



House of Commons
Defence Committee

**Defence White Paper
2003: Government
Response to the
Committee's Fifth
Report of Session
2003–04**

**Second Special Report of Session
2003–04**

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 15 September 2004*

HC 1048
Published on 20 September 2004
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Defence Committee

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Second Special Report

The Defence Committee published its Fifth Report of Session 2003–04 on the Defence White Paper 2003 as HC 465 on 1 July 2004. The Government's response to this report was received on 13 September 2004. It is set out below.

Government response

1. This memorandum constitutes the Government's response to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee's report, *Defence White Paper 2003* (Fifth Report of Session 2003–04, HC 465-1, published on 1 July 2004). The Government welcomes the Committee's Report.

2. The Ministry of Defence published its once-a-Parliament White Paper, *Delivering Security in a Changing World* on 11 December 2003 (Cm 6041). It provided an updated assessment of the security environment, and serves as a policy baseline against which the Department evaluated the structures and capabilities required by the Armed Forces to carry out the operations they can expect to undertake. The conclusions of this work were set out in a further Command Paper, *Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities* that was published on 21 July 2004 (Cm 6269). This covers many of the issues revisited by the Committee's report. These two Command Papers represent an evolution of the expeditionary strategy articulated in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR), and built on the conclusions of the SDR New Chapter of 2002 (Cm 5566) and recent operational experience.

3. It identified the three key challenges to our peace and security that now confront us: international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and weak and failing states.

4. In responding to these challenges, the White Paper sets out the need for a rebalancing of the UK's Armed Forces to reflect the most likely military operations. In addition to our standing Military Tasks and overseas commitments, our Armed Forces must be optimised to conduct three concurrent Small and Medium Scale operations, at least one of which is an enduring peace support operation. This reflects our experience of the pattern of operations since the SDR, and is what the Department and military leadership judge the trend to be for the foreseeable future. These forces must be capable of rapidly projecting military effect further afield than the core regions set out in the SDR (Europe, the Near East, North Africa and the Gulf) to encompass sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and to meet the wider threat from international terrorism on a global basis. Key to this will be our ability to exploit successfully the benefits to be derived from advances in technology; in particular those associated with Network Enabled Capability (NEC).

5. In building this into our plans, the Armed Forces must retain the flexibility to adapt at longer notice for the less frequent, but more demanding Large Scale operations. The policy set out in the White Paper seeks to strike this balance. We will plan to maintain a broad spectrum of capabilities to ensure that we are able to conduct limited national operations, or be the lead or framework nation for coalition operations at Small and Medium Scale

where the US is not involved. But we do not need to replicate the same spectrum of capabilities at Large Scale, given that it is inconceivable that the most demanding of operations could be conducted without the involvement of the United States (either leading a coalition or as part of NATO), where we have choices as to what we contribute.

6. In planning for the future the Department will concentrate on enhancing our ability to deliver military effects, and continue to move away from simply assessing military capability by the numbers of platforms and personnel in the inventory. Future capability will be measured against the characteristics of speed, precision, agility, deployability, reach and sustainability, and its ability to integrate rapidly with other capabilities to deliver a specific military effect and swiftly combine with others to achieve a different effect. In doing so, the Armed Forces will continue to provide support to the Home Office and other civil authorities responsible for the security of the UK, including at times of crisis.

7. The MoD will also ensure that the organisation of the Armed Forces will reflect the reasonable aspirations of its people in terms of, for example, greater geographic stability in their home lives.

8. Changes to the force structure and future equipment programme to support the policy set out in the White Paper were announced on 21 July 2004. These ensure that we have the right capabilities we need for the challenges ahead, and that we are spending our resources in the best possible way.

Background to the Defence White Paper 2003

As the post-conflict stage in Iraq has shown, a great deal more is required to achieve the objectives of an effects-based operation, than advanced military technologies in the hands of numerically small forces. (Paragraph 21)

9. We agree that national and international objectives for such complex operations, particularly during the transition from a conflict to a post-conflict situation, cannot be achieved solely by military forces. Contributions from other Government Departments, multinational organisations and the private sector are essential elements, particularly for the process of rebuilding security, social and economic infrastructures.

10. The 2003 Iraq conflict provides, however, a good example of how we envisage the effects-based capabilities of the Armed Forces contributing to overall goals. The Armed Forces achieved rapid and precise military effects during major combat operations in Iraq, before adapting to undertake post-conflict, stabilisation and reconstruction tasks, in partnership with other Government Departments, allies and partners and the Iraqi people, in support of the broader UK and international effort.

We recommend that the MoD should explain more fully how UK forces have supported the United Nations (UN); how the UK expects to continue to do so; and how defence planners see the UK's military role within the UN system in relation to its roles within NATO and the European Union. (Paragraph 25)

11. Supporting Essay 1 to the Defence White Paper provided an assessment of the roles of the UN, NATO and the EU in responding to the strategic environment, and their inter-

relationships. As a permanent member of the Security Council the UK has particular and continuing responsibility to ensure that the UN can deliver.

12. The MoD supports the UN in a number of ways, for example:

- a) providing sophisticated forces for coalition operations implementing UN Mandates;
- b) providing officers to key posts in UN missions where we can make a valuable and influential contribution (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan);
- c) working with EU partners on a “battlegroup” concept to offer rapid response capability for temporary and focused support of UN operations;
- d) training peacekeeping troops from third party countries, particularly in Africa. This will enable the UN to call upon a larger pool of quality manpower and African states to do more of their own peacekeeping. In this, we are striving to coordinate our efforts with key partners, especially France and the US;
- e) participating fully in cross-Whitehall efforts to support the further reform and development of the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); and
- f) engaging in the work of the High Level Panel on the UN response to key challenges to international security.

13. We contribute some 7.4% of the costs of UN peacekeeping (assessed costs). We currently have 22 military observers and 434 troops in UN operations. While this represents 1.07% of UN military manpower, there is a qualitative dimension. Moreover, this is slightly above our overall share of the world population (0.92%).

14. Examples of the UK contribution to UN operations include: a One Star Chief of Staff in Sierra Leone; a Colonel Chief of Staff to the Force Commander in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and a Lieutenant Colonel Military Assistant to the Force Commander in Sudan.

15. The UK contribution to the UN is likely to remain limited in terms of personnel on blue helmet missions. However, considerable help, in the form of key members of UK staff, is being provided to meet short notice requests for planning assistance in UN DPKO during the current surge in peacekeeping operations.

16. EU/UN co-operation is developing well with contact groups regularly exchanging ideas and seeking to develop more effective working practices. These include the proposal for a “clearing house” concept, which allows greater co-ordination of individual EU Member States’ contributions to UN missions—here, the UK is pressing for better co-operation and synergy between the three organisations—UN/NATO/EU—in order to avoid duplication of effort.

While we note the co-operation between MoD and FCO at the policy level (such as on Conflict Prevention Pools) we believe that the future operational demands of effects-based thinking will require even greater collaboration. (Paragraph 31)

17. We agree with the Committee’s conclusion that effects-based planning and operations have implications across government. The MoD will continue to work closely with other

government departments—particularly the FCO and DFID—to ensure that military effects-based planning complements wider strategic planning and the cross-government effort on crisis prevention and management, and close, integrated working on the planning and execution of operations and their aftermath.

Strategic Environment

We are disappointed that a policy document that could have far reaching implications has been presented with little or no detail on the relevant procurement decisions, funding questions or likely changes in force structures and consequent effect on personnel. (Paragraph 35)

18. The White Paper provided a comprehensive statement of Defence policy and the strategic context in which our Armed Forces operate. The Secretary of State for Defence made clear when publishing the White Paper last December, and indeed to the Committee, that further work was underway to develop the appropriate force structures and forward equipment programme. This work has now completed, and its conclusions were set out in a further Command Paper, *Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities* that was published on 21 July 2004.

What has emerged in the past six years is the extent to which the Armed Forces have been operating at the limits of what they can achieve. The Strategic Defence Review's (SDR) planning assumptions provided relatively little resilience to enable the services to re-orientate when called upon to do so. (Paragraph 37)

It may be rash of the White Paper to state that “we expect to see a similar pattern of operations in the future”, just after its predecessor document—the Strategic Defence Review—has had to be substantially amended, not least because unforeseen developments in the security environment have led to changes in operational demands. We are not convinced that expecting things to follow a similar pattern to the recent past is the best way to shape UK defence policy in an era of rapid change. (Paragraph 42)

19. The force structure changes that the 2003 White Paper heralded will better enable our Armed Forces to carry out the operations they are most likely to undertake, and specifically address resilience in those areas of the force structure that have been under most pressure since the SDR. Much of the SDR remains valid today; in particular, the expeditionary strategy and modernisation programme it initiated. It provided a fundamental rethink of how the UK's Armed Forces, including their supporting infrastructure, should be structured to meet the increasingly complex security environment that followed the Cold War and the emergence of instability in many areas of the world.

20. The SDR New Chapter and the 2003 White Paper represented a refinement of the assumptions we made at the time of the SDR, reflecting enduring strategic threats. In particular operational experience since 1998 demonstrated that our Armed Forces are more likely to be engaged on a series of concurrent, Small and Medium Scale operations, rather than the simple pattern of Large or Medium Scale operations that had formed the focus of our planning assumptions at the time. Our analysis of future trends is that this pattern of operations is likely to continue, but we must retain the flexibility for Large Scale operations as we did for Operation TELIC.

We are left wondering whether the Defence White Paper is properly set in the strategic context of Britain's security circumstances, or whether it is more a reflection of what the UK has actually been doing for the last three years, and the existence of a number of legacy systems of whose continuing importance the MoD is uncertain. In other words it is far from clear whether the review process has actually been effects-led, or rather resource driven. (Paragraph 46)

21. Modernisation on the scale the White Paper envisages is clearly a major challenge requiring significant investment and prioritisation. But the 2004 Spending Review increased the defence budget by £3.7Bn in the Spending Review period (an average real terms increase of 1.4% per year). The resource challenge is one that the Government is determined to meet.

We are not convinced that an essentially reactive approach to defence of the UK homeland is satisfactory given the nature of the threat to the UK today. (Paragraph 48)

The approach of fighting terrorism at distance has informed all of the MoD's work since 11 September 2001, but ultimately assumes that terrorists will agree to fight on our terms and in places of our choosing. As UK Ministers and officials regularly warn, they may choose to bring the campaign closer to our region, or indeed to the UK itself. In the context of repeated attacks on the UK we do not think that MoD's assumption would be sustainable. (Paragraph 49)

22. The Government agrees that a pro-active approach to defending against terrorism is preferable and makes no assumption that terrorists will "fight on our terms and in places of our choosing". It has put in place a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy which will ultimately address all aspects of the challenge of terrorism both at home and abroad, using all of the means available in the best way possible.

23. In the UK, the Home Office is responsible for counter-terrorism policy and the lead for domestic security lies with the civil agencies. The Government has made very substantial investments in domestic counter-terrorist capabilities across the board, from intelligence to consequence management.

24. The SDR New Chapter (Cm 5566) spelt out the areas where Defence capabilities contributed to domestic security and where improvements were required.

25. The Government has therefore maintained (and made a number of enhancements to) those specialised military capabilities whose use is essential within the UK including hostage recovery, explosive ordnance disposal, and air and maritime integrity.

26. More generally, the Government does not believe it is an efficient use of resources to establish a permanent dedicated cadre within the Armed Forces for consequence-management tasks in the UK. However there are long-standing and effective arrangements by which military resources can be made available in emergencies under the principles of Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (Military Aid to the Civil Power, Military Aid to Other Government Departments, and Military Aid to the Civil Community) to undertake those tasks for which they are suited.

27. These arrangements are being maintained and enhanced. The New Chapter improved the capacity of the Armed Forces to respond to requests for assistance, and their ability to engage in contingency planning with the civil authorities, both by establishing a new capability in the Civil Contingencies Reaction Force and strengthening the regional chain of command.

28. In any particular situation, Ministers will have to make a decision on the best use of the available military resources, depending on the severity of the civil emergency, the relative importance of deployed operations and the impact of the commitment on the recuperation, training and exercising of units not operationally deployed, and on the morale and well-being of Service personnel. A civil emergency is no different in this regard to any other short-notice task.

Effects-based operations

We note that MoD has only “begun to develop” capabilities to provide a range of options other than having to resort to traditional attritional warfare methods. We are disappointed at the apparent lack of progress in developing capabilities to provide non-kinetic options. (Paragraph 52)

29. As the Committee has identified, “effects-based operations” embrace both kinetic and non-kinetic effects. Kinetic effects have been the basis of military operations for many years, and, as such, are well understood. Non-kinetic means were also used with some success during Operation TELIC and UK Armed Forces already have some capability in the information operations and electronic warfare areas among others. Only recently, however, have the doctrine, technology and understanding of the intelligence required to exploit the potential of non-kinetic effects started to mature. As technology, doctrine and other work develop the MoD will continue to consider and develop capabilities, including non-kinetic, which enhance the operational effectiveness of UK Armed Forces. During 2005 we expect to improve our limited information operations capability, including radio broadcast, leaflet and television production.

We believe that focussing on network enabled capability risks emphasising technology at the expense of a thorough consideration of the utility and application of military force and its judicious and appropriate use in effects-based operations. In our view the three critical elements identified by the Chief of the Defence Staff (sensors, a network and shooters), which were previously set out in the SDR New Chapter, will require a vital fourth element of effective decision-making, which is not a consequence of NEC but a requirement for the realisation of effects-based operations. (Paragraph 62)

30. NEC is intended to improve understanding of events in the battlespace and to improve the delivery of military effect. As well as affecting existing and planned equipment, it will require progressive changes to doctrine, training and command and control arrangements to take advantage of the new capabilities. We agree that the decision-making processes will need to adapt to the new opportunities presented by NEC and it is recognised that NEC should be considered in the context of effects-based operations using military and non-military resources and employing a range of instruments (diplomatic, military and economic).

We believe that MoD’s discussion of the evolution of warfare has not always distinguished sufficiently clearly between the concepts of network enabled capability (NEC) and effects-based operations (EBO). NEC may contribute to the delivery of military effect in support of EBO, but it is not a prerequisite for it, or indeed, necessarily the main contributor towards an effects-based operational outcome. (Paragraph 64)

31. Chapter 4 of the White Paper describes how effects-based operations focus on desired outcomes and contribute to a wider cross-government strategy. Network Enabled Capability, on the other hand, concerns the coherent integration of sensors, decision-makers and weapons systems along with support capabilities. NEC will deliver the knowledge superiority and ability to apply rapid and precise military effect that will enable us to exploit the full potential of EBO.

While the improvements in precision, accuracy and fire power are obvious, we have found less evidence that adequate resources have been devoted to the provision of the intelligence capabilities, including human intelligence, and cultural understanding which are essential to underpin these technological advances. (Paragraph 68)

32. The Future Capabilities Paper recognises that technological advances (and stand-off sensors, in particular) will not remove the requirement for timely and accurate human intelligence, particularly in the field at operational and tactical levels. The rebalancing of the Army that the Paper outlines will include a reinvestment of resources into additional intelligence staff to enhance our deployable human intelligence capability.

We agree that effects-based operations should embrace the whole gamut of military and cross government capability and support the Government’s goal of better fusing all elements of national capability to strategic ends. However, we believe that the limits of what the military can achieve in effects-based operations on their own needs to be understood by all parts of the MoD and across Government departments. (Paragraph 69)

33. The Effects-Based Operations Concept is currently being drafted and will be shared with other Departments to secure a common understanding of effects methods and terminology. An effects-based approach focuses on what is to be achieved (outcome focused) rather than how to achieve it (activity focused). Such an approach is optimised by collaborative cross-government working but will also improve individual Departments’ outputs and will provide an effective approach to the complex operations of the future.

We are not convinced that mass “effect” alone will be enough in meeting the challenges faced by UK, since in many situations we will still require the capacity for mass “presence” as well. (Paragraph 72)

34. We agree that sometimes the presence of substantial forces is necessary to achieve the desired effect, for example, deterrence or stabilisation, though we expect that in such scenarios the UK will be acting in a coalition and thus only have to provide part of the force. In other situations the effect can be achieved with less ‘mass’. A clear understanding of the required effect and the choice of actions available should allow us to achieve our objectives more efficiently than has been the case in the past.

It is impossible to assess whether the application of network enabled capability to fewer platforms will really produce greater (or even equal) effect, without any discussion of the costs of embracing these technologies and the structural implications for the armed services of such developments. (Paragraph 73)

35. The force structure changes that are being introduced (as outlined in the Future Capabilities Paper) will deliver flexible and adaptable Armed Forces that are properly equipped and structured to carry out the most likely pattern of concurrent Small and Medium scale operations. The relative costs of different ways of conducting operations were part of the analytical process. The changes we are making are about shaping the Armed Forces to conduct the type of operations we expect them to face in the future.

36. Key to this will be taking advantage of developments in technology and network enabled capability which will enable our Armed Forces to act ever more quickly, precisely and effectively, and increase the military effect they can deliver. This will allow them to deliver the desired military outcome with fewer but more capable, linked assets.

We believe that a policy of reducing the existing number of platforms in advance of acquiring the new capabilities (and of demonstrating their effectiveness) is potentially dangerous. (Paragraph 74)

37. As highlighted in the Future Capabilities Paper, there are certain areas where we judge our current capability is disproportionately high now for the actual level of threat (anti-submarine warfare and air defence, in particular). This judgement was not dependent on new capabilities. We also identify the capabilities in which we need to invest. It is therefore prudent to reduce some capabilities now, whilst restructuring and investing in our priority areas.

We accept that there is every justification in seeking the benefit from advances in technology to deliver decisive effect when it is required. However, we believe the UK's future security challenges, on the scale of the effort envisaged, require the retention of the existing scale of forces, plus the benefits of network-enabling capabilities. Otherwise, the Armed Forces will be unable to operate without again placing unsustainable demands on service personnel. (Paragraph 79)

We believe MoD has not addressed the issue at the heart of effects-based operations—the difference between the “projection” of force and the “presence” of force. We fully support the idea of devoting further resources to enabling assets and achieving more deployable forces. We do not however believe that this should be at the expense of reasonable scale. In high-tempo, high intensity operations (and in engaging targets of opportunity), projection forces may be sufficient. But as extensive peace support operational experience has demonstrated, the UK may also be called upon to provide presence and for that there is still no substitute for numbers. We believe that true effect is a product of quality and scale. Effects-based operations may in some circumstances reduce the required numbers of people and platforms, but they cannot be regarded as an all-purpose substitute. We believe that any reduction in the establishment of the Army would be premature. (Paragraph 84)

38. At their heart, military operations will remain a human activity. Technology will be used to support the decision-maker. Equally, technology will not replace the value of deployed personnel across the spectrum of conflict; rather it will make our Armed Forces more effective. For instance, in enduring peacekeeping operations for which the UK already—and rightly—has an unparalleled reputation, deployed personnel will be assisted by sophisticated technology.

39. The White Paper identifies a mix of enduring and non-enduring operations and the range of strategic effects we need to plan to achieve whilst conducting them—usually as part of a coalition. Achieving some effects will be more manpower intensive than others; effects-based operations should improve the planning and conduct of operations, and new technologies will assist in achieving military effect more rapidly and decisively.

40. However, we recognise that in some operations numbers will be key, and are restructuring the Army to significantly increase the manpower available for expeditionary operations. In this respect, the restructuring of the infantry, made possible by the progress made towards a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, will be key. We have been able to reduce the number of infantry battalions to the Province by four; a move which, owing to the need to rotate battalions through this task, has actually freed up 16 battalions for use on other tasks. The manpower freed-up by this move will be re-distributed across the Army, not only to develop more robust and resilient unit establishments within the infantry, but also to bolster the most heavily committed specialists such as logisticians, engineers, signallers and intelligence. Additionally, the phasing out of the traditional practice of arms plotting will further increase the efficiency and availability of Army resources.

We believe that if the number of platforms in certain key areas (such as large surface ships) was significantly reduced, the UK Armed Forces would be vulnerable to any significant combat attrition in future operations. We have not seen evidence that this factor has been taken seriously enough into account by MoD in its approach to platform numbers. (Paragraph 81)

41. The paper *Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities*, published in July 2004, explained in detail the methodology used to determine the force structure. Our force structure is designed to be sufficiently robust to allow for attrition, though any need to replace assets lost through attrition would clearly slow down the speed of recuperation of the Armed Forces for future operations

We understand the necessity of placing high intensity war-fighting at the heart of military training, but question whether the continued emphasis on war-fighting skills is the correct way of approaching the challenges of effects-based operations. We recognise that while effects-based operations may alter the balance between capabilities, the concept does not do away with the need to have armed forces that can fight wars of the most demanding type. However, in the wider strategic context, effects-based operations place new demands on individuals at all levels to understand the impact of their actions. We question whether the current emphasis on training for war, supplemented by limited pre-deployment training which hone skills for peace support operations, are adequately equipping our service personnel for these much wider demands. The current preoccupation with speed, agility, parallel operations, decisiveness and tempo misses a vital human aspect of effects-based thinking, which

has significant ramifications for the way we train our Armed Forces. We are not convinced that these have been adequately addressed by the White Paper. (Paragraph 88)

42. The White Paper set out the extensive work already underway to ensure that our troops are fully prepared for effects-based operations. Our Servicemen and women remain the crucial component to any military operation we undertake. The MoD fully recognises this, and the White Paper has acknowledged the need to invest in the development of capable and motivated Servicemen and women, who possess both the necessary confidence and comprehensive skill sets to adapt to unexpected challenges. The Defence Training Review 2001 set out clear objectives to advance individual education and training, through high quality and robust means that stress the need to be responsive to rapidly changing requirements and opportunities.

Much of the talk about effects-based operations and network enabled capability is still stuck in the world of kinetic effect and physical destruction, with the higher order psychological effects remaining elusive. The skills we are asking of our Armed Forces in support of these operations are of a significantly different and additional nature to what has previously been asked of them, even for war-fighting and to ignore this risks sending them unprepared into complex and dangerous situations. (Paragraph 89)

43. In any operation, now or in the future, the UK will of course seek to achieve the full spectrum of effects, ranging from the physical to the psychological. Steps to incorporate and act upon the lessons learnt from our operations in Northern Ireland, the Balkans and more recently Afghanistan and Iraq are already underway—including the integration, initially at the strategic level, of kinetic/physical targeting and information/psychological operations. The benefits arising from this increased synergy have already begun to emerge and we are exploring options to embed an Effects-based Operations Cell in the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), the UK's operational headquarters. At the individual level, the MoD recognises the need to continue to evaluate its effects-based training and to adapt it accordingly. This is reflected in the Defence Individual Training and Education Strategic Plan 2004 (that looks out to and beyond 2015), which has instigated a change delivery programme to optimise training and education for expeditionary operations, firmly placed within the Information Age. The plan includes undertaking the necessary Joint training to deliver flexible, multi-disciplined forces and innovative commanders with greater situational awareness.

We believe that the advent of true effects-based operations may have very significant implications for the nature of military training and indeed on the structure of the Armed Forces. (Paragraph 91)

44. The Committee is right to highlight the significant implications that the advent of true effects-based operations may have for the Armed Forces' training and structures. The MoD is alert to the need to adapt to the changing environment and develop more agile forces that are fully capable across the spectrum of operations, ranging from high-intensity warfighting through peace support to humanitarian activity, all of which may occur simultaneously in the same operation. The White Paper provided a comprehensive assessment of the principal changes affecting the Armed Forces to achieve this, and initiated further work to develop structures that offer broader utility across the range of

operations. Certainly, providing the right training for our Servicemen and women is central to the delivery of the core competencies that support effects-based operations. This is why the MoD, through the Defence Training Review 2001 and its initiatives, has done much already and continues to develop the right training regime and the right training facilities. The importance of Service ethos within the UK's Armed Forces, including the strong emphasis on teamwork and values, will not change. It is this which continues to drive and motivate our Servicemen and women, providing them with the moral framework to overcome the challenges they may face.

Command Issues

We question whether it is reasonable to expect people at the operational/tactical end of the spectrum to consider constantly the full implications of their actions on the effects sought, but we believe that this is a major implication of embracing effects-based operations. We are not convinced that these challenges have been properly grasped or addressed by the Defence White Paper. (Paragraph 97)

45. This observation reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of effects-based operations, which complement the UK's manoeuvrist approach. By focusing on the effects that they wish to achieve in a campaign or operation, Commanders are better able to synchronise the actions of individual elements of their force to achieve success. Their planning is translated into directives and orders that express *what* has to be achieved without constraining the freedom of action of their subordinates by telling them *how* to achieve it. When the orders are executed, the actions of units and individuals are governed by Rules of Engagement, which set out the permissions and restrictions on the use of force.

The command chain needs to address the implications of the actions of the few (in human rights abuse cases) more comprehensively that it has done to date—to show that every possible step has been taken to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in future and such “effects” are not repeated. The fact that similar incidents occurred among coalition forces in Afghanistan before Iraq and in Somalia before that, should have warned senior officers and civilian leaders as to the dangers. In effects-based operations, the Armed Forces need to rigorously enforce observance of acceptable standards of behaviour towards civilians, detainees and prisoners by their personnel. (Paragraph 102)

46. The UK does not tolerate the abuse of people under its duty of care. Commanders will continue to ensure that all members of the Armed Forces are aware of their moral and legal obligations.

The shift to high levels of expeditionary activity around the world in support of “effects” can be seen as evidence of the re-politicisation of defence policy. No longer can defence be seen as supporting ends somewhat detached from other aspects of foreign and domestic policy. Rather it will now have to operate as an integral part of that political process, with consequent changes in the position of the Armed Forces within the political process. (Paragraph 104)

47. Defence has been, and will remain, an essential means of achieving the UK's wider Foreign and Security Policy objectives. This was as true during the Cold War as it is today.

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

48. Effects-based operations and planning, by clearly focusing on the effect required to achieve objectives, will provide commanders at all levels with improved processes for determining the best actions to be taken. As the EBO concept develops it will undergo rigorous validation through an Integrated Analysis and Experimentation plan to identify the impact on all Lines of Development, including personnel. It is likely that there will be significant impact on the high-level analysis, planning, execution and assessment processes within the military, requiring senior commanders to evolve and adapt their current practices to ensure that the military contribution to EBO remains cogent.

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. (Paragraph 108)

49. We are already able to plug into some US networks as necessary, for example the Blue Force Tracking system using leased US equipment during Operation TELIC and the Link 16 data link system for air and maritime platforms. Maintaining this ability to fight alongside the US on the most demanding operations is a continuing task and we are pursuing a range of initiatives and developing concepts with the US to ensure that we can operate together as and when appropriate. For example, radars of our frigates and destroyers will be networked with those of US naval forces when they are fitted with the UK version of the US developed Co-operative Engagement Capability (CEC), we are conducting trials to demonstrate interoperability between the BOWMAN radio system and the US equivalent and we are active in NATO in taking forward NEC and interoperability initiatives with the US and European Allies.

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. (Paragraph 109)

50. The White Paper emphasises the importance of ensuring that our Armed Forces are prepared and equipped to lead or act as framework nation for European (and other coalition) operations at Small and Medium Scale where the US is not engaged. This clearly places a premium on the ability of our Armed Forces to operate seamlessly alongside other nations, particularly those of our NATO and EU allies and partners.

51. However, as technology develops, it becomes even more important that not just we, but all NATO partners invest in capabilities that enable us to operate at the same tempo as the US. We are actively encouraging this approach through the Allied Command for Transformation and the development of the NATO Response Force, with its emphasis on creating flexible, deployable and technologically advanced and interoperable forces.

52. Similarly, the UK has strongly supported the establishment of a capabilities focused European Defence Agency to energise the development of capabilities and co-ordinate associated acquisition policies.

53. Whilst we must ensure that our capability plans are consistent with the direction in which the US is heading, we must ensure that we avoid developing capabilities in isolation from our other allies.

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 “effects” sought. This problem has the potential to undermine the UK’s approach to composite coalition operations. (Paragraph 111)

54. The full benefits from the adoption of an effects-based approach (EBA) will be realised by taking the idea beyond national boundaries and convincing our allies and coalition partners of the efficacy of such an approach, enhancing international collaboration. Encouragingly, many nations are giving consideration to the adoption of an EBA.

55. Through proper operational force planning (which is already an integral part of NATO and ESDP procedures), effective force packages can be built to deliver the desired effect. Whilst we seek to minimise coalition nations' Rules of Engagements (ROE) caveats, so called 'Red Cards', we acknowledge that there will always be certain national caveats on which nations will not be able to compromise. Through proper planning it is usually possible to work around these, so that although they might affect the way an operation is conducted, they would not affect the achievement of the desired outcome.

56. The capability or effectiveness of a force is not necessarily related to its size. In our planning for operations we consider that capable, albeit sometimes "small", UK force packages operating within a coalition are fully able to deliver "effect".

Force Structures and Personnel

We continue to be surprised at the slow pace with which unmanned aerial vehicle technology is being embraced by the UK Armed Forces. It does not seem that many of the effects-based operational capabilities that the MoD indicated it was exploring in the New Chapter have been significantly enhanced since, although we welcome the introduction of Bowman radio ahead of its (albeit revised) in-service date. A number of the key programmes identified in the SDR New Chapter have either slipped further or remain unchanged. We are concerned that the UK still does not have sufficient secure data links to allow it to integrate with United States forces, especially in the land environment. (Paragraph 113)

57. The Department is actively embracing new technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The early announcement on 20 July 2004 of Thales as the preferred bidder for the WATCHKEEPER UAV capability ahead of the main investment decision planned for later this year confirmed that this important Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) programme remains on course. WATCHKEEPER will build on the capability represented by the in-service PHOENIX

UAV capability and the Joint UAV Experimental Programme began work last year to examine the utility of UAVs in roles beyond the WATCHKEEPER capability. As the Committee notes, the BOWMAN communications system achieved its In Service Date ahead of the target in March 2004. The ASTOR programme remains on track and the assessment phase of the Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) was approved in April 2004.

58. We are working to improve the capability to exchange information securely with US forces in the land environment through plans to enable the BOWMAN and FALCON communications systems to interoperate with their US counterparts.

In evidence, the Secretary of State and the Chief of the Defence Staff refused to discuss the current MoD work streams in which a range of issues including future force structures are being considered. We have been disappointed at the lack of openness by MoD witnesses during this inquiry in responding to what we believe have been reasonable and appropriate questions. (Paragraph 115)

We were disappointed that the Chief of the Defence Staff prevented the Chief of the General Staff from answering a question on future Army Step 2. We regret the level of secrecy that has met our repeated requests for detail on the implications of the White Paper for force structures, and personnel and urge Ministers to review their approach to parliamentary oversight of these matters. (Paragraph 130)

59. In announcing the publication of the White Paper last December, and again in his opening remarks to the Committee on 31 March, the Secretary of Defence made it quite clear that the results of work to establish the precise force structures and forward equipment programme to support the policy set out in the White Paper would be published by the summer of 2004. That work was detailed in the Future Capabilities Paper published on 21 July. Internal advice to Ministers in preparing such a paper is customarily confidential.

We are surprised that the Army is prepared to do away with, as yet unspecified, quantities of heavy armoured forces when their replacement (FRES) remains a concept which has not even left the assessment phase. (Paragraph 116)

60. Our priority is to rebalance our Land forces so that they are better structured and equipped to conduct the full range of military tasks on concurrent Small and Medium Scale operations, whilst still being able to reconfigure at longer notice to undertake Large Scale operations. The balanced Land force of the future will comprise two heavy armoured brigades, three medium weight brigades and a light brigade (in addition to the air assault and Royal Marine Commando brigades). A full explanation of this rebalancing is contained in the Future Capabilities Paper.

61. As the White Paper made clear, the first stage in this process is the establishment of the new light brigade, and the rerolling of one heavy armoured brigade. There is no operational reason why this move should be held up pending the introduction of enhanced medium-weight capabilities, such as FRES.

The future challenge of close air support, demonstrated by Afghanistan and repeated in Iraq, is how to supply timely and precise air support to small numbers of friendly forces in non-linear engagements, not how to destroy large enemy divisions such as Saddam's

Republican Guards. It is a problem that does not appear to have been resolved by the MoD. Given the repeated references to “jointery” in official policy documents we are surprised that the operational practice of air-land integration has been so slow to change. We recommend that MoD addresses this question with much greater urgency than has been displayed to date. (Paragraph 123)

62. Failings in the Air/Land interface were recognised in the Op TELIC Lessons and Project Coningham-Keyes (PC-K), a joint initiative between FLEET, LAND and STRIKE Commands, initiated to identify and address current capability shortfalls, with an emphasis upon tactical level execution. High-level doctrine has been improved by the publication, in October 2003, of IJWP 3-30 Joint Air Operations while AJP-3.3.2 Close Air Support (CAS), currently under development by NATO, will provide more procedural detail and, importantly, ensure compatibility for coalition operations. PC-K identified lower, tactical level deficiencies, prompting recommendations to enhance the current Joint Forward Air Control Training and Standards Unit (JFACTSU) and establish additional Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs) in each Division and manoeuvre Brigade. Command and Control improvements are sought by the proposal to create, at 1 Star level, a new military post of Commander Joint Air Land Organisation within HQ STRIKE Command; following initial support from the 2 Star Policy Group and VCDS, the proposed organisation is the subject of ongoing studies.

63. The requirement for greater interaction at tactical level is also acknowledged, evidenced by Ex IRON STORM, which integrated Tornado GR4, Jaguar GR3 and Harrier GR7 CAS into a live fire Land exercise, and the STRIKE Command decision to reinforce the 1 (UK) Armd Div TACP exercise in September 2004 in the Czech Republic with 8 x GR 7 where the original exercise required just 2 x Hawks.

The Royal Navy target of no more than 660 separated days in three years, or 220 in any single year, was broken during Operation Telic for almost 100 personnel. (Paragraph 126)

64. No more than 660 separated days service in three years is not a target, but rather a Personnel Functional Standard (PFS) endorsed by the Navy Board. There is no PFS of 220 days separated service in one year.

We believe work on dealing with excess stretch is urgently required and represents one of the greatest weaknesses of the Strategic Defence Review implementation to date. (Paragraph 127)

65. The White Paper makes it clear that the changes we propose to introduce are specifically to optimise the Armed Forces for the pattern of operations they are most likely to face: multiple, concurrent Small and Medium Scale operations, that assume an enduring commitment to peacekeeping and peace enforcement as well as warfighting. The changes are designed to ensure that we maintain high quality, flexible and adaptable Armed Forces that are best equipped to meet the full range of the threats and challenges we face.

66. At their heart is the restructuring of the infantry, made possible by the significant progress made towards a lasting peace settlement in Northern Ireland. Here, we have been able to reduce by four the number of infantry battalions committed to the Province—in

practice, a commitment of 16 battalions because of the need to maintain 24-month tour intervals. The manpower this move frees up will be re-distributed across the Army, not only to develop more robust and resilient unit establishments across the infantry, but also to reinforce the most heavily committed specialists such as logisticians, engineers, signallers and intelligence. This, together with a greater availability of Army resources resulting from the phasing out of the traditional practice of arms plotting, will enhance our ability to meet the likely pattern of expeditionary operations, whilst at the same time reducing the burden on our personnel and the interval between operational tours.

Since the Strategic Defence Review, the MoD's own harmony guidelines have too often not been achieved in terms of the work-life balance of Armed Forces personnel. We have seen no evidence in the White Paper that the demanding operational tempo of the past six years and consequent stretch on too many of our service personnel will not be repeated. We urge MoD to place the achievement of harmony guidelines at the top of its list of priorities. (Paragraph 132)

We believe that manpower shortages and the resultant practice of "gapping" (not filling posts deemed non-essential) must be tackled seriously and urgently by the MoD. Achieving full manning levels must be a priority for the Armed Forces in an era of regular deployments. (Paragraph 137)

67. Service personnel have been heavily committed to expeditionary operations over the last few years. This pressure has not been uniform across the three Services, or even within them. The Department is keenly aware of the need to maintain a balance between commitments and the available manpower. It follows that we will continue to seek to ensure that our people are not, routinely, required to exceed guidelines on individual separation.

68. Key to this for the future will be the force structure changes that were announced on 21 July. These will ensure that the Armed Forces are sufficiently balanced and flexible to meet the security challenges outlined in the White Paper. Once the new force structures are in place, the Services will be better configured and balanced to meet and sustain operational commitments, helping the Services to meet their harmony guidelines, and giving our people a better work/life balance.

Should reserves act as an augmentation element of the regulars, or as the providers of essential specialist capabilities? Either way, in an era of regular operations, what it means to serve in the reserves is changing and this will need to be understood by the reservists themselves and their employers. (Paragraph 142)

69. The use of reservists to support such operations is fully in line with the SDR, namely having more capable, usable, integrated and relevant reserve forces, which support their regular counterparts on operations overseas. Every individual joining the Volunteer Reserve is made aware of his or her call-out liability under the Reserve Forces Act 1996. During the Cold War, mobilisation may have been considered unlikely, but this has changed. Since NATO operations commenced in the former Yugoslavia, the Reserve Forces have consistently provided between 10–15% of the total UK manpower deployed in theatre and the call-out of reservists to support Op TELIC has brought mobilisation even more to the fore. Thus the Reserve Forces are no longer called on solely in times of national

emergency; as a part of the Total Force Concept, they are used as and when their skills are needed for operations.

70. As a result of the lessons we have learned from Op TELIC, mobilisation awareness training is being introduced as part of routine annual training. This will inform reservists about the process and likelihood of mobilisation. In addition, building on the 2004 Defence White Paper, we are drafting a “Defence Intent for Reserves” which will inform all interested parties, including reservists and their employers, on the use of the Reserve Forces in the future.

71. In addition, the MoD’s SaBRE (Supporting Britain’s Reservists and Employers) campaign continues to provide information and advice to employers on the role that reservists are expected to play in today’s environment.

Given that many reservists are mobilised for service in units that are not close to their homes, we are concerned that the MoD should be seen to be prioritising effective methods of welfare support to the families of mobilised reservists, who in many cases receive extremely short notice of call-out. (Paragraph 144)

In an era of reliance on the reserves to support operational deployments, there will be an increasing requirement for the MoD to look after reservists and their families. Although there is no detailed information on this matter in the White Paper, we were pleased to note some attention to this problem in the Government’s response to our Lessons of Iraq report. We recommend that MoD considers mobilising Welfare Officers across all the services where reservists are deployed. (Paragraph 147)

72. Much progress has been made since TELIC 1 and improvements continue to be made in the welfare provision for Reservists and their families. The single Services have all developed welfare plans and in the case of the Army, where groups of soldiers from a single unit continue to be mobilised, Commanding Officers have authority to mobilise both the unit Welfare Officer and the Unit Employment Support Officer (sometimes the same individual) for the period of the unit’s mobilised service. RAF and RN reservists are nominated a dedicated Welfare Officer when they are mobilised. Further studies on welfare provision for reservists are underway, the results of which will assist us in improving welfare support further.

It appears that the MoD still has not decided how best to deploy reservists—as specialists or as formed units. Efforts are under way to draw up databases of skill-sets that the MoD can draw on, but the Secretary of State told us that not all reserves want to use their specialisms, adding, “we should not in principle mobilise people because of their civilian skills”. Nevertheless, we understand that the Territorial Army is considering whether to use reserves as formed units or as back-fillers for gaps in the future. In the Royal Navy all reservists are used as individual back fillers, although following a decision taken in 2002 to restructure the reserves to provide niche capabilities where gaps existed, some fill specific specialisms such as in psychological operations and civil-military co-operation. A longer-term question is whether reserve units should train with their regular partners so as to integrate better operationally, a question that we have not had answered as yet. (Paragraph 145)

73. In the main reservists have not been called-out specifically to fill specialist civilian administration roles. Only two reservists from the Civil Affairs Group who volunteered to be mobilised for Op TELIC have been called-out specifically for their civilian skills. For the rest, the fact that they possessed skills associated with their civilian employment which could be utilised during the reconstruction of Iraq was fortunate, but not planned. As part of the Op TELIC Lessons Identified work, we are looking at the use made of civilian skills in theatre and, as stated in the Committee's report, efforts are underway to draw up databases of civilian skills. However, there are no plans to compulsorily mobilise reservists for their civilian skills; any such mobilisation would be on a voluntary basis.

74. It is not the case that the MoD has not yet decided how best to deploy reservists. Reservists are deployed both individually and as formed units as directed by operational need.

We welcome initiatives such as creating pools of specialists ready to contribute to post-conflict reconstruction work as important steps towards the realisation of true cross-departmental effects-based operations and look forward to being updated on their progress. (Paragraph 148)

75. Good progress is being made on the establishment of permanent, improved structures and mechanisms across Whitehall to address the challenges posed by military-civilian transitions and post conflict reconstruction activity. An update to the House on the detail, once finalised across government departments, is expected this session.

We conclude that MoD has still not taken seriously enough the need for a “predictable” element to be available for civil emergencies at home. We remain to be convinced that the MoD has adequately thought through the use of reserve forces at home and away in an era of constant operational commitments and a significant threat to the UK. (Paragraph 151)

76. The Government does not wish contingency plans for civil emergencies to depend critically on support from the Armed Forces. That would divert resources away from the overseas component of its counter-terrorism strategy without improving the capabilities of the civil agencies and emergency services best able to respond to contingencies in the UK. Nonetheless support from the Armed Forces will continue to be made available when the need arises and the MoD is therefore fully engaged in the development of contingency planning, both nationally and regionally. The Government does not believe that the double-hatting of individual reservists between their primary military roles and CCRFs undermines the effectiveness of either the broader principles of MACA or the overall utility of the CCRFs as a national resource alongside the regular elements of the Armed Forces.

In our Lessons of Iraq report we criticised the way in which the MoD had decided to require reservists to inform their employers (and prospective employers) of their membership of the volunteer reserves, which could have negative implications for the employment prospects of some reservists. In its reply, the Government argues that employers were automatically informed of employee's membership of the reserves upon mobilisation and did “not expect routine employers notification to have a significant impact on employer support”. This did not answer our actual point about the interests of the reservists themselves. (Paragraph 153)

77. As the Committee is aware, this subject has been the topic of much debate both within MoD and with reservists and employers. The results of our research prior to introducing Employer Notification suggested that the more an employer understood about the implications and the benefits of their employee being in the Reserve Forces, the more supportive they tended to be. A reservist who is confident of his employer's support will be more effective and motivated than one who believes his employer is hostile to his commitment.

We are pleased to note that the MoD is taking seriously the pressures that have been placed on the reserves in recent years. We welcome this, but would urge the MoD to avoid exploiting the commitment and dedication of the reserves through overuse. If the reserves are intended to fulfil an ever increasing role in the Armed Forces, this will require fundamental structural changes in the relationship between the regulars and reserves. We await detailed proposals from the MoD on how it intends to improve the terms and conditions of reserve service, both for the reservists themselves and their families as well as their employers. (Paragraph 154)

78. The Reserve Forces will continue to play a key role in current and future operations. RFA 96 places statutory limitations on the length of time reservists can be mobilised, but as the Committee has noted in its report (paragraph 153) the MoD is considering ways of further ensuring that reservists are not overused and that a suitable balance between full-time service and civilian career is sustained. In addition, we are taking forward work to improve the financial package available to employers and reservists once mobilised. As noted above, we have also improved the welfare package available to reservists and their families and work is in hand to identify where further improvements should be made. The Future Capabilities Paper announced that we intend to carry out a re-balancing of our forces to meet future challenges. A major part of this rebalancing includes, wherever possible, integration of Regular and TA infantry battalions in the new large Regimental structure.

Reports from the Defence Committee since 2001

Session 2003–04

First Report	Armed Forces Pensions and Compensation	HC 96-I & II (<i>Cm 6109</i>)
Second Report	Annual Report for 2003	HC 293
Third Report	Lessons of Iraq	HC 57-I, II & III (<i>HC 635</i>)
Fourth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2002, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 390
Fifth Report	The Defence White Paper 2003	HC 465-I & II (<i>HC 1048</i>)
Sixth Report	Defence Procurement	HC 572-I & II

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First Report	Missile Defence	HC 290 (<i>HC 411</i>)
Second Report	Annual Report for 2002	HC 378
Third Report	Arms Control and Disarmament (Inspections) Bill	HC 321 (<i>HC 754</i>)
Fourth Report	The Government's Proposals for Secondary Legislation under the Export Control Act	HC 620 (<i>Cm 5988</i>)
Fifth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2001, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 474 (<i>Cm 5943</i>)
Sixth Report	A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review	HC 93-I & II (<i>HC 975</i>)
Seventh Report	Draft Civil Contingencies Bill	HC 557 (<i>Cm 6078</i>)
Eighth Report	Defence Procurement	HC 694 (<i>HC 1194</i>)

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First Report	Ministry of Defence Police: Changes in jurisdiction proposed under the Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Bill 2001	HC 382 (<i>HC 621</i>)
Second Report	The Threat from Terrorism	HC 348 (<i>HC 667</i>)
Third Report	The Ministry of Defence Reviews of Armed Forces' Pension and Compensation Arrangements	HC 666 (<i>HC 115</i>)
Fourth Report	Major Procurement Projects	HC 779 (<i>HC 1229</i>)
Fifth Report	The Government's Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls for 2000, Licensing Policy and Prior Parliamentary Scrutiny (Joint with Foreign Affairs Committee, International Development Committee and Trade and Industry Committee)	HC 718 (<i>Cm 5629</i>)
Sixth Report	Defence and Security in the UK	HC 518 (<i>HC 1230</i>)
Seventh Report	The Future of NATO	HC 914 (<i>HC 1231</i>)

Government Responses to Defence Committee reports are published as Special Reports from the Committee (or as Command papers). They are listed here in brackets by their HC (or Cm) No. after the report they relate to.