

THE STRATEGIC DEFENCE REVIEW

THE NEW CHAPTER

BY

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'First there was the SDRand then there was September 11th.'

Have things changed?

In many respects they have not and the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) remains valid. The Balkans take a medium scale deployment of our forces, albeit mainly on land. There is a continuing training and support role in Macedonia, East Timor and Sierra Leone and we have commitments in Iraq, the Falklands and Northern Ireland and in 'new' roles such as drug interdiction. (PJHQ is currently running nine operational communications lines). Elsewhere there are countries that continue to draw our attention because of their own problems and instability that could boil over, especially in the Middle East and Sub-Sahara Africa. All these problems were there before September 11th and, without it, international relationships would still present military implications that have to be addressed. For example, NATO needs streamlining as it expands and the United Nations, although effective at authorizing action, has to be better able to organize that response.

The SDR was critically analysed in light of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington and the subsequent declaration of war against global terrorism. That analysis is complete and the capability analysis that emerged from it is undergoing careful scrutiny. This will lead on to a force structure analysis that determines what capability is needed.

What is certain is that the attack changed the American people's perception of the world and lined them up behind their President's steely resolve. What is less certain is where the response will ultimately lead.

There is a fundamental problem when fighting global terrorism. The foe is elusive and there is no single focus to either rally global support against or sign a surrender document with as there is in conventional warfare. Political consensus is difficult (why are we concerned about East Timor?) and maintaining a consensus of international approval and support almost impossible. The rules of engagement are tricky too; we can sink a rogue ship and protect important places with missile batteries, but can an NCO on a RAPIER battery take responsibility for firing at a hijacked civilian aircraft; will he have the time to seek command, let alone political, approval?

A route out of the mess is to match the military coercive strategy (that treats the symptoms, such as that practised in Chechnya and Palestine) with a political holistic strategy that also looks at the causes (Oman, Malaysia and the later part of the Northern Ireland approach). However, the causes that, in their extremity, make people commit suicide to harm others are so deep and complex, they will take time to understand and years to unravel.

Unable to simply stand still, we have to look towards improving homeland defence and how best the military can be used to achieve this and help the civil powers in the strategic defence of Great Britain. (Reserve forces are favoured, as that would relieve the stretch on regular forces, although a formal third (paramilitary) force,

as in France and Italy, to work alongside the civil police is not a compelling option). We also have to expand the horizon to encompass protection against the unknown threat to our allies, especially those in the NATO alliance as an attack on any one of them is also an attack on the UK. Symptomatic treatments applied abroad could use a range of pre-emptive effects from persuasion, through deterrence, coercion and disruption to destruction. The military would be called upon to play a major defence diplomacy role in helping stabilize countries that are affected by terrorism, deterring states from harbouring them, or being used to find and strike against terrorist groups.

Thus the SDR is sound, but requires a new direction and an extra chapter. The World Order sees the need for us to extend east and south to encompass Bangladesh and Africa; it requires us to have the capacity to both stabilize and strike simultaneously as we deal with both the symptoms and the causes of those elements of world disorder that threaten us. It requires a review of NATO's role in the wearing of two hats; a defender's hat within NATO and a security hat elsewhere. It calls for a greater role for multi-national operations and focuses attention on the position of the United Nations in all this turmoil. It also asks how we work with the world's other regional security groupings such as Australia and its relationship (concern) with Indonesia. And it needs to ask the question,

“Do we need a high end conventional deterrent?”

Clearly, the nuclear one we have is not a part of this scenario. The massive bombing power demonstrated by the American B52s in Afghanistan is an obvious example, but a flawed one as it was not seen as a deterrent by the terrorists. The scenario started with an incomprehensible and evil act perpetrated by people who were immune from deterrence and evolved through a unique set of circumstances no-one could ever have predicted, but which culminated in the bombs being unleashed within a country that had very little control over their terrorist guest. However, the proliferation of ballistic missile threats and weapons of mass destruction clearly call for some response. Now that the position is clearer and the world knows that the coalition against terrorism is prepared to use force, a conventional deterrent actually becomes viable.

THE FUTURE NAVY

BY

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The Chiefs of Staff set out their concept of the future in a headline document called the *UK Joint Vision*. It puts war-fighting, or the ability to conduct high intensity combat, at the heart of planning and capability. The enabling of it focuses on the desired effect we need to impose on an enemy and this will determine our capabilities. Achieving the effect requires an ability to prevent the effect of hostile intentions and this requires us to have:

- Knowledge superiority.
- Operational agility.
- The ability for rapid action anywhere in the world.

Knowledge underlines our strategy and is the means whereby we secure a legal basis for action and a route into people's hearts and minds. Rapid action and agility need strategic lift and the ability to get logistics into areas that do not have the infrastructures we take for granted, as terrorists invariably use failed states for their training and as their base.

Before indicating how we can do this, a few definitions:

Strategic Defence Review (SDR)

The Government baseline for the future of the UK's armed forces.

Defence Strategic Plan

The military implementation of the SDR.

The Future Navy document

Sets out the vision of the Navy as we navigate into the next (unpredictable) fifteen years.

The Naval Strategic Plan

Provides the route map and identifies the key 'way points' on the journey so that we can invest in the desired maritime capability.

The Future Navy Operational Concepts

Describes how we can expect to fight in the future battlespace.

The Navy Board has established a *Future Navy Process* to guide decision making in all aspects of resource allocation in support of the joint vision. It has certain principles:

- Coherent with department process and policy.
- Dynamic, simple, streamlined with minimal bureaucracy.
- Focused on the needs of the target audience.
- Consultative and inclusive.
- Balanced historically across six lines of development (The SDR's 5 pillars plus concept doctrine).
- Short readable and accessible.

At its heart is the concept of a **versatile maritime force** that is optimized for power projection across the spectrum of conflict, in conjunction with others (interoperable) and ready! (If we are not ready, we are of no use).

An enabling concept to achieve a versatile maritime force is called 'Swing'. It is, "The ability to configure a force, formation or unit to allow it to operate successfully across a range of mission types and roles".

We saw it perfectly demonstrated when HMS *Illustrious* recently sent its HARRIER fixed wing aircraft force home in exchange for an embarked CHINNOOK heavy lift helicopter force in a 48 hour turn round that allowed it to 'Swing' into a new operational role.

Swing has five components that work better if they are designed into a ship:

1. Adaptability.
Our equipment must be multi-functional.
2. Configurability.
Modular systems that allows ship's to reconfigure to different roles.
3. Standardization.
Fewer classes of more flexible ships, perhaps, to reduce the economy of scale and all that it implies.
4. Simplicity of operation.
Reduce the demands placed upon people.
5. Information superiority.
A requirement that is fundamental to everything we do, or manage across government and defence.

'Power projection' is part of the Navy's new definition of its capabilities. Hitherto it was simple; we had carrier air power, SSNs and the amphibious element. The *Future Navy Operational Concepts Paper* introduces four core capabilities that are 'effects based':

Power projection

Incorporates the manoeuvre required to place a maritime force into the littoral. Maritime strike is using the Navy to interdict land from sea (by direct/indirect fire and tactical air power).

Flexible global reach

Optimizes the advantages associated with sustainable freedom of the sea in order to deploy the Rapid Response Force forward to wherever it is required, independent of any host nation support.

Optimized access

Enabled by swing, exploits the maritime advantage of being able to assemble the force in theatre already configured for operations, again without recourse to host nation support.

C⁴ISR (Command and Control, Communications, Computers, Information, Surveillance and Reconnaissance)

To influence the conduct of operations in a joint battlespace and without which, we cannot win.

In summary, the future is formed around specific core capabilities that incorporate the characteristics of a versatile maritime force that is enabled by the concepts of swing. These core capabilities may be modified by the events of September 11th but will, ultimately, match the job the Government requires us to do. Rest assured, agile and well configured, the Royal Navy will be best placed to meet the challenges of the unpredictable and changing future strategic environment.