessary. We announced in the New Chapter that this was to be achieved through Joint Regional Liaison Officers (JRLO) with additional Volunteer Reserve personnel available to augment headquarters as needed. This allows the MOD to participate fully in contingency planning by local authorities and government regional offices. Advance planning makes responses quicker, more reliable and more effective. Most of these 300 people have been appointed.

**The Strategic Deterrent & Missile Defence**

3.11 The Government's policy on nuclear weapons remains as set out in the SDR. We are committed to working towards a safer world in which there is no requirement for nuclear weapons and continue to play a full role in international efforts to strengthen arms control and prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. However, the continuing risk from the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the certainty that a number of other countries will retain substantial nuclear arsenals, mean that our minimum nuclear deterrent capability, currently represented by Trident, is likely to remain a necessary element of our security. The SDR noted the need to ensure that Trident could remain an effective deterrent for up to 30 years, and the New Chapter noted the continuing role of nuclear weapons as the ultimate guarantor of the UK's national security. Decisions on whether to replace Trident are not needed this Parliament but are likely to be required in the next one. We will therefore continue to take appropriate steps to ensure that the range of options for maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability is kept open until that decision point.



3.12 Missile defence technology is a growing area of interest following the ending of the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty. Although the technologies are developing rapidly, missile interceptors and other means of destroying missiles will only be able to deal with a limited ballistic missile threat. They are not a substitute for nuclear or other forms of deterrence. However, the addition of active missile defences may complicate the thinking of an adversary. We have agreed with the US to allow the Fylingdales radar to be used for this role, but will continue to examine, with our NATO Allies, the complex web of strategic issues to inform future political and policy decisions. Active missile defences could provide an option for meeting the threat from WMD and its means of delivery. But we will need to consider the right balance of investment between it, forces for nuclear deterrence, and other deterrent, defensive and preventive strategies.

3.13 The UK continues to monitor developments in the potential ballistic missile threat to deployed forces. In parallel, studies looking across the four pillars of Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (TBMD) – Deterrence, Counterforce, Active Defence and Passive Defence – have scoped the extent of the capability gap in this area and identified potential solutions. The UK also retains a strong interest in international fora considering how the capability may be met by an alliance. Of particular interest has been the NATO feasibility study that has examined an Active Layered Ballistic Missile Defence capability. The report from this study is in production, and we will assess its implications once it is available.

**Implications for Military Tasks**

3.14 Based on this analysis and our experience from recent operations, we conclude that the UK's future military capability must be configured to meet a diverse range of contingent operations. These are reflected in a rationalised and updated set of 18 Military Tasks (which are dealt with fully in Supporting Essay 2 and include the Standing Home and Overseas Tasks) that provide the baseline against which we develop our force structures and capability requirements for the future. At home, UK forces must also be prepared to support the UK civil authorities in deterring, countering and responding to the aftermath of a terrorist attack.