



Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review

The outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), which sets out how the Government will deliver the priorities identified in the National Security Strategy, has been published. In this special feature, MOD DCB finds out more and hears industry reactions to the SDSR.

Addressing the current and future needs of the UK Armed Forces, the Government has published its vision of the new landscape for defence. *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* details how our Armed Forces will be reshaped to tackle emerging and future threats.

There have been two main priorities in the review:

- to ensure that our mission in Afghanistan is protected; and
- to make sure we emerge with a coherent defence capability in 2020.

Afghanistan remains the MOD's top priority and the review sets out the Government's intention to do all they can to ensure success. However, the review also acknowledges the fact that defence cannot continue on an unaffordable footing. The SDSR aims to bring defence plans, commitments and resources into balance so that the UK can have a coherent defence capability and a sustainable defence programme for the future.

Secretary of State for Defence Dr Liam Fox said: *"The front line has been protected because Afghanistan is the Government's top priority. Tough decisions are required to reconfigure our Armed Forces to confront future threats whilst we also tackle the £38bn deficit that has accumulated in the 12 years since the last Defence Review. The MOD must become as effective and as efficient as possible. Lord Levene will help me deliver radical reform to streamline the Department."*

The Permanent Secretary Sir Bill Jeffrey and Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, together with the Service Chiefs and other members of the Defence Board, have been closely involved throughout the review.

There will be some major changes to force elements of all three Services to enable them to meet future force structures.

The review will lead to reductions in manpower over the next five years across all three Services and the civilians in defence:

- the Royal Navy will reduce by around 5000 personnel;
- the Army by 7000;
- the RAF by 5000; and
- civilians by 25,000.

No changes will be made to frontline Army, Royal Marine or RAF Regiment units while operations in Afghanistan continue.

There are other impacts on the three Services, which are detailed below.

Royal Navy

The Royal Navy will have a number of capabilities, including the Trident Force, based around the four Vanguard Class submarines, one of which is always on patrol.

The Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier will give the UK political and military flexibility in responding to crises. It will routinely have 12 Joint Strike Fighters, plus helicopters embarked for operations. The aircraft's 700-mile (1100km) range over land and sea will enable it to carry out a broad range of missions.

"The UK is a world leader in the defence sector and to retain this position the industry and the Government must work together"

The Royal Navy will be equipped with 19 frigates and destroyers to protect a naval task group and meet our standing commitments at home and overseas. These will include six new Type 45 destroyers and new Type 26 frigates.

This force, though smaller than currently, will provide military flexibility and choice across a variety of operations from full-scale warfare, through coercion and reassurance, to presence and maritime security (in particular protecting trade and energy supplies).

Seven new Astute Class submarines will contribute to the protection of our nuclear deterrent and naval task groups.

3 Commando Brigade will provide one element of our very high readiness response force.



The Royal Marines will be able to land and sustain a commando group by helicopter, and with protective vehicles, logistics, and command and control support from a specialist landing and command ship.

In order to meet this new structure the Royal Navy will:

- reduce Royal Navy Service personnel by around 5000 to a total of about 30,000 by 2015, and with an assumption, for now, of a requirement of about 29,000 by 2020;
- decommission HMS *Ark Royal* immediately;
- decommission either the helicopter landing ship HMS *Ocean* or HMS *Illustrious* following a short study of which would provide the most effective helicopter platform capability, and place one landing and command ship at extended readiness;
- decommission four frigates and a Bay Class amphibious support ship; and
- rationalise the Royal Navy estate.

Army

The Army will be structured around five multi-role brigades, each including reconnaissance, armoured, mechanised and light infantry forces with supporting units of equipment and enablers. One brigade will be kept at high readiness available for an intervention operation and four in support to ensure our ability to sustain an enduring stabilisation operation.

The Army will retain 16 Air Assault Brigade, a high-readiness intervention brigade with supporting units, trained and equipped to be one of the first ground forces to intervene in a new conflict.

The Army will also retain the ability to command operations at very senior level through the UK-led Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) headquarters (part of NATO). The UK will also retain the capacity to deliver one fully deployable, senior level (divisional) headquarters, and the ability to regenerate a second deployable divisional headquarters.

In order to meet this new structure the Army will:

- reduce by around 7000 to about 95,000 personnel by 2015, but with no changes to combat units involved in Afghanistan, and an assumption, for now, of a requirement of about 94,000 by 2020;
- reduce by one the number of deployable brigades, as we restructure to five multi-role brigades;
- reduce holdings of Challenger 2 tanks by around 40 per cent and heavy artillery by around 35 per cent;
- significantly reduce non-deployable regional administrative structure; and
- rationalise deployable headquarters by reducing the communications and logistics support to headquarters ARRC and convert the second of the operational divisional headquarters to a force preparation role.

Royal Air Force

The Royal Air Force's future capabilities will include a fleet of two of the most capable fast jets anywhere in the world: a modernised multi-role Typhoon fleet and the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) to provide combat intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities.

It will also have strategic surveillance and intelligence platforms as part of our broader ISTAR capability, including E-3D Sentry AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) to provide airborne command, control and surveillance; Rivet Joint signals intelligence aircraft to provide independent strategic intelligence gathering; and a range of remotely piloted air systems.

The air transport fleet will be upgraded with the addition of A400M transport aircraft and A330 future strategic tanker and transport aircraft as well as the planned C-17 fleet. These aircraft will enable the MOD to deploy rapidly, support and recover UK forces and their equipment anywhere in the world, and provide airborne refuelling to maximise the range and endurance of aircraft.

The support helicopter capability (both RAF and RN) will also provide battlefield mobility from land and sea, based on Chinook heavy-lift and Merlin medium-lift helicopters, able to move personnel and equipment rapidly over considerable distances.

In addition, RAF Regiment force protection squadrons at high readiness will protect deployed aircraft and personnel in hostile areas and provide elements of Defence's joint CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) detection capabilities.

In order to meet this new structure the Royal Air Force will:

- reduce by around 5000 personnel to about 33,000 by 2015, and with an assumption, for now, of a requirement of about 31,500 by 2020;
- withdraw the C-130 Hercules transport fleet ten years earlier than planned as we transition to the more capable and larger A400M;
- withdraw the Sentinel surveillance aircraft once it is no longer required to support operations in Afghanistan;
- rationalise the RAF estate;
- retain Tornados, which will continue to operate in Afghanistan;
- remove Harrier from service in the transition to a future fast jet force of Typhoon and JSF. This will mean a gap for carrier fast jet operations. JSF, like Harrier, will be operated jointly by RAF and Royal Navy pilots;
- not bring into service the Nimrod MRA4; and
- withdraw VC-10 and the three variants of TriStar aircraft from 2013 as the UK transitions towards the more capable A330 future strategic transport and tanker aircraft.

► A study will be undertaken by the leadership of the Regular forces and Reserves into the future role and structure of the Reserves. We expect this study to take about six months.

Changes on this scale cannot be managed by the usual manning regulators. A redundancy scheme will be run for Service personnel and a paid early release scheme for civilians in accordance with the usual arrangements for such schemes, including – in the case of civilians – consultation with the Trade Unions.

With such a comprehensive review, much effort will now be required to work through the detailed implications of the various SDSR decisions and their implementation.

Part of this will be the work of the Defence Reform Unit, which is looking at the organisation of the MOD and will report in July 2011. This will ensure defence is delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible. Reforms will be implemented as the review progresses.

SDSR – industry reaction

As the implications of the SDSR were announced, A|D|S, the UK's aerospace, defence and security trade organisation, acknowledged the difficulties facing the UK defence industry in such austere times. Ian Godden, Chairman of A|D|S, said: *"The key test of the success of the Review will be the extent to which it ensures that the UK has the industrial capabilities to address long-term future security needs and that our Armed Forces are equipped for the tasks that the nation asks of them. Today's announcement marks the beginning of a process, not the end of one. We will now work with the MOD as it produces its Defence Industrial Technology Policy to deliver the Review's aims in practical terms. Industry welcomes the clarity provided by the Review, which will ensure that plans can be adapted to meet new situations and future investment decisions can be made."*

However, Mr Godden was also keen to point out that the UK defence industry is a major contributor to economic growth and recovery, stating: *"The UK is a world leader in the defence sector and to retain this position the industry and the Government must work together. This will deliver benefits for our Armed Forces, the UK economy, our export strength and the 300,000 people that work in UK defence – who are proud of the job that they do for our Armed Forces and for the delivery of over £32bn per year for the country."*

"Alongside the multinational firms based in Britain we also have more SME in defence than France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Norway combined. They are the bedrock on which our defence success is based and their needs must not be forgotten if the UK is to retain its ability to supply and support our troops to the highest possible standard."

In acknowledgement of the high value that the sector provides to the UK, Business Secretary Vince Cable announced that a new industry-led group has been created to ensure that high value skills in the defence sector can be effectively redeployed where there are industrial changes as a result of the SDSR.

The Skills and Jobs Retention Group will be chaired by Allan Cook, the current chairman of Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (SEMTEA).

The group's remit will be to explore how skilled workers can be retained in the advanced manufacturing sector, by working with industry to redeploy affected employees to other sectors such as civil aerospace, automotive, energy and marine.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: *"The Government recognises the important contribution that the defence sector makes to the wider economy through high value jobs, intellectual property rights, export revenues and as a key sponsor of apprenticeships and training. I want to ensure that wherever possible we retain the talented individuals leaving the defence industry within the UK's advanced manufacturing sector which is why I am announcing an industry led group to look at how we can help redeploy skilled engineers affected by the SDSR."*

"I am delighted that Allan Cook has agreed to chair the group; he has experience of both the defence sector, wider engineering and manufacturing and is a passionate advocate for maximising skills opportunities."

Chairman of Atkins and Chairman of SEMTEA Allan Cook said: *"The aerospace and defence industry is a major employer in the UK, providing high-value employment and supporting a wide range of skills across science, engineering, production, service, training and finance. The UK cannot compete internationally without highly skilled workers developing engineering solutions and building new products so it is vital for future economic growth that we do all that we can to retain these skills within the advanced engineering and manufacturing sectors."*

The group will comprise of a small team of senior industry figures with experience in defence and advanced engineering and manufacturing and will be supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Further information

To read the Strategic Defence and Security Review in full, please visit:

Web: www.mod.uk

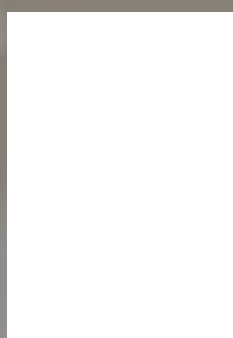


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These features should focus on key contracts, more efficient ways of working within the MOD or even new products and initiatives that could help the MOD provide a more effective service.

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