

## TRANSFORMATIONAL ARMY STRUCTURES

### Delivering an Army Relevant for 21st Century Challenges

#### INTRODUCTION

Driven by globalisation, the world is rapidly and irreversibly changing. So too is the character of conflict: the Cold War is emphatically in the past. However, Defence has not changed apace. It must therefore transform in order to remain relevant and thus continue to secure UK national interests. The Army has conducted a detailed study, drawing on lessons from contemporary operations and the deductions from Defence's thorough examination of the Future Character of Conflict. Based on this, we have designed a relevant, adaptable and cost effective Future Force, which will continue to evolve as the demands of operations change over time and is designed to meet future threats and challenges. This work is known as Transformational Army Structures (TAS). The key word is transformational; the Army will continue to evolve.

Whilst TAS focuses on the Army's deployable component, the broader study encompasses all elements of the Force, including the Territorial Army, our Reserves and those which support the deployable component from 'the home base'. Furthermore, it is fully integrated with a number of other detailed studies focused on Equipment, Doctrine, Infrastructure and Personnel. This note focuses on the deployable structure, that which we must protect.

#### SECURING THE UK'S VITAL INTERESTS

The UK's national interests are interwoven with those of other countries; they are global, as are the threats to them. To secure those national interests, whether on the land where they originate or on the 'global commons' along which some are transported, the UK must shape the world by engaging globally and reacting decisively to events. Consider the following scenario, which the UK could plausibly face within the next decade:

- The UK has recently deployed as part of a US-led contingent operation to help secure significant energy resources vital to our national interests, which are threatened by a neighbouring state. The indigenous government is functioning, but requires external military support to decisively counter the imminent threats to its security. Coalition forces are therefore working with indigenous forces to tackle the immediate security threats whilst simultaneously developing a sustainable and capable indigenous military capability. The mission is expected to last 1-2 years. An Army brigade is the basis of the force, with a UK 2-star headquarters commanding a multinational division, thus providing us with significant influence in the coalition.
- Concurrently, the UK is undertaking wider, continuous engagement in the world, in regions where UK national interests lie. Army training teams are delivering military capacity

building, helping to prevent conflict emerging and simultaneously: providing greater regional understanding and ground truth strategic intelligence; developing relationships and strategic partnerships by supporting Defence Diplomacy activity; and extending UK influence.

- Unanticipated violent civil unrest breaks out in a Commonwealth country, threatening the security of the predominately British expatriate community and challenging the credibility of the government there. The high readiness battle group is deployed within 48 hours as part of a joint task force to secure and extract UK and other entitled citizens to safety. It subsequently remains in place for a month to provide a deterrent to further unrest, whilst the government re-establishes its authority and control.
- Soon after the conclusion of the non-combatant evacuation operation, a contagious epidemic breaks out amongst livestock herds in the UK. Unable to contain the rapidly spreading disease, the civil authorities request assistance from the Armed Forces. 2000 troops are re-tasked for 6 weeks from training for operations, providing logistic and command and control support until the epidemic has been contained.

Failure to deliver any one of these tasks would undermine the UK's security, reputation and strategic partnerships. TAS ensures that the Government has at its disposal the necessary and appropriate land forces to undertake all these tasks successfully; it delivers choice and flexibility.

## LESSONS AND DEDUCTIONS: THE FOUNDATION OF TAS

The character of conflict has changed irreversibly. We have seen this, for example, in Iraq between 2003-2009, in Lebanon in 2006, in Georgia in 2008 and throughout the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Current and future conflict is complex and multifaceted, presenting hybrid threats. The information revolution has increasingly drawn the 'human battlefield' to the fore; we now fight for the minds of the population, not for territory. This demands greater investment in our ability to understand and influence others, avoid collateral damage when employing weapons and counter both high-tech and low-tech threats. However, this does not mean that 'high end', capabilities are no longer required; on the contrary, armour[1] and precision guided weapons remain relevant to all contemporary operations. We must retain these high end capabilities, albeit at a lesser scale, and must be able to conduct joint, combined arms manoeuvre to defeat conventional ground forces when encountered[2].

We have learnt that committing sufficient forces early reduces the likelihood of a protracted campaign. That said, quick wins are the exception, not the norm[3]; decisive change in a campaign will usually take about 2 years and can only occur on the land. Operations throughout the last 2 decades have shown that the brigade is the force of choice; large enough to deliver credible sustained effect, and able to command the wide range of assets required for contemporary operations. We have learnt in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan that a 2-star headquarters above the brigade is essential, providing the focal point for national and coalition engagement and thus enabling the brigade to focus on the tactical complexities of the operation. Furthermore a UK 2-star headquarters provides us with significant influence within a coalition.

The value of having theatre level command and the ability to lead coalitions has been proved repeatedly since the end of the Cold War. Through HQ ARRC, Defence can deliver an operational capability that other countries cannot; this buys us considerable influence over the campaign and within NATO, and adds to our global standing. Indeed, HQ ARRC has proven its utility and relevance so frequently in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan that it is due to re-deploy in 2011 and the French and US are both seeking to invest further in this, the best of NATO's 9 Graduated Readiness Force (Land) HQs.

40 years of continuous operations, supported by scientific research and evidence from US studies has shown that 6 month tours, separated by a minimum of 24 months to recover, reorganise, train and critically to restore balance in the soldiers' personal lives, is the optimal deployment model for sustained operations. Longer deployments or shorter tour intervals will increase incidents of post-traumatic stress, suicide and other social disorders. Where levels of operational intensity allows, these figures can be adjusted; in certain instances, longer tour lengths for commanders and staff in higher-level headquarters have proven beneficial in providing campaign continuity.

Contemporary operations have demonstrated that the Reserves have a vital role. They add resilience to the force and bring critical skills from their civilian employment – medical, policing, governance, agriculture are but a few examples – which enable the Army to undertake the broad canvas of tasks demanded of complex operations amongst indigenous populations.

## DELIVERING THE DEPLOYABLE FORCE

Multi-role Brigades (MRBs). The MRBs form the core of TAS. They would be structured and equipped to prevail against the hybrid threats we will face on contemporary operations: the most likely form of conflict and, for the Army, the most demanding. Engineer and logistic assets, enhanced intelligence and surveillance capabilities, precision fire support and light role infantry equipped with protected mobility would be grouped with armoured and mechanised units. This breadth of capability will ensure that the brigades have maximum utility, sustainability and in-built agility; and the quantity of manpower contained within the MRBs will ensure resilience.

Five brigades will be required to guarantee that the UK can sustain persistent modulated engagement when the operational imperative demands that we must do so; this may range from a number of concurrent small scale pre-conflict capacity building operations to a single brigade level intervention operation. The MRBs will be held at varying degrees of readiness within a training cycle, thus providing both the high readiness contingent forces (see EEF below) and the ability, when required, to sustain persistent engagement. They have the capability both to deter, coerce, and fight, and to deliver training teams, Defence diplomacy, and support to UK operations.

Early Effects Force (EEF). In order to deliver forces held at high readiness for contingent operations, TAS proposes gathering together relevant forces including a divisional head quarters, 16 Air Assault Brigade, the Military Assistance and Stabilisation Group (MASG) and one of the MRBs. Held within the 'Response Force'[4], this would provide Defence with a

broad range of contingent capabilities able of meeting its concurrency assumptions. Grouping the MASG with specialist light forces and an adaptable MRB would deliver better coherence of the hard and soft effects required to conduct effective prevention, intervention and post-conflict resolution.

- o 1 and 3 Div HQs both deployable
- o MRB allocated to High Readiness Contingency at appropriate point of readiness cycle
- o HQ 16 AA Bde and a battle group allocated to High Readiness Contingency; remainder in readiness cycle

Forces would be selected from the Army EEF, 3 Cdo Bde and SF to meet NSC Posture 2 concurrency requirements: 2 x non-enduring, complex interventions, a non-enduring simple intervention and an enduring stabilisation op.

The Military Assistance and Stabilisation Group (MASG). Understanding regional dynamics over time, coupled with the ability to grow relationships and develop indigenous security infrastructure, will be key to preventing conflict; it will also increase UK influence globally and potentially stimulate defence exports. Rapidly rebuilding security in a country will be critical to early and sustained conflict resolution. Specialist capabilities are required to deliver these effects through joint and cross government organisations.

For a minimal investment of a few hundred service personnel, integrated with personnel from civilian agencies and departments, the MASG would provide this: a cross-governmental centre of excellence, the delivery arm of the Stabilisation Unit and a deployable Provincial Reconstruction Team. It would provide specialist teams that could deploy independently or be integrated into deployed battle groups and brigades, focused on delivering both civil and military capacity building. Whilst geared primarily for overseas operations, it could and should be used in response to emergencies at home, thus increasing our resilience.

Other Elements of the Force Structure. Some other elements of the Army's force structure would reside within the 'Committed Force'[5]. The Army would continue to deliver forces to secure our overseas territories, provide military aid to the civil authorities (MACA) in the UK and conduct high-profile State Ceremonial and Public Duties. Opportunities to link the latter 2 tasks in order to find efficiencies are being examined, remaining cognisant of the fragile security environment in N Ireland[6] where the MACA battalions would most likely be employed.

## RESOURCING TAS

Resourcing TAS. TAS is not a cost savings exercise. Its aim is first and foremost to ensure that the Army is fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world and will require increases in certain capabilities to achieve this, notably: Intelligence, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (ISTAR) capabilities, such as UAVs and increased intelligence fusion and analysis capabilities; organic protected mobility for light infantry; increased counter-IED capabilities; and capabilities to better deliver precision fire support. But that said, the Army understands the need to find savings. These will be found from 2 areas:

The Deployable Force. The removal of one war fighting brigade from the structure will see the reduction of a brigade headquarters and signal squadron, 4 infantry battalions, an engineer regiment, an artillery regiment and a logistic regiment. An additional 2 engineer regiments will be removed from other areas of the Force. The rebalancing of capabilities in the MRBs will deliver significant reductions in heavy armoured equipment, notably tanks and artillery. Modernising the TA to ensure better integration with the Regular element as a unified 'Whole Force' will also deliver savings.

The Supporting Force. The element of the Army that recruits, trains, supports and sustains the Deployable Force – including Army personnel supporting other Services and organisations within Defence – will be made leaner. This will deliver efficiency savings in the order of 2500 personnel.

The Army is undertaking modelling to identify where proposed capabilities could be reduced in the event of control totals being set at a level below that required to deliver TAS.

## DELIVERING TAS

Achieving the Future Force structure proposed in TAS will be subject to constraints. Firstly, adjustments to structures will require re-training, re-equipping and re-locating of the manpower that constitutes the Force. This will take time. Critically, change must be implemented carefully to ensure that the personal needs of our people – soldiers who have been engaged in highly demanding operations for over 8 years and their families – are met; failure to do so will impact negatively on the Army's ability to undertake current and future operations. Secondly, the Army's commitment in Afghanistan will limit the pace of change in the near term.

## SUMMARY

The character of the conflicts the UK will routinely be engaged in, either by will or necessity, have changed irrevocably. The demands on Defence are far greater and more unpredictable than in any recent period in our history. TAS will provide an Army that is relevant, adaptable and cost effective allowing Defence to help shape the world, secure our National interests and meet future threats and challenges as they arise.

[1] The Danes and the Canadians are currently employing tanks in Afghanistan and the UK has been operating Warrior AFVs there since 2007. Armour was used extensively in Iraq by UK and US forces, conducting a wide spectrum of tasks after the initial entry into the country such as convoy security and dominating urban areas (where its psychological impact was as telling as its physical impact).

[2] Future adversaries, both state and non-state, may use armoured forces against us. In December 2008, Hamas demonstrated that non-state actors can operate effectively in a conventional posture using high tech weapons: the Israeli Defence Force deployed 3 x armoured brigades against them during Operation CAST LEAD.

[3] The average length of UK operations from 1990 has been 64.8 months, the shortest being

one month in Macedonia and the longest being 185 months in Bosnia.

[4] The Response Force is defined by the requirement to respond quickly to non-discretionary threats to the national interest.

[5] The Committed Force covers all non-discretionary, national standing tasks.

[6] There have been 10 significant Dissident Republican attacks in N Ireland since Jan 2010.