House of Commons

Defence Committee

Towards the next Strategic Defence and Security Review: Part Three

Twelfth Report of Session 2014–15

Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report

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The Defence Committee

The Defence Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Ministry of Defence and its associated public bodies.

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Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/defcom and by The Stationery Office by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the Committee's website on the inquiry page.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are James Rhys (Clerk), Leoni Kurt (Second Clerk), Eleanor Scarnell (Committee Specialist), Ian Thomson (Committee Specialist), Christine Randall (Senior Committee Assistant), Alison Pratt and Carolyn Bowes (Committee Assistants).

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1   Introduction

Scope of this report

1. Since autumn 2012 we have been determined that our reports should help to inform the next Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). This report summarises the contribution of our recent reports, and raises a number of questions that we believe need to be addressed in the next SDSR. We would like to see the Government response to our questions embedded in the next DSR.

2. We have not sought further evidence in the course of preparing this report, but are grateful to our regular team of advisers[1] in addition to Professor Sir Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War, Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Director (UK Defence Policy), Royal United Services Institute, and James de Waal, Senior Fellow International Security, Chatham House.

3. As an Annex to this report, we are also publishing an analysis of how we have addressed the 10 Core Tasks set for Departmental Select Committees by the House of Commons Liaison Committee.[2]

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1   The relevant interests of the Committee's specialist advisers can be found in the Committee's Formal Minutes which are available on the Committee's website.

2   Select Committee effectiveness, resources and powers, Second Report of the Liaison Committee, Session 2012–13, HC 697 para 20.

2   SDSR Process and content

A national strategy

2. It is essential that an entirely fresh National Security Strategy (NSS) is created before consideration begins on the next SDSR. This new strategy should involve a fundamental reassessment of the UK's role in the world, in the light of the new and unexpected threats to National Security since 2010. The Strategy should explain the position that the UK seeks to maintain in the world. It should set out the criteria, which will determine how the UK's power is deployed. The Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy has previously insisted (contrary to the Government's assertion) that the NSS must plan for a curtailment of the UK's strategic ambition, saying that:

> expecting there to be no shrinkage in the UK's influence is wholly unrealistic. Any national security strategy based on this is wishful thinking rather than credible strategy.[…] no amount of spending money carefully can change the overall picture; in the long term, the UK and its allies are in relative decline on the global stage.[3]

We favour a more confident vision of the UK's global role, but the NSS must be honest about its vision of UK influence, and the resources it will provide to sustain this influence.

3. The SDSR should then follow the NSS's definition of UK interests and objectives. It should set out the combinations of hard and soft power at the UK's disposal as the "ways" of achieving the "ends", defined in the NSS.[4]

4. Given the new threats in the world, the SDSR too should be an ambitious and fundamental reassessment of the nation's defence and force structures, conducted with ample time to allow for fundamental reconsideration. The 1998 Strategic Defence Review process provides a good example for the kind of timeframe (18 months), and the inclusion of key outside voices, required in such a process. Needless to say, it is imperative that defence spending is retained at current proportions of GDP while that reassessment is conducted.

5. Amongst many other things, the review must state when and whether the UK would intervene to maintain stability overseas and it must define how success should be measured in international defence engagement and stabilisation operations. It should also focus more rigorously on the UK's key military alliances and partnerships (particularly with the US, France and NATO). The Government must ensure that it obtains the input of key allies in preparing the SDSR. We expect the following questions to be addressed in the next SDSR and NSS:

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3   The work of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy in 2013–14, First Report of the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, Session 2013-14, HL169 HC1257, para 47.

4   Seventh Report, Session 2013–14, HC 197, para 32.

6. **What is the UK national strategy? Should it be global or regional in focus?**

7. **Does the Government maintain the assertion of no strategic shrinkage? If so, how is this to be achieved with Armed Forces that are reducing in size?**

8. **What regional partnerships should we develop to help to deliver the UK's national security objectives? What capacity do our allies have to contribute to our security and what is the UK's capacity to provide reciprocal support?**

9. **How will the instruments of national power be deployed to advance UK interests?**

10. We also believe that the strategy needs to be open to revision. As we said in *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part One*

> The allocation of resources will be based on national spending priorities set to meet the nation's security needs. Once the national strategy has been articulated in the NSS, the process of agreeing the ways and the means is therefore an iterative one.[5]

As the nature of threats to the UK changes, so too should the resources deployed to tackle them. The relationship between the "ways" of implementing the strategy and the allocation of the "means" to do so should, therefore, be dynamic not static, iterative not linear. The NSS and SDSR cannot remain untouched between the five-year periods of review; strategy must be constantly open to amendment to accommodate unforeseen events while remaining focused on long-term objectives. What process is there for review of the SDSR and NSS within the five-year period before the next scheduled review?

11. **What consultation and challenge was incorporated into the process of preparation of the SDSR?**

12. **How will the Government ensure that there is an iterative process in place which allows for revisions between SDSRs? How will consultation and challenge be incorporated into these processes?**

Public engagement

13. One of the greatest strategic threats to the UK Armed Forces remains a disconnect with the public.[6] As General Sir Nick Houghton, Chief of the Defence Staff told us:

> The armed forces have never been held in higher respect by the nation, but perhaps the purposes towards which we have most recently been put have never been more deeply questioned […] I sometimes feel that rather than being understood we are sympathised with. I sometimes feel that we are the

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5   Seventh Report, Session 2013–14, HC 197, para 67

6   Ibid, para 24

object of our nation's charity rather than its deep sympathetic understanding with what armed forces are about and their relevance.[7]

14. Recent operations and commemorations have risked the development of an unhealthy perception of the Armed Forces as simply "victims" in conflict. The next Defence and Security Review should play an important role in explaining to the public the role of the Armed Forces and the importance of defence in protecting UK values and society. It should also consider the ways in which force structures, (such as the Reserves, or Short Service Limited Commissions) or military activities (including public displays and tattoos), could bind the military more closely to the civilian population.[8]

15. The will of the population and its government to respond to attack, and its attitude towards the military, is crucial for the deterrence of potential adversaries. The nation's ability to deter threats will be crucially undermined if there is deep public antipathy to the use of force. We expect that the next DSR and NSS should address the following questions:

16. **How can the SDSR be used to communicate to the public the role of the Armed Forces?**

17. **How will it be used to bridge the disconnect with the public?**

18. **Has the SDSR sought to engage the public in thinking about the implications of geo-political developments for UK security and the capabilities that we require?**

Governance

19. The next SDSR, like the last, is expected to be produced by the Cabinet Office, representing the cross-government nature of the enterprise. This helps the integration of all aspects of security and defence into the review. But its disadvantage is that it significantly weakens the military voice, and military expertise in the formulation of national strategy. This has been made worse by the marginalisation of the role of the Chiefs of Staff in providing strategic advice during progressive structural reforms at the MoD, leaving strategy in the hands of the Chief of the Defence Staff.

20. The NSC has also failed to harness real expertise and deep knowledge. This is partly a weakness of government institutions which have increasingly cut back on deep country expertise. It is partly a reflection of an unwillingness to fully incorporate external voices. There is an insufficient culture of informed challenge and of learning lessons within the system. Proper challenge must be incorporated into the process of preparing for the next

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7   Evidence from General Sir Nick Houghton on *The work of the Chief of Defence Staff*, 16 October 2013, HC 740, Q1

8   We note for example, in this context, the abolition of the Short Service Limited Commission—a one year commission introduced by Field Marshal Lord Templar, to introduce "society leaders" to the military. Many serving MPs, senior officials, and businesspeople have benefited from the commission. It was comparatively cheap to run. Its removal means that parliament, government and the private sector will in the future have even less exposure to the military.

SDSR, and we have advocated the establishment of a "red team" to contribute to this challenge.[9]

21. More needs to be done to educate the key decision-makers, and train them to think more strategically. The NSC itself does not seem to be adequately staffed or resourced to provide deep expertise or challenge. The tone, and time-limits of the meetings, does not seem to provide the right environment in which to accurately define problems, prioritise objectives, evaluate alternatives, or manage the risk of tentative decisions. Its implementation capacity is weak. It appears still to struggle to incorporate expertise or critical viewpoints and too often it seems to be functioning more as a crisis response centre, rather than a body forecasting long term changes. We expect the following questions to be addressed in the next SDSR:

22. **What improvements will be made to decision-making structures within Government to ensure better formulation and implementation of defence and security strategy?**

23. **How will deep expertise, knowledge and strategic thought be improved in the Ministry of Defence, the military and other government departments?**

24. **How will the Chiefs of Staff be able to play a fuller role in strategy formulation?**

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9   Seventh Report, Session 2013–14, HC 197, para 87

3 New Threats

25. The clearest rationale for a complete rewriting of the NSS and the SDSR is the events of 2014 in Ukraine, Africa and the Middle East. These represent a fundamental change in the nature of the threats to the UK and in the character of warfare. Our successor Committee will need to ensure that the National Security Strategy acknowledges these fundamental changes, and responds accordingly. This requires a fundamental re-calibration of the threats to national security identified in the National Security Strategy and a corresponding re-assessment of the size and shape of the Armed Forces that the UK.

Russia

26. We have long been concerned about Russian expansionism—highlighting the invasion of Georgia in 2008 (from where Russian forces have still not withdrawn), the cyber attack on Estonia in 2007, and the annexation of Crimea and continuing operations aimed at destabilising and dividing Ukraine in 2014. The West's failure to respond to those earlier attacks encouraged subsequent Russian actions in Ukraine.

27. Our report on *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO* noted Russia's use of extensive asymmetric and ambiguous tactics including psychological and information operations (in particular using Russian medium television channels broadcasting to Russian language minorities), economic attacks, cyber operations, and operations using proxies (armed civilian or terrorist groups operating without insignia or any official affiliation and working at times in association with Russian special forces). [10] These tactics have also been combined with the deployment of the most up-to-date Russian military hardware. Chris Donnelly, Director of the Institute for Statecraft, described Russian tactics as the integration of the use of force with the non-military tools of war, arguing that operations in Ukraine had been designed to

> […] break the integrity of the state […] before there is any need to cross its borders with an invasion force […] So we are seeing a form of warfare that is operating under our reaction threshold.[11]

28. He described the Russians as deploying a concept of war which involves

> constantly increasing the level of activity and getting us used to accepting it, so that we become like the frog in a bucket of water, warming up slowly and not realising that we are accepting more and more that we should not be. That is the danger, so first we need more intelligence, and secondly it is crucial that we revise our capacity for thinking and acting strategically.[12]

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10   [Third Report](), Session 2014–15, HC 358

11   [Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO](), Evidence Q266

12   [Ibid](), Q286

29. In our report on *Re-thinking Defence to meet new threats*, we considered whether there may be a case for re-assessing the costs and benefits of withdrawal from Germany.[13] We wish to highlight the following headline questions that have emerged from our scrutiny of the growing threat to NATO from Russia which we wish to see addressed in the next SDSR.

30. **What capacity does the Government have to understand Russian motivations and strategy? What investment is being made in increasing this understanding?**

31. **What will the UK's long-term contribution be to the various NATO missions or organisations it is already supporting or considering supporting: the Baltic Air Policing Mission; the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force; Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and Headquarters MultiNational Corps (Northeast)—if tensions stay at their current level or continue to escalate? Does the UK have the capacity to provide this contribution?**

32. **What new investments will the UK be making in its conventional capacities in order to address new threats from an advanced military nation? In particular what new investment will it make in areas such as maritime surveillance, Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological warfare, and in Ballistic Missile Defence?**

33. **What steps has the UK taken to match the call from Sir Peter Wall, the former-Chief of the General Staff to "deliver a comprehensive carrier-strike capability; to sustain sufficient combat air squadrons to police our skies alongside our NATO partners; to expand cyber and surveillance and hone our special forces capabilities; to ensure that we can field a resilient land force at the divisional level, which means stemming the creeping obsolescence of the Army's manoeuvre capabilities"?**

34. **What steps is the UK taking to acquire and enhance the capabilities required to engage in ambiguous warfare?**

35. **Given the changing nature of the threats to the UK, has the SDSR re-examined the costs and benefits of the withdrawal of UK Armed Forces from Germany?**

The Middle East and North Africa and the threat of DAESH

36. The second major threat facing the UK is from radicalised, terrorist-linked groups now controlling increasingly large areas of state territory in the Middle East and Africa. The most dramatic example of this is of course DAESH, which now controls a territory larger than the United Kingdom, and has attracted 20,000 foreign fighters. Again, the UK appears to have been unprepared for this resurgent threat, and its initial response seemed—as we argued in *The situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham (DAESH)*—strikingly modest.[14] As with Russia and Ukraine there was a clear absence of

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13   Tenth Report, Session 2014-15, HC512.

14   Seventh Report, Session 2014–15, HC 690

intelligence and expert analysis covering the emerging situation on the ground, and a lack of a clearly defined UK strategy and mission.

37. This problem, however, extends from DAESH to also encompass our response to the situation in Yemen, in Northern Nigeria (where Boko Haram, at time of writing, controls large swathes of territory), in Afghanistan (where the Taliban has re-established a significant presence in the South and the East), and potentially in regions ranging from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa. Initial operations in Libya were, as we noted in our report, successful in preventing Gaddaffi's attack on Benghazi, and toppling his regime.[15] But the country is now in chaos, with a divided government, lawless militia groups, and a growing DAESH presence.

38. Any future SDSR should provide for the ability to conduct much more detailed analysis of the options available in such theatres. It should allow, for a harder-headed assessment of objectives (should they, for example in relation to DAESH, be objectives of containment or of destruction). It should also allow for the ability to analyse the risks inherent in the existing local government or occasionally US-led strategy. A dramatic step up in the level of defence engagement would be necessary to contribute to deeper human understanding of the challenges in the country and a much broader "comprehensive approach" coordinating efforts across Government to further the chances of a political settlement in the country. We emphasise the importance of working much more closely with key regional powers in finding a long-term political solution. We also called on the Government to do far more by way of responding to specific requests for assistance from the local Governments, whether in provision of counter-IED training, contributing to military capacity building; or, if necessary, providing money and materiel.[16]

39. In February 2015 we visited the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) on the island of Cyprus. The bases are supporting Operation SHADER, the current UK operation in Iraq, and provide the base for the Regional Standby Battalion involved in the aborted airlift from Mt Sinjar and later the training of the Peshmerga. The SBAs are an immensely valuable platform for operations in the Middle East particularly when the UK Armed Forces do not have carrier strike capability. They have the potential to play a key role in the UK's defence regional engagement strategy. Much further investment is required, beyond that already earmarked for the improvement of infrastructure of the bases. We expect the next SDSR to address the following questions:

40. **What detailed analysis has been produced on the situation in these failed states with terrorist links? In Iraq for example, what analysis has been conducted of the Sunni tribes and Shia militia? How robust, and detailed is the analytical capacity available to the UK on the ground?**

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15   [Ninth Report](), Session 2010–12, HC 950

16   [Seventh Report](), Session 2014–15, HC 690

41. **What exactly is the objective in Iraq or these other theatres, what is the UK strategy, and campaign plan? How does the UK assessment differ from or complement that of other coalition partners?**

42. **How many UK civilian and military personnel are to be posted to such theatres, including Iraq, outside Kurdistan? Will they be resourced and supported to be able to develop a deeper human understanding of the challenges in the country and a much broader "comprehensive approach"?**

43. **What steps are being taken to coordinate with key regional powers in finding a long-term political solution?**

44. **How is the Government responding to specific requests for assistance from the local Government?**

45. **What will be the scale of the UK's enduring commitment to operations against DAESH?**

46. **What steps are being taken to address shortcomings in the UK's analytic capabilities, ability to process intelligence and understanding of the countries of the Middle East? What steps are being taken to improve these capabilities in other regions of potential instability?**

47. **How will the Defence Engagement Strategy contribute to the monitoring of emerging threats in the Middle East and beyond?**

48. **What is the role of Cyprus in the UK's long-term basing for operations in the Middle East and, in particular, what thought has been given to the role of Cyprus in a strategy for the South East Mediterranean basin?**

49. **What is the UK Gulf Strategy?**

Afghanistan

50. During the course of this Parliament, we have closely followed the conduct of operations in Afghanistan, visiting the country in January 2011, November 2012 and October 2013, publishing three reports on the campaign as a whole.[17] Whilst the UK combat mission in Afghanistan drew to a close at the end of 2014, with full responsibility for the country's security passing to the Afghan National Security Forces, the UK's commitment to and interest in Afghanistan has not ended.

51. The MOD retains a substantial commitment to the country in the form of the Afghan National Army Officer Academy at Qargha.[18] The Department for International Development remains engaged in the delivery of programmes and other UK Government

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17   Operations in Afghanistan, Fourth Report, Session 2010–12, HC554; Securing the Future of Afghanistan, Tenth Report, Session 2012–13, HC 413; Afghanistan, Fifteenth Report, Session 2013–14, HC 994.

18   Ministry of Defence (AFG006) paragraph 9.1

Departments are involved in a range of projects including state institution building, developing capacity in policing and justice and facilitating commercial development. We expect the next SDSR to address the following questions:

52. **Given that we have withdrawn our combat troops before the completion of the two main tasks (the defeat of the Taliban, and the creation of 'an effective, credible, and legitimate Afghan state), what is the new mission in Afghanistan? Is it focused on a political settlement, retaining a strategic base, on containment, or on something else? Does the UK have the resources, and commitment to fulfil that new mission?**

53. **If the security situation in Afghanistan were to deteriorate, as it has in Iraq, what would be the UK's response? What demands would be made on UK Armed Forces? What is being done to mitigate this risk? What additional support would we be prepared to provide for the Afghan government if the Taliban, or possibly groups such as DAESH, were to significantly increase their presence in the country?**

4   Defence strategic tools

54. Once the objectives of national strategy have been identified, decisions can be taken as to what tools can be used to achieve them. A coherent strategy will envisage the deployment of the full spectrum of the instruments of national power including the deployment (or threat of deployment) of military force, the use of economic levers (such as sanctions) and the application of "soft power", including strategic communications. These tools can be deployed to deter or contain a threat or potential threat or as part of an intervention.

55. This chapter addresses the questions we have raised in our work examining the strategic tools of defence. The next chapter provides an account of the work we have done in examining military capabilities (and processes of acquiring them). These subjects go far wider than the ground that the Committee has been able to cover in the last two years. Nonetheless, we believe that we have focused on key areas that raise pertinent questions that need to be addressed in the next SDSR. Our comments are intended to raise questions, not form a comprehensive portrait of a vast subject. The Committee is, however, concerned that, with increasingly complex threats, the distinction between domestic and international and defence and other security is being blurred. The SDSR needs to reflect an integrated approach. In addition, we believe that the next SDSR should take account of the potentially distorting effect of statutory ring-fencing (such as the 0.7% of GDP to be spent on international development) and how such ring-fencing could distort the allocation of resources to defence and security.

Deterrence

56. Communication is central to a deterrent posture. A potential adversary's understanding of the UK's readiness to deploy its instruments of power—whether to respond to or to pre-empt attack—is essential to that adversary's calculation of whether the likely costs of an attack will outweigh the likely benefits. Likewise, the UK's understanding and knowledge of its potential adversaries is also key to effective national deterrence.

57. Our report on *Deterrence in the twenty-first century* examined the challenges of deterring both symmetric and asymmetric threats to UK security and considered how the concept of deterrence had evolved since the Cold War era of deterrence of an easily identifiable state threat.[19] The changing nature of threats to the UK and the increasing diversity of the types of threat (from CBRN device to large-scale cyber attack) that could be deployed by non-state groups, or even individuals, with devastating effect, pose a challenge to the concept of deterrence, particularly where it may not be immediately possible to determine with certainty the originator of an attack. It may also be more difficult to threaten or exact retaliation that is proportionate against groups or individuals where it is difficult to identify that group or individual's interests.

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19   Eleventh Report, Session 2013–14, HC 1066

58. The concept of deterrence also operates in less obvious ways. Resilience builds the UK's capacity to recover. This reduces the benefits that an adversary might perceive in causing damage. This constitutes a form of deterrence by denial of success.

59. NATO is fundamental to the UK's deterrent posture as Article 5 of the Washington Treaty provides "that an armed attack against one or more [NATO allies] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all". The UK Armed Forces provide a substantial contribution to the overall deterrent effect provided by NATO, although, as we note in our report on *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO*, the Alliance's deterrent posture relies on the perception of potential adversaries that its Member States have the political will to respond to aggression in line with their Article 5 obligations. As we have argued in our report, there is a significant risk that ambiguous tactics will operate below the threshold of an Article 5 attack. We recommended that the adjective "armed" be removed from the definition of an Article 5 attack, questioning whether there would be an advantage in redefining Article 5 to specify that any attack, not just an armed attack, would be covered by the Article 5 defence guarantee.[20]

60. Our report on *Deterrence in the twenty-first century* also examined the role of the nuclear deterrent in the context of a world in which so many threats to the UK came from asymmetric sources and non-state actors. However, we noted that the potential for the "re-emergence of tensions with an existing nuclear power, [and] the emergence of a new power whose interests are inimical to those of the United Kingdom with the capacity to deliver a CBRN attack on the UK or its interests" still existed.[21] Events in Ukraine in the last year have proven this correct.

61. One of the UK's standing commitments, for which NATO is unlikely to provide support, is to the defence of UK Overseas Territories, including the Falklands. Whilst Argentina's military capacity to launch another invasion of the islands may appear limited, there is no room for complacency. The Argentinean Government has also remained active in seeking to deploy diplomatic and commercial pressure on the UK over the islands. The UK retains a substantial conventional force in the Falklands to deter a repeat of the 1982 invasion. We visited the Falklands in March 2012 to look at the islands' infrastructure and UK deployments to the area and two Members of the Committee visited in January 2015 as part of a follow-up exercise. We expect the next SDSR to address the following questions:

62. **Does the SDSR set out NATO's role in deterring threats identified in the NSS and how the UK can best contribute to the Alliance's continuing effectiveness and deterrent capability?**

63. **We ask the Government to consider again whether it is the right time to propose to NATO allies a revision of Article 5 to remove the word "armed".**

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20   [Third Report](#), Session 2014–15, HC 358, para 88.

21   [Eleventh Report](#), Session 2013-14, HC1066, para 57.

64. **How can cyber attack from state and non-state actors be deterred when attribution is not clear?**

65. **Which threats to UK national security is the nuclear deterrent expected to deter?**

66. **What is the role of the Armed Forces in conventional deterrence?**

67. **What is the role of the conventional Armed Forces in guaranteeing the nuclear deterrent?**

68. **What is the role of the Armed Forces in contributing to UK domestic resilience?**

69. **What is the nature of the security threat to the Falklands? Is the UK military deployment to the Falklands sufficient to deter threats?**

70. **Does the UK have the capacity to rapidly reinforce capabilities deployed there in the event of escalating tension?**

Electro-magnetic pulses (EMP)

71. We have also been concerned by the emerging threat of Electro-Magnetic Pulses (EMP), either occurring naturally following a space weather event, or generated by High Altitude Nuclear EMP Weapons (HEMP).[22] Whilst the concept of deterrence is relevant to such an event triggered by hostile action, there is no means of deterring a natural phenomenon. However, to deal with both circumstances, the need to build national resilience is paramount. As we note above, resilience can, in itself, serve to act as a deterrent to a potential adversary by denying them the disruption and harm they seek to inflict.

72. The impact of an EMP event in terms of its effect on national infrastructure is potentially cataclysmic; the MoD told us that it had assessed the likelihood of a nuclear HEMP device being used as low, but that

> The likelihood of a severe space weather event is assessed to be moderate to high over the next five years, with the potential to cause damage to electrically conducting systems such as power grids, pipelines and signalling circuits.[23]

73. We met the Prime Minister to discuss our concerns in September 2012 and were pleased to hear that he had taken further work forward to evaluate the threat and to assess UK resilience to such an event. We have published our correspondence with the Prime Minister on this matter.[24]

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22 Tenth Report, Session 2010–12, HC 1552

23 Tenth Report, Session 2010–12, HC 1552, Ev 20

24 http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/defence/121220-PM-to-Chair-re-EMP.pdf

74. **What is the current assessment of the threat to the UK from Electro-Magnetic pulse events, both those occurring naturally and those consequent on hostile action? What assessment has been made of UK resilience to such an event?**

Intervention

75. Our report on *Intervention: Why, When and How?* sought to differentiate between interventions that might be construed as discretionary, and those that must be considered as non-discretionary (such as responses to an invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or a response to an attack on a UK overseas territory) and called on the Government to establish a set of criteria for discretionary interventions and benchmarks for their success.[25] Such criteria might help the public to understand better the rationales for future decision-making around UK military operations overseas.

76. **What criteria will the UK use for undertaking discretionary interventions, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan?**

77. **How does the Government determine and measure success against the strategic aims set for the deployment of UK Armed Forces?**

78. **How will the success of the International Defence Engagement Strategy and the Building Security Overseas Strategy be measured?**

The Legal framework for future operations

79. Our report on *Armed Forces Personnel and the Legal framework for Future Operations* called on the Government to carry out a strategic reassessment of the legal framework governing UK intervention operations in the light of experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. We found that there was a degree of tension between the bodies of law governing UK operations that were defined as "non-international armed conflicts", such as those in Iraq from 2003 and Afghanistan. This tension arose due to an overlap between International Humanitarian Law (also called the Law of Armed Conflict) and human rights law, which had led to a lack of certainty and had given rise to a large number of cases against the MoD.

80. We were particularly concerned about the extraterritorial application of the European Convention on Human Rights which had allowed claims in UK courts from foreign nationals about treatment by UK forces on operations. The consequent judicial processes placed a significant burden on the MoD and the Armed Forces. We were also concerned that the operation of human rights law was undermining the principle of combat immunity, allowing families and Armed Forces personnel to bring negligence cases against the MoD for injury or death. We believed that this risked the "judicialisation" of war and was "incompatible with the accepted contract entered into by Service personnel".[26] We were

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25   Fourteenth Report, Session 2013-14, HC952

26   Twelfth Report, Session 2013–14, para 130

particularly concerned that this could undermine the willingness of commanders to take necessary risks and could actually result in greater bloodshed in conflict.

81. Future military operations will involve Armed Forces personnel, civilian staff from Government Departments and private sector contractors and the complex legal framework needs to be examined on a cross-Government basis. We concluded that it is essential that the next SDSR should look strategically at the legal framework for future armed conflict and the whole spectrum of military operations including peacekeeping and post-conflict stabilisation. We therefore expect the next DSR to answer the following questions:

82. **What assessment has the Government made of the implications of recent case law on the ability of the UK to continue to deploy its Armed Forces on military operations?**

83. **What steps is the Government taking to address the problems raised by the overlap between International Humanitarian Law and the Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Law?**

84. **We re-emphasise how crucial it is that the Government should re-assess the legal framework for future operations in the next SDSR and will look to ensure that this is addressed.**

Containment

85. Associated with the concepts of deterrence and intervention is the concept of containment. This can be defined as the "geographical restriction of action of enemy forces; measures to limit the geographical spread of a crisis; and measures taken to limit the geographical spread of an ideology or the influence of power".[27]

86. We noted in our report on *The situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham (DAESH)* that

> Given the deep polarisation and structural weaknesses of the Iraqi State, we wonder whether containment and suppression of DAESH would not be a more realistic goal than total elimination.[28]

87. **Should the concept of containment be the model for future UK operations given the shortcomings of the UK's recent experiences in intervention state building?**

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27   Source: Ministry of Defence, BR 1806: British Maritime Doctrine, Third Edition, May 2004. Available at: http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/jscsc/courses/RND/bmd)

28   Seventh Report, Session 2014-15, HC690, para 127.

5   Capabilities and capacity

88. We have also provided a critique of the last SDSR and how it has been implemented in our reports on *Future Army 2020*[29] and *Re-thinking Defence to meet new threats*.[30] We have asked fundamental questions as to whether the size and structure of the UK Armed Forces are sufficient to meet the scale of the security challenges now facing the UK, both in terms of the reappearance of a substantial state on state threat to NATO Allies from Russia and the spread of jihadist-inspired instability across the Middle East and North Africa. We have drawn attention to specific shortcomings in the UK's conventional capabilities, most glaringly in the capability gap for a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (a gap recently exposed by recent incursions by a Russian submarine into UK territorial waters).[31]

89. We also identified a number of high level risks to the viability of Future Force 2020 in both a looming manpower crisis in the Armed Forces, particularly the Royal Navy, and in a number of seemingly uncosted additional commitments that had been taken on.[32] We welcomed the planned UK contribution to NATO exercising and additional deployments but questioned their impact on the Armed Forces' other commitments. We also questioned the impact of the, seemingly uncosted, announcement that the second aircraft carrier would be brought into service on the rest of the Armed Forces. The impact will be significant in terms of manpower, financial costs and the resources required to service, supply and protect the second carrier, not to mention the additional aircraft to fly from it.

90. We have also drawn attention to the changing character of warfare in our reports both on *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO* and on *Re-thinking Defence to meet new threats*.[33] The demands of meeting the threat from an advanced military nation such as Russia require—as noted above—much more substantial investment in conventional capabilities than those so far envisaged at the NATO summit. We have only provided a list of examples of the kinds of capability, which may be required to provide firmer conventional deterrent. But even this short list—maritime surveillance aircraft, CBRN capabilities, Ballistic Missile Defence, a comprehensive carrier strike capability, more Royal Navy vessels and Royal Air Force planes, and enhanced divisional manoeuvre and armoured capacity in the military and possible pre-positioning of troops in continental Europe, would require a significantly increased Defence budget. These matters demand close attention in the SDSR and the Government needs to face up to the fact that the UK needs to increase both its capabilities and capacity to ensure that there is a critical mass in the UK's Armed Forces.

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29   Ninth Report, Session 2013–14, HC 576

30   Tenth Report, Session 2014–15, HC 512

31   Article: The Independent, MoD asks for American help in searching for Russian submarine near Scotland, 8 January 2015

32   Tenth Report, Session 2014–15, HC 512

33   Third Report, Session 2014–15, HC 358 and Tenth Report, Session 2014–15, HC 512

91. Second, combating ambiguous warfare techniques require an investment in different types of capabilities, from cyber, to strategic communications to intelligence based on expert scientific and academic research.[34]

92. Third, responding to concurrent threats in failing states, with strong terrorist links (from sub-Saharan Africa, through the Sahel to the Mediterranean basin) would require investing in new capabilities and force structures. The first of these, as noted above, would require a very substantial reinvestment in Defence intelligence, Defence analysis and Defence Engagement capabilities. (Ranging from rethinking the Defence Attaché network, to reintroducing the ARAG Russia-analysis section). We note the Army's investment in its Adaptable Brigades and look for further evidence that the objectives of these brigades will be followed through and that they will genuinely develop deep country expertise and linguistic specialisation.

93. Furthermore, if the challenges with Russia suggest that there is a requirement to focus on, and invest in, divisional level operations (as opposed to the current focus on the Brigade), these concurrent challenges suggest there is also a new requirement to reconsider battle-group or even company-level deployments in military assistance missions and in support of Defence Engagement.

94. All this requires substantial flexibility, confidence, and ultimately resources. We expect the next SDSR to examine the following questions:

95. **What new set of Defence Planning Assumptions is in the SDSR? Do they more accurately reflect the new threats to the UK?**

96. **Has the Government consulted with key allies about the capabilities that the UK should maintain, and has it considered whether a full spectrum capability is still the optimum model for maintaining the UK's standing with its allies?**

97. **What are the implications for the UK's relationship with the US of the development of Ballistic Missile Defence capability?**

98. **The SDSR should re-introduce attrition calculations into its planning. What assessment has been made of the resilience of the UK Armed Forces to losses, particularly of platforms, to hostile action? What space is there for contingency in the UK Armed Forces? What are the MoD's attrition calculations?**

99. **Are the Armed Forces sufficiently flexible to ramp up capabilities when necessary, either at divisional or company level?**

100. **How is the risk inherent in the current capability gaps (such as Maritime Patrol Aircraft) being managed?**

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34   We recommended in our report on Defence Acquisition, Seventh Report of Session 2012–13, that the Government should commit to a target of 2% of the MoD's budget being spent on UK based research and development (paragraph 114)

101. **What assessment has been made of the need to increase CBRN defence and detection capabilities?**

102. **What progress has been made in developing doctrine and guidance on the use of cyber warfare?**

103. **What reassurance can the MoD provide that it will continue to invest in research and development and, in particular, whether it will meet our previous recommendation that 2% of the defence budget should be spent on research and development?**

104. **How will the second aircraft carrier be brought into operation? Will additional manpower and financial resources be provided to allow it to operate? Will aircraft be able to fly off it, and if so, whose?**

105. **What measures are being taken to address the crisis of manpower in the Armed Forces?**

106. **What will be the role of the Reserves in strengthening both capability and capacity? Is further legislation required to optimise the use that can be made of the Reserves?**

107. **What new investments will be made in maritime surveillance aircraft, CBRN capabilities, Ballistic Missile Defence, a comprehensive carrier strike capability, more Royal Navy vessels and Royal Air Force planes, and enhanced divisional manoeuvre and armoured capacity?**

108. **What new investments will be made in the capacity to combat asymmetric or ambiguous warfare?**

109. **What new doctrine and capability has been developed to deal with such a proliferation of concurrent threats? In particular what reforms will be introduced to support intelligence, analysis, military assistance missions, and Defence Engagement?**

The role of the private sector and the defence industrial base

110. The next SDSR will also need to consider the role of the private sector in contributing to the nation's security. In the context of the UK's broader security, much responsibility for the resilience of the nation's infrastructure, from the national grid to banking and payment systems rests within the private sector. The private sector is also responsible for both supplying equipment for operations and providing an increasing proportion of the manpower used. ADS told us that

> The UK's national security is dependent on a successful public-private partnership. This is not limited to the development, supply and procurement of capabilities. Businesses generally […] and academia could make a valuable contribution to strategy development, horizon scanning and risk assessments based on their understanding of the countries within which they operate, and, in the case of the defence and security sectors, threat-driven R&D. In addition,

industry can contribute unique situational awareness and technical/scientific expertise to support crisis management and response,[35]

111. It has been estimated that commercial businesses have provided 45% of the operational manpower, in terms of both headcount and input costs, for the UK's military operations since 2000.[36] In addition, the development of a cyber capability, which will comprise a high proportion of Reserves, relies heavily on expertise honed and developed in the private sector.

112. ADS have said that they hope that the next SDSR would see Government working with industry to identify, develop and deliver capability requirements; prioritising Government investment in defence and security research and development; and recognising that the UK's freedom of action in defence was underpinned by its defence industrial capabilities. They specifically called on the next SDSR to

- Recognise the role of the domestic industrial base;

- Address the skills gap in key areas such as defence engineering and cyber security;

- Examine how the procurement process could be adapted to improve "pull-through" of research and development, boosting efficiency and productivity; and

- Identify and maximise synergies between defence and security capabilities and other capabilities such as those used in counter terrorism and combating serious organised crime.[37]

113. In respect of the procurement of defence equipment, we have taken evidence on the Government's reforms of Defence Equipment and Support, and the attempts to establish the organisation firstly as a Government-owned, Contractor-operated entity (GoCo), and subsequently as a bespoke trading entity, contracting with a number of strategic partners.[38]

114. We have also examined the Government's work in development of the Defence Growth Partnership. Mike Maiden, Chairman Northern Defence Industries Ltd, described this initiative to us as aiming to

sustain and to grow the industry that the British armed forces largely rely on for their equipment and support. It is also about leveraging the strength of that industry, from the prime contractors through to the SMEs, by ensuring that their customer base is able to generate the ability to invest in technology and skills, so that the industry can in turn continue to support the armed forces.[39]

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35   ADS: Working with industry on the next SDSR, para 2.1

36   Henrik Heidenkamp, John Louth and Trevor Taylor, The Defence Industrial Ecosystem—Delivering Security in an Uncertain World, RUSI Whitehall Paper 2–11

37   ADS: Working with industry on the next SDSR, paragraphs 4.1–4.4

38   The Defence Materiel Strategy, evidence 12 December 2013 and 12 February 2014.

39   The Defence Growth Partnership, Q2

115. The health of the defence industrial base operating from the UK is critical to the delivery of national security. Full-time Armed Forces personnel operate alongside contractors, Reservists (whether sponsored or voluntary), civil servants, international partners and myriad commercial supply chains. In addition, the requirement for original defence and security research and development can be added to the immediate requirements of operations and mean that defence must be seen as a complex enterprise that needs active strategic management and a degree of certainty for investment.

116. The ongoing implementation of the Levene reforms and the success, or otherwise, of reform of DE&S will be matters for our successor Committee to scrutinise in more detail. We hope that these reforms will allow a culture and practice of whole force defence enterprise management across all of the building blocks of defence capability and will not reinforce the "stovepipes" of the individual services. The future skills, competencies, technologies and mass necessary to deliver capability need to be captured at an enterprise level and future planning assumptions must be shared across all of the partners of defence. We expect the next SDSR to address the following questions:

117. **Does the UK Government accept that the health of the UK defence industrial base is critical to the delivery of national security? What criteria should underpin consideration of what sovereign defence industrial capability should be retained by the UK?**

118. **Which elements of the national industrial, academic and commercial base are now of strategic importance to national security and defence?**

119. **What is the process for addressing capability gaps? Whose job is it to take a strategic view of them? Who is responsible for the implementation of the equipment programme overall?**

120. **What is the role of the private sector in enhancing national resilience?**

121. **What is the role of the private sector in delivering capability on operations?**

122. **What benefits are expected to be delivered by reform of DE&S?**

123. **Does the SDSR identify a means of developing defence enterprise-level direction and management?**

124. **Does the SDSR address the skills gap in both public and private sectors in defence engineering and cyber security?**

Remotely Piloted Air Systems

125. We examined the role of Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS), often referred to as "drones", in the UK Armed Forces and considered questions around their development and

use that needed to be addressed in the next SDSR.[40] Our report acknowledged a "sense of public disquiet" around their use in military operations. We noted that RPAS had made a significant contribution to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, providing enhanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support in addition to weapons use. However, we also argued that the MoD needed to rise to the challenge of overcoming public suspicion of RPAS and developing public understanding of the capability.

126. **What conclusions were drawn from the Air ISTAR Optimisation Study and how will they feed in to the SDSR 2015?**

127. **What proportion of ISTAR and strike capabilities will the UK require to be provided by RPAS up to the end of the decade and is it able to be provided by the currently operational platforms and those in development?**

128. **What are the benefits and potential obstacles for a collaborative approach with either US or European partners to develop and acquire future RPAS platforms?**

129. **Are there sufficient suitably qualified and experienced personnel to provide support for future RPAS programmes?**

130. **What is the Government doing to increase public confidence in the use of RPAS?**

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40   Tenth Report, Session 2013–14, HC 772

6   Lessons learned

131. In our report on *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part One*, we drew attention to the need for an understanding of history to inform future strategy, noting that important strategic lessons could be learned from both the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns.[41] We noted that, since the Second World War, only two campaign histories had ever been published (on Korea and the Falklands) and that there had been no official accounts of other military operations involving UK Armed Forces. We recommended that the MoD, in conjunction with the Cabinet Office and the National Security Secretariat, should initiate the preparation of histories of these conflicts, including those in Afghanistan and Iraq. The writing of such histories requires, in our estimation, relatively modest resources.

132. In our report on *Afghanistan*, we made recommendations for the terms of reference for a future review of the campaign in that country.[42] We also called for the commissioning of work to write the narrative of operations in Afghanistan as the precursor to future work on the official history. We expect the next SDSR to address the following questions:

133. **What work is being done to prepare official histories of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan? When will this work be completed and will it be made public?**

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41   Seventh Report, Session 2013–14, HC 197

42   Fifteenth Report, Session 2013-14, HC994.

Conclusions

SSDR Process and content

1. What is the UK national strategy? Should it be global or regional in focus? (Paragraph 7)

2. Does the Government maintain the assertion of no strategic shrinkage? If so, how is this to be achieved with Armed Forces that are reducing in size? (Paragraph 8)

3. What regional partnerships should we develop to help to deliver the UK's national security objectives? What capacity do our allies have to contribute to our security and what is the UK's capacity to provide reciprocal support? (Paragraph 9)

4. How will the instruments of national power be deployed to advance UK interests? (Paragraph 10)

5. What consultation and challenge was incorporated into the process of preparation of the SDSR? (Paragraph 12)

6. How will the Government ensure that there is an iterative process in place which allows for revisions between SDSRs? How will consultation and challenge be incorporated into these processes? (Paragraph 13)

7. How can the SDSR be used to communicate to the public the role of the Armed Forces? (Paragraph 17)

8. How will it be used to bridge the disconnect with the public? (Paragraph 18)

9. Has the SDSR sought to engage the public in thinking about the implications of geo-political developments for UK security and the capabilities that we require? (Paragraph 19)

10. What improvements will be made to decision-making structures within Government to ensure better formulation and implementation of defence and security strategy? (Paragraph 23)

11. How will deep expertise, knowledge and strategic thought be improved in the Ministry of Defence, the military and other government departments? (Paragraph 24)

12. How will the Chiefs of Staff be able to play a fuller role in strategy formulation? (Paragraph 25)

New Threats

13. What capacity does the Government have to understand Russian motivations and strategy? What investment is being made in increasing this understanding? (Paragraph 31)

14.   What will the UK's long-term contribution be to the various NATO missions or organisations it is already supporting or considering supporting: the Baltic Air Policing Mission; the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force; Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and Headquarters MultiNational Corps (Northeast)—if tensions stay at their current level or continue to escalate? Does the UK have the capacity to provide this contribution? (Paragraph 32)

15.   What new investments will the UK be making in its conventional capacities in order to address new threats from an advanced military nation? In particular what new investment will it make in areas such as maritime surveillance, Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological warfare, and in Ballistic Missile Defence? (Paragraph 33)

16.   What steps has the UK taken to match the call from Sir Peter Wall, the former-Chief of the General Staff to "deliver a comprehensive carrier-strike capability; to sustain sufficient combat air squadrons to police our skies alongside our NATO partners; to expand cyber and surveillance and hone our special forces capabilities; to ensure that we can field a resilient land force at the divisional level, which means stemming the creeping obsolescence of the Army's manoeuvre capabilities"? (Paragraph 34)

17.   What steps is the UK taking to acquire and enhance the capabilities required to engage in ambiguous warfare? (Paragraph 35)

18.   Given the changing nature of the threats to the UK, has the SDSR re-examined the costs and benefits of the withdrawal of UK Armed Forces from Germany? (Paragraph 36)

19.   What detailed analysis has been produced on the situation in these failed states with terrorist links? In Iraq for example, what analysis has been conducted of the Sunni tribes and Shia militia? How robust, and detailed is the analytical capacity available to the UK on the ground? (Paragraph 41)

20.   What exactly is the objective in Iraq or these other theatres, what is the UK strategy, and campaign plan? How does the UK assessment differ from or complement that of other coalition partners? (Paragraph 42)

21.   How many UK civilian and military personnel are to be posted to such theatres, including Iraq, outside Kurdistan? Will they be resourced and supported to be able to develop a deeper human understanding of the challenges in the country and a much broader "comprehensive approach"? (Paragraph 43)

22.   What steps are being taken to coordinate with key regional powers in finding a long-term political solution? (Paragraph 44)

23.   How is the Government responding to specific requests for assistance from the local Government? (Paragraph 45)

24.   What will be the scale of the UK's enduring commitment to operations against DAESH? (Paragraph 46)

25. What steps are being taken to address shortcomings in the UK's analytic capabilities, ability to process intelligence and understanding of the countries of the Middle East? What steps are being taken to improve these capabilities in other regions of potential instability? (Paragraph 47)

26. How will the Defence Engagement Strategy contribute to the monitoring of emerging threats in the Middle East and beyond? (Paragraph 48)

27. What is the role of Cyprus in the UK's long-term basing for operations in the Middle East and, in particular, what thought has been given to the role of Cyprus in a strategy for the South East Mediterranean basin? (Paragraph 49)

28. What is the UK Gulf Strategy? (Paragraph 50)

29. Given that we have withdrawn our combat troops before the completion of the two main tasks (the defeat of the Taliban, and the creation of 'an effective, credible, and legitimate Afghan state), what is the new mission in Afghanistan? Is it focused on a political settlement, retaining a strategic base, on containment, or on something else? Does the UK have the resources, and commitment to fulfil that new mission? (Paragraph 53)

30. If the security situation in Afghanistan were to deteriorate, as it has in Iraq, what would be the UK's response? What demands would be made on UK Armed Forces? What is being done to mitigate this risk? What additional support would we be prepared to provide for the Afghan government if the Taliban, or possibly groups such as DAESH, were to significantly increase their presence in the country? (Paragraph 54)

Defence strategic tools

31. Does the SDSR set out NATO's role in deterring threats identified in the NSS and how the UK can best contribute to the Alliance's continuing effectiveness and deterrent capability? (Paragraph 63)

32. We ask the Government to consider again whether it is the right time to propose to NATO allies a revision of Article 5 to remove the word "armed". (Paragraph 64)

33. How can cyber attack from state and non-state actors be deterred when attribution is not clear? (Paragraph 65)

34. Which threats to UK national security is the nuclear deterrent expected to deter? (Paragraph 66)

35. What is the role of the Armed Forces in conventional deterrence? (Paragraph 67)

36. What is the role of the conventional Armed Forces in guaranteeing the nuclear deterrent? (Paragraph 68)

37. What is the role of the Armed Forces in contributing to UK domestic resilience? (Paragraph 69)

38.   What is the nature of the security threat to the Falklands? Is the UK military deployment to the Falklands sufficient to deter threats? (Paragraph 70)

39.   Does the UK have the capacity to rapidly reinforce capabilities deployed there in the event of escalating tension? (Paragraph 71)

40.   What is the current assessment of the threat to the UK from Electro-Magnetic pulse events, both those occurring naturally and those consequent on hostile action? What assessment has been made of UK resilience to such an event? (Paragraph 74)

41.   What criteria will the UK use for undertaking discretionary interventions, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan? (Paragraph 76)

42.   How does the Government determine and measure success against the strategic aims set for the deployment of UK Armed Forces? (Paragraph 77)

43.   How will the success of the International Defence Engagement Strategy and the Building Security Overseas Strategy be measured? (Paragraph 78)

44.   What assessment has the Government made of the implications of recent case law on the ability of the UK to continue to deploy its Armed Forces on military operations? (Paragraph 82)

45.   What steps is the Government taking to address the problems raised by the overlap between International Humanitarian Law and the Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Law? (Paragraph 83)

46.   We re-emphasise how crucial it is that the Government should re-assess the legal framework for future operations in the next SDSR and will look to ensure that this is addressed. (Paragraph 84)

47.   Should the concept of containment be the model for future UK operations given the shortcomings of the UK's recent experiences in intervention state building? (Paragraph 87)

Capabilities and capacity

48.   What new set of Defence Planning Assumptions is in the SDSR? Do they more accurately reflect the new threats to the UK? (Paragraph 95)

49.   Has the Government consulted with key allies about the capabilities that the UK should maintain, and has it considered whether a full spectrum capability is still the optimum model for maintaining the UK's standing with its allies? (Paragraph 96)

50.   What are the implications for the UK's relationship with the US of the development of Ballistic Missile Defence capability? (Paragraph 97)

51.   The SDSR should re-introduce attrition calculations into its planning. What assessment has been made of the resilience of the UK Armed Forces to losses,

particularly of platforms, to hostile action? What space is there for contingency in the UK Armed Forces? What are the MoD's attrition calculations? (Paragraph 98)

52.   Are the Armed Forces sufficiently flexible to ramp up capabilities when necessary, either at divisional or company level? (Paragraph 99)

53.   How is the risk inherent in the current capability gaps (such as Maritime Patrol Aircraft) being managed? (Paragraph 100)

54.   What assessment has been made of the need to increase CBRN defence and detection capabilities? (Paragraph 101)

55.   What progress has been made in developing doctrine and guidance on the use of cyber warfare? (Paragraph 102)

56.   What reassurance can the MoD provide that it will continue to invest in research and development and, in particular, whether it will meet our previous recommendation that 2% of the defence budget should be spent on research and development? (Paragraph 103)

57.   How will the second aircraft carrier be brought into operation? Will additional manpower and financial resources be provided to allow it to operate? Will aircraft be able to fly off it, and if so, whose? (Paragraph 104)

58.   What measures are being taken to address the crisis of manpower in the Armed Forces? (Paragraph 105)

59.   What will be the role of the Reserves in strengthening both capability and capacity? Is further legislation required to optimise the use that can be made of the Reserves? (Paragraph 106)

60.   What new investments will be made in maritime surveillance aircraft, CBRN capabilities, Ballistic Missile Defence, a comprehensive carrier strike capability, more Royal Navy vessels and Royal Air Force planes, and enhanced divisional manoeuvre and armoured capacity? (Paragraph 107)

61.   What new investments will be made in the capacity to combat asymmetric or ambiguous warfare? (Paragraph 108)

62.   What new doctrine and capability has been developed to deal with such a proliferation of concurrent threats? In particular what reforms will be introduced to support intelligence, analysis, military assistance missions, and Defence Engagement? (Paragraph 109)

63.   Does the UK Government accept that the health of the UK defence industrial base is critical to the delivery of national security? What criteria should underpin consideration of what sovereign defence industrial capability should be retained by the UK? (Paragraph 117)

64. Which elements of the national industrial, academic and commercial base are now of strategic importance to national security and defence? (Paragraph 118)

65. What is the process for addressing capability gaps? Whose job is it to take a strategic view of them? Who is responsible for the implementation of the equipment programme overall? (Paragraph 119)

66. What is the role of the private sector in enhancing national resilience? (Paragraph 120)

67. What is the role of the private sector in delivering capability on operations? (Paragraph 121)

68. What benefits are expected to be delivered by reform of DE&S? (Paragraph 122)

69. Does the SDSR identify a means of developing defence enterprise-level direction and management? (Paragraph 123)

70. Does the SDSR address the skills gap in both public and private sectors in defence engineering and cyber security? (Paragraph 124)

71. What conclusions were drawn from the Air ISTAR Optimisation Study and how will they feed in to the SDSR 2015? (Paragraph 125)

72. What proportion of ISTAR and strike capabilities will the UK require to be provided by RPAS up to the end of the decade and is it able to be provided by the currently operational platforms and those in development? (Paragraph 127)

73. What are the benefits and potential obstacles for a collaborative approach with either US or European partners to develop and acquire future RPAS platforms? (Paragraph 128)

74. Are there sufficient suitably qualified and experienced personnel to provide support for future RPAS programmes? (Paragraph 129)

75. What is the Government doing to increase public confidence in the use of RPAS? (Paragraph 130)

Lessons learned

76. What work is being done to prepare official histories of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan? When will this work be completed and will it be made public? (Paragraph 133)

Annex: the work of the Committee in the 2010–15 Parliament

In the course of this Parliament, we will have published a total of 47 reports, an average of one every four weeks, during the time when parliament is sitting. A full list of our reports is printed in this report. We have taken evidence on 105 occasions from a total of 340 witnesses.

Our work has examined operations, policy and structural reform within the MoD. We examined operations in Afghanistan and preparations for the drawdown of the UK military commitment in 2014 and the operation in Libya. We also held inquiries into the Government's policy on and actions taken in Iraq and Syria. During this Parliament, we visited Afghanistan three times, Pakistan, Latvia, Estonia, Iraq and Jordan as part of operational inquiries.

In addition to focusing on ongoing operations, we have also been looking ahead to the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and National Security Strategy (NSS), continuing to assess the success and effects of implementation of the 2010 SDSR. We have examined deficiencies in our capabilities, including maritime patrol aircraft and have assessed emerging threats and new forms of warfare, for example, the potential for the use of electro-magnetic pulse, cyber attacks and ambiguous warfare techniques (such as the use of proxy forces). We have also focused on the changing shape of the Armed Forces in our Army 2020 and Future Force 2020 inquiries.

During the course of the Parliament, we have also held a number of inquiries into the operation of the Armed Forces Covenant, which was a commitment the Government made to Armed Forces personnel and their families, recognising the sacrifices they are asked to make as a result of their service to the country, and the role of the Service Complaints Commissioner. We have contributed significantly to debate on the latter, both in terms of our report and in tabling amendments to the Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill in Committee. A series of amendments that we tabled to substantially widen the investigative scope of the Ombudsman (enabling her to investigate the substance of a service complaint, any maladministration in the handling of a service complaint, and an allegation of inappropriate delay) were accepted in Public Bill Committee. We also held a pre-appointment hearing for the new service complaints commissioner. Finally, we also completed a major report on the defence implications of Scottish independence with the intention of helping to inform debate in the run-up to the referendum. As part of this inquiry we visited HM Naval Base Clyde (Faslane), RNAD Coulport, the BaE Scotstoun shipyard, Rosyth Naval Base, RAF Lossiemouth and Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.

We have visited permanent UK bases in the Falklands and Cyprus and have visited NATO headquarters and SHAPE in Brussels. We have also been engaged with our closest military allies, visiting the US twice and taking part in a biannual meeting of the UK-France Parliamentary Working Group on Bilateral Defence Co-operation which examines the Lancaster House treaties signed in 2010. We have visited the Permanent Joint Headquarters,

RAF Brize Norton, RAF Waddington, Flag Officer Sea Training in Plymouth and the Fleet Diving School in Portsmouth. We visited the Global Operations Security Control Centre (GOSCC) at MoD Corsham in Wiltshire during our Defence and Cyber-Security inquiry, and to DE&S in Bristol, during our inquiry examining Defence Acquisition.

We have undertaken numerous visits around the UK to speak to Service personnel and their families as part of inquiries examining the Armed Forces Covenant. We visited the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court and Hasler Company in Plymouth during our inquiry *The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties*. As part of our inquiry, *The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation*, we visited Catterick Garrison where we saw a selection of Service Families Accommodation of varying age and condition and Single Living Accommodation including recently completed en-suite rooms of a high standard and multi-occupancy rooms which were very run down. We had the opportunity to talk to Armed Forces personnel and their families about their experience of living in MOD accommodation. We also spoke to MOD staff and contractors working on the management and maintenance of the housing stock. We took oral evidence from children, parents and teachers at Wellington Academy, Tidworth, as part of our inquiry into the Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 3: Educating the children of Service Personnel. We would like to put on record again our gratitude to everyone who has met with us during this Parliament and to the many people who have facilitated our visits. It is vital that we have access to those who are dealing first hand with the issues that we are scrutinising.

We have rejected two Government responses to our reports, asking for them to be re-written, and have requested clarification on several more. We have also expressed concern about the MOD attempting to limit our contact with serving Armed Forces personnel. We have adopted a policy of systematically carrying out follow up, six months after the Government Response to our reports has been published.

The Liaison Committee sets the Departmental Select Committees a set of "core tasks", and we report below on how we have sought to meet each task during this Parliament:

Strategy

Throughout the Parliament, we have produced reports with a view to informing the next Strategic Defence and Security Review. Its significance for the identification of threats to the UK and decisions relating to the allocation of resources within Government will be fundamental. It will therefore have a key role in determining the future of the Armed Forces after 2015, and we hope to have a significant input into the process.

We have also tried to assess emerging threats to UK security. Following the publication of our Report on 'Developing threats: Electro-magnetic pulses', the Committee initiated a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss the threats posed by a possible space weather event or an attack causing an electro-magnetic pulse event. We were concerned that analysis of this emerging threat should be given a high priority within Government; we have published correspondence on our website arising from our meeting with the Prime Minister,

detailing actions that he has taken in response to the session. The cyber inquiry explored whether the high profile given to the cyber-threat in the UK is matched by a coherent plan and chain of command in the event of a major cyber-attack on our national infrastructure or our national interests.

Our inquiry on the situation in Iraq and Syria examined the Government's role in the international coalition's strategy to stabilise the region and counter the threat posed by DAESH. This strategy consisted of carrying out air-strikes, the training of local security forces, 'capacity-building' of the Iraqi state, and an aspiration to create 'a regional solution'. We found that the UK had played a strikingly modest role, seemingly carrying a small proportion of air strikes, providing a small short-term training team for a limited amount of time and failing to contribute significantly in terms of equipment or diplomatic support.

Policy

We undertook a major report into Future Maritime Surveillance in response to the decision announced in the SDSR 2010 to cancel the Nimrod MRA4 programme. Rather than revisit the cancellation of Nimrod, we examined the implications of the decision for future maritime surveillance capabilities and assessed how the resultant capability gap would be managed. This included an assessment of the strategic requirements for military and non-military maritime surveillance capabilities, the various ways they are provided currently and in the future and how this would be incorporated into work on the next National Security Strategy and next Strategic Defence and Security Review.

We examined the Army 2020 plans announced by the Government which would reduce the size of the regular Army and increased the number of Reserves, highlighting our concern that the reduction in regular Army personnel, prior to sufficient Reserves being recruited and trained, potentially left the Army with a shortfall should it be required to deploy significant numbers of personnel.

We have also taken evidence on the Future Force 2020 proposals which we consider to be outdated given the changes in the global security situation since the 2010 SDSR (which led to the concept of Future Force 2020). As part of our inquiry 'Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO' we examined the ability of the UK and its NATO allies to respond should events which took place in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine be repeated in a Baltic State. As part of this we visited Latvia and Estonia, meeting with political and military personnel to the threat posed by Russian expansionism and the required response.

Expenditure and performance

We continue to place a high priority on our work in scrutinising the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts, and the Department's Estimates. We have held annual evidence sessions with the Permanent Under Secretary which have resulted in Reports. We have also produced a number of reports on the MoD Estimates. We have highlighted the repeated qualification of the MoD Accounts; weak financial management information and the paucity of information provided in the Annual Report. We have also raised concerns

about the shortage of key Armed Forces personnel and highlighted the change in approach to defence equipment and support which we have suggested ought to be monitored closely by our successor Committee.

In our report on the *Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14*, we noted that the MOD have made progress in the management of its accounts and increased its transparency in reporting on its own performance.[43]

Bills and Delegated Legislation

This committee has been a key leader in the creation, first of the Service Complaints commissioner, and then of the Armed Forces Ombudsman since our predecessor Committee's report on *Duty of Care* in 2005.[44] We Our reports shaped much of the content of the Armed Forces (and Financial Assistance) Bill. We then scrutinised the bill before it pass through the House of Lords, and drafted detailed further amendments. The committee's two most substantial amendments were inserted, after the Government was defeated during the Committee Stage of the Bill in 2015. Those amendments will significantly widen the investigative scope of the Ombudsman, and will enable the ombudsman to investigate the substance of a service complaint as well as any maladministration in the complaint handling or inappropriate delay.

Our work has also contributed to informing the House's consideration of the Defence Reform Bill. The Committee's report on Defence Acquisition was tagged on the Order Paper to the Second Reading debate on the Bill which provides for a legislative framework for the establishment of a Government-owned, Contractor-operated (GoCo) body to manage defence acquisition. Our inquiry raised a number of important questions around the proposals, particularly relating to future governance; whether problems would arise if a non-UK company were given responsibility for UK defence acquisition; and whether sufficient consultation with allies had taken place.

The Defence Reform Bill also provided for reforms of the UK Reserve Forces which we examined as part of our inquiry into Future Army 2020. During the remaining stages of the Bill, oral evidence taken as part of the inquiry was tagged on the Order Paper. The Future Army 2020 report was tagged on the Order Paper for the consideration of Lords Amendments to the Bill, as was written and oral evidence taken on the Defence Materiel Strategy.

Post-legislative scrutiny

The Armed Forces Act 2011 placed a requirement on the Secretary of State for Defence to make an annual statement to Parliament on the operation of the military covenant. This was the first legislative commitment pertaining to services provided to support service personnel.

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43   [Eighth Report](), Session 2014–15, HC 896

44   [Third Report](), Session 2004–05, HC 63. See also our report on The work of the Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces, [Eighth Report](), Session 2012–13, HC 720

We have undertaken a series of inquiries on the theme of The Armed Forces Covenant in Action?, examining military casualties, accommodation, education of Service personnel and the education of children of Service personnel. As part of these inquiries, we highlighted a range of issues where further improvement in the provision of support to our Armed Forces and their families are required. We are particularly concerned that sufficient support is provided for those who suffered life-changing injuries during their service in Afghanistan and the families of those who lost their lives. We hope that our successor Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the commitments made under the Armed Forces Covenant.

We hope that our successor committee will conduct post-legislative scrutiny of the Defence Reform Act and the Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill.

European scrutiny

During the course of this Parliament, we have been asked for two formal opinions by the European Scrutiny Committee: on a Commission Communication on Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector and on a Commission Report, Defence Implementation Roadmap towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector. We have provided these opinions to the European Scrutiny Committee who have subsequently published them.

Appointments

We have undertaken a formal pre-appointment hearing during this Parliament with the new Service Complaints Commissioner. We have also held introductory evidence sessions with the previous and current Chief of the Defence Staff and the previous and current Permanent Under Secretary at the Ministry of Defence.

Support for the House

19 reports were tagged in 14 debates during the 2010–15 Parliament. In addition to the tags mentioned below, our report on Future Army 2020 was launched in the House of Commons on 6 March 2014.

Date	Debate	Defence Committee Reports tagged
Thursday 16 September 2010	Strategic Defence and Security Review and the future of the UK's Armed Forces [Backbench Business Committee debate, proposed by Alison Seabeck—opened by James Arbuthnot]	The First Report from the Defence Committee of Session 2010–11, on the Strategic Defence and Security Review, HC 345
Thursday 26 January 2012	Progress on defence reform and the Strategic Defence and Security Review [Backbench Business Committee debate, proposed by James Arbuthnot]	The First Report from the Defence Committee of Session 2010–12, on the Strategic Defence and Security Review, HC 345. The Sixth Report of the Defence Committee of Session 2010–12 on

Date	Debate	Defence Committee Reports tagged
		the Strategic Defence Review and National Security Strategy, HC 761
6 December 2012	Defence Personnel [Backbench Business Committee debate, proposed by the Defence Committee]	Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2010–12, The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties, HC 762 Eighth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2010-12, The Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts, 2010–11, HC 1835 Second Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13, The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation, HC 331
7 February 2013	Future Maritime Surveillance [Westminster Hall Debate]	Fifth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13, Future Maritime Surveillance, HC 110
25 June 2013	Armed Forces [Opposition Day Debate]	Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2010–12, The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties, HC 762 Second Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13, The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation, HC 331
16 July 2013	Defence Reform Bill [Debate on Second Reading]	Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13 Defence Acquisition, HC 9
20 November 2013	Defence Reform Bill [Remaining Stages]	Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13, on Defence Acquisition, HC 9
4 March 2014	Defence and cyber-security [Estimates Day Debate, proposed by the Defence Committee]	Sixth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2012–13, on Defence and cyber-security, HC 106
29 April 2014	Defence Reform Bill [Lords Amendments]	Ninth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2013–14, on Future Army 2020, HC 576
10 September 2014	Debate on Ukraine, Middle East, North Africa and Security [Government Debate]	Third Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2014–15, on Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO, HC 358 Fourteenth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2013–14, on Intervention: Why, When and How?, HC 952
2 February 2015	Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill [Second Reading]	Fifth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2014–15, on the Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill, HC 508

Date	Debate	Defence Committee Reports tagged
2 March 2015	Debate on Next Defence and Security Review: Part Two–NATO [Estimates Day Debate, proposed by the Defence Committee]	Third Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2014–15, on Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO, HC 358
9 March 2015	Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill [Remaining Stages]	Fifth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2014-15, on the Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill, HC 508
12 March 2015	Defence Spending [Backbench Business Committee debate, proposed by Mr John Baron]	Third Report from the Defence Committee, Session 2014–15, on Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO, HC 358

Our members also played a prominent role in a series of Defence-related debates over the course of the parliament including the debates on intervention in Syria and Libya, and the recent debates over Defence Spending commitments.

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm and Governments frequently acknowledge this. We are therefore deeply troubled and disappointed by the dramatic decline in the time allocated by the Government to defence debates in the Chamber. Given the critical importance of defence, the sacrifice of service personnels' lives and the need to increase public understanding of the Armed Forces, we believe that more time is needed. This is particularly important given the current environment of cuts to capabilities and the increased number of threats. We think it is absolutely essential that Government should commit substantially greater time for debate on defence matters to meet its responsibilities to both Parliament and the public. We hope that our successor Committee will take this matter up further with the Government after the election.

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 18 March 2015

Members present:

Rory Stewart, in the Chair

Richard Benyon	Sir Bob Russell
Dai Havard	Bob Stewart
Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis	Ms Gisela Stuart
Mrs Madeleine Moon	Derek Twigg

Draft Report (*Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Three*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 133 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Twelfth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[The Committee adjourned.

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee's website at
www.parliament.uk/defcom.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2010–12

First Report	The Strategic Defence and Security Review	HC 345 (HC 638)
Second Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export Controls (2011): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2009, Quarterly Report for 2010, licensing policy and review of export control legislation	HC 686 (Cm 8079)
Third Report	The Performance of the Ministry of Defence 2009–10	HC 760 (HC 1495)
Fourth Report	Operations in Afghanistan	HC 554 (HC 1525)
Fifth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2011–12	HC 1373 (HC 1528)
Sixth Report	The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy	HC 761 (HC 1693)
Seventh Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 1: Military Casualties	HC 762
Eighth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2010–11	HC 1635
Ninth Report	Operations in Libya	HC 950
Tenth Report	Developing Threats: Electro-Magnetic Pulses (EMP)	HC1552

Session 2012–13

First Report	Ministry of Defence Supplementary Estimate 2011–12	HC 99 (HC 577)
Second Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 2: Accommodation	HC 331 (HC 578)
Third Report	MoD Main Estimate 2012–13	HC 133 (HC 607)
Fourth Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports (2012): UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2010, Quarterly Reports for July to December 2010 and January to September 2011, the Government's Review of arms exports to the Middle East and North Africa, and wider arms control issues	HC 419 (Cm 8441)
Fifth Report	Future Maritime Surveillance	HC 110 (HC 827)
Sixth Report	Defence and Cyber-Security	HC 106
Seventh Report	Defence Acquisition	HC 9
Eighth Report	The work of the Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces	HC 720
Ninth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2011–12	HC 828

Tenth Report	Securing the Future of Afghanistan	HC 413

Session 2013–14

First Report	MoD Supplementary Estimate 2012–13	HC 291 (HC 644)
Second Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2013–14	HC 517 (HC 670)
Third Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports and Arms Control (2013): Scrutiny of the Government's UK Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2011 published in July 2012, the Government's Quarterly Reports from October 2011 to September 2012, and the Government's policies on arms exports and international arms control issues	HC 205 (Cm 8707)
Fourth Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 3: Educating the Children of Service Personnel	HC 586 (HC 771)
Fifth Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action? Part 4: Education of Service Personnel	HC 185 (HC 759)
Sixth Report	The Defence Implications of Possible Scottish Independence	HC 198 (HC 839)
Seventh Report	Toward the Next Defence and Security Review: Part One	HC 197 (HC 1175)
Eighth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2012–13	HC 653 (HC 1198)
Ninth Report	Future Army 2020	HC 576 (HC 387)
Tenth Report	Remote Control: Remotely Piloted Air Systems—current and future UK use	HC 772 (HC 611)
Eleventh Report	Deterrence in the twenty-first century	HC 1066 (HC 525)
Twelfth Report	UK Armed Forces Personnel and the Legal Framework for Future Operations	HC 931 (HC 548)
Thirteenth Report	Afghanistan—Camp Bastion Attack	HC 830 (HC 526)
Fourteenth Report	Intervention: Why, When and How?	HC 952 (HC 581)
Fifteenth Report	Afghanistan	HC 994 (HC 582)

Session 2014–15

First Report	The Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2014–15	HC 469 (HC 681)
Second Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export and Arms Controls (2014) First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development Committees of Session 2014–15	HC 186 (Cm 8935)
Third Report	Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two: NATO	HC 358 (HC 755)
Fourth Report	The Armed Forces Covenant in Action Part 5: Military Casualties, a review of progress	HC 527 (HC 953)
Fifth Report	Armed Forces (Service Complaints and Financial Assistance) Bill	HC 508 (HC 900)
Sixth Report	Pre-appointment hearing for the Service Complaints Commissioner	HC 832

Seventh Report	The situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham (DAESH)	HC 690 (HC 1126)
Eighth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2013–14	HC 896
Ninth Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Export and Arms Controls (2015) First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development Committees of Session 2014–15	HC 608
Tenth Report	Re-thinking Defence to meet new threats	HC 512
Eleventh Report	Decision-making in Defence Policy	HC 682
Twelfth Report	Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Three	HC 1127