



House of Commons
Defence Committee

SDSR 2015 and the Army

Eighth Report of Session 2016–17

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 25 April 2017*

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.

Current membership

[Dr Julian Lewis MP](#) (*Conservative, New Forest East*) (Chair)

[Douglas Chapman MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Dunfermline and West Fife*)

[James Gray MP](#) (*Conservative, North Wiltshire*)

[Jack Lopresti MP](#) (*Conservative, Filton and Bradley Stoke*)

[Johnny Mercer MP](#) (*Conservative, Plymouth, Moor View*)

[Mrs Madeleine Moon MP](#) (*Labour, Bridgend*)

[Gavin Robinson MP](#) (*Democratic Unionist Party, Belfast East*)

[Ruth Smeeth MP](#) (*Labour, Stoke-on-Trent North*)

[John Spellar MP](#) (*Labour, Warley*)

[Bob Stewart MP](#) (*Conservative, Beckenham*)

[Phil Wilson MP](#) (*Labour, Sedgefield*)

The following were also Members of the Committee during the course of the inquiry:

Richard Benyon MP (*Conservative, Newbury*)

Jim Shannon MP (*Democratic Unionist Party, Strangford*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in the House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

Committee reports are published on the [Committee's website](#) and in print by Order of the House. Evidence relating to this Report is published on the relevant [inquiry page](#) of the Committee's website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are James Davies (Clerk), Dr Adam Evans (Second Clerk), David Nicholas, Eleanor Scarnell, and Ian Thomson (Committee Specialists), David Gardner (Senior Committee Assistant), Carolyn Bowes, (Committee Assistant).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Defence Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5857; the Committee's email address is defcom@parliament.uk. Media inquiries should be addressed to Alex Paterson on 020 7219 1589.

Contents

Summary	3
1 Introduction	5
Background	5
Our inquiry	5
2 SDSR 2015: Headline ambitions for the Army	8
Strategic rationale of Army 2020	8
Army 2020 Structure	8
SDSR 2015	9
Joint Force 2025	9
SDSR 2015 commitments to Army equipment	10
3 A new warfighting division	12
Introduction	12
Vision for the new warfighting division	12
Air superiority and protection of the warfighting division	15
Enhanced forward presence and deployment of the new warfighting division	16
Training	18
Integrated Action	20
Regeneration and reconstitution	22
4 Defence engagement and national resilience	25
Introduction	25
Defence engagement	25
National resilience	28
5 Army personnel	30
Background	30
Trained personnel	31
Army strength and recruitment	32
Regular Army	32
Reserves	34
Recruitment Partnership	36
Other recruitment and retention initiatives	37
Whole Force Concept	37
Maximising Talent Initiative	37
New Employment Model	38

Army culture	39
Women in ground close combat roles	39
6 Army equipment	41
Introduction	41
Army equipment projects	41
The AJAX programme	42
Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank and Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles	43
Mechanised Infantry Vehicle and Multi-Role Vehicle (Protected)	44
Delivery of the Army component of the equipment plan	45
Conclusions and recommendations	48
Appendix 1: Armed Forces' Missions	53
Appendix 2: Army Personnel Statistics	54
Appendix 3: Historical figures for Main Battle Tanks and Warrior Vehicles	57
Formal Minutes	59
Witnesses	60
Published written evidence	61
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	62

Summary

The 2015 Strategic Defence Review (SDSR 2015) sets out an ambitious plan to restructure the British Army. It is the latest in a series of recent reforms which began with the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the controversial reductions in Regular Army numbers. At the heart of SDSR 2015 is the creation of a warfighting division, which will be constructed to meet the resurgent threat of conflict with a peer adversary. It will consist of 40,000 troops comprised of two Armoured Infantry brigades and a Strike Brigade, together with associated combat and combat service support elements, which can deploy at speed.

The warfighting division represents a significant advance on the *Army 2020* strategy capable of deploying a division for a non-enduring warfighting operation at “best effort” with appropriate warning and additional resource. However, we have identified a number of significant risks and challenges to the delivery and affordability of this new capability.

The delivery of a warfighting division relies on the recruitment and retention of both 82,000 Regulars and 30,000 Reservists. However, despite the fact that the size of the Regular Army has been set at an historic low, the MoD has yet to recruit to even that low total. In addition, its ability to achieve the target of 30,000 trained Reservists by March 2019 has been met with scepticism, most notably from the independent UK Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team. If the MoD fails to address its problems with recruitment and retention, the capability and credibility of the warfighting division will be undermined.

The Army has acknowledged that recruitment and retention is a challenge and the need to widen the pool of recruits to include those from non-traditional areas, in particular, women and individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. It is also committed to changing the culture of the Army through initiatives on employment, talent management and leadership. Successful implementation of these initiatives should attract greater numbers of soldiers and provide them with a structure within which to achieve their full potential. However, in its desire to reach the full complement of Regulars and Reservists, the MoD must ensure that entrance and training standards are clearly sufficient for preparing an Army to be able to participate in state-on-state conflict.

The warfighting division will require access to appropriate training facilities and environments both in the UK and overseas. We welcome the Army’s reassessment of its training requirements to meet the threat of a challenge by a peer adversary. However we remain concerned that the MoD is unable to provide data on the costs and spending trends of training investment. Without that information, activity levels in training will remain threatened by wider budget pressures on the MoD.

The warfighting division will require an extensive procurement programme for equipment if it is to provide the modern ground-manoeuvre warfighting capability envisaged by the MoD. The MoD is committed to the procurement of 589 new AJAX armoured vehicles and 50 Apache Attack Helicopters. In addition, the MoD has also begun the process of developing a new family of Mechanised Infantry Vehicles.

Programmes are also underway to extend the life of the Challenger Mark 2 main battle tanks and to upgrade the Warrior fighting vehicles. However the MoD could not confirm the number of tanks and vehicles to be upgraded under these programmes. We currently have some 240 main battle tanks compared with more than twice this number in 1997. Further reductions would be fraught with risk.

Together these programmes and upgrades represent a significant financial commitment and it is deeply concerning that the NAO has identified that SDSR 2015 contains an additional £24.4 billion of new commitments to the MoD's Equipment Plan. It also made clear that the programme for the new Mechanised Infantry Vehicle remains uncosted. The MoD must be clear that the financial settlement is sufficient to deliver this vital equipment—on time and within budget—without raiding other parts of defence expenditure. Inadequate funding of these programmes would seriously impair, if not fatally undermine, the Army's ability to deploy either the division or the new Strike Brigades.

SDSR 2015 also highlights the importance of the Army's contribution to defence engagement and national resilience. These are important roles in countering instability abroad and providing reassurance at home. However, meeting those commitments has resource implications for the Army. Demand for defence engagement exceeds the available funding; and it is not yet clear how the allocation of personnel to national resilience will impact on the warfighting division.

A fully-manned and fully-equipped warfighting division is central to the credibility of the Army. At present, it is a work in progress but there are clear risks to its affordability and delivery. The MoD must address the challenges of funding and recruitment. It must set out a timetable with full cost implications for its delivery so that proper scrutiny of progress can take place. Failure to establish a realistic and affordable equipment programme for the Army will mean failing in the critical task set in SDSR 2015 for the Army to provide a warfighting division.

As in so many other areas of defence, the work of the Army is constrained by the fact that defence expenditure has fallen to an unacceptably low level in GDP percentage terms, bearing in mind that, until the mid-1990s, the UK never spent less than 3% of GDP on Defence.

1 Introduction

Background

1. The current restructuring of the Army has its origins in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR).¹ That Review set out the Government's vision for a tri-service armed forces entitled *Future Force 2020*, the Army component of which would require significant changes to its size, shape and structure.² However, SDSR 2010 was just the start of the process.³ The main *Future Force 2020* decisions for the Army were announced in July 2012.⁴ The decisions were controversial with reductions in Regular Army personnel, the deletion of several Regular units, and a much greater structural reliance on the Reserve to operate. Further announcements on the role and greater use of Reserve Forces, and Regular and Reserve basing decisions were made in 2013.⁵
2. The latest Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR 2015)⁶ was published on 23 November 2015 and took forward that work. It included an updated plan for the size, shape and structure of UK Armed Forces—entitled *Joint Force 2025*—to meet the changing defence and security challenges highlighted in the 2015 SDSR which was combined with an updated National Security Strategy (NSS).⁷

Our inquiry

3. In May 2016, we announced an inquiry into the implications for the Army of the outcomes of the 2015 SDSR. The inquiry's terms of reference focused on:
 - progress in the delivery of the *Army 2020* programme;
 - what change is yet required in the Army to meet the requirements of the SDSR's *Joint Force 2025*, and other evolving strategic circumstances;
 - the ability of the Army, by 2025, to deliver a land division with three brigades as part of the 50,000-strong force envisaged by SDSR 2015, including the provision of suitable equipment for land forces;

1 HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, [Cm 7948](#), October 2010

2 HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, [Cm 7948](#), October 2010, pp 19–20 and paras 2.A.6–2.A.8

3 For example SDSR 2010 announced a six-month study into the future role and structure of the Reserves, reductions in Regular personnel in each of the Services, and plans for a rationalisation of the defence estate. (HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, [Cm 7948](#), October 2010, paras 2.A.12, 2.D.6–2.D.8 and 2.D.10–2.D.14)

4 HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 1085–1110](#) and HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 65–67WS](#); see also British Army, *Modernising to face an unpredictable future: Transforming the British Army*, July 2012

5 Regular Army Basing Plan: HC Deb, 5 March 2013, [cols 845–848](#); Role of Reserves and Reserves basing: HC Deb, 3 July 2013, [cols 923–925](#), HC Deb, 3 July 2013, [cols 49–53WS](#) and HC Deb, 4 July 2013, [cols 61–62WS](#), see also Ministry of Defence, *Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued*, [Cm 8655](#), July 2013

6 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015

7 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015

- how the Army is employing Regular, Reserve and other personnel as part of the MoD's Whole Force Concept; its ability to maximise talent in its ranks; and the suitability of its career structures and terms and conditions of service;
- whether the training programme for the Army is sufficient to meet the broad and varied requirements of its likely future commitments; and
- the structure, flexibility and institutional resilience of the Army to provide both conventional defences against state-based threats and the need to counter threats that do not recognise national borders.

4. Our inquiry also sought to evaluate the proposals for the Army and the extent to which they addressed the checklist of eleven potential threats and vulnerabilities that we identified, in our first report of this Parliament, as set out in the box below.⁸

Box 1: checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities

Six potential threat areas:

- Cyber-attack and espionage;
- Growing instability in the Middle East and North Africa;
- Increases in extremism, radicalisation and other enablers of terrorist activity;
- Non-state actors and hybrid warfare undermining the international rules-based order;
- Potential for conflict in the South and East China Seas; and
- Potential for Russian aggression in Europe and the High North and possible dilution of the commitment to Article 5.

Five general vulnerabilities:

- Economic dependence on unreliable partners;
- Inability to react to sub-conventional threats;
- Inadequate training opportunities for UK Armed Forces;
- Lack of numbers in UK Armed Forces and gaps in capabilities; and
- Lack of expertise in Whitehall.

Source: Defence Committee, First Report of Session 2015–16, *Flexible Response? An SDSR Checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities*, HC 493

5. We held four oral evidence sessions, with the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chief of the General Staff, a senior officer from the Army Reserve, the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability, Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials, the Clerk to the UK Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team, and academic experts. We are grateful to

⁸ Defence Committee, First Report of Session 2015–16, [Flexible response? An SDSR checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities](#), HC 493

all our witnesses and those who submitted written evidence. We also wish to record our appreciation to the MoD and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) for facilitating our informal discussions with Warrant Officer Class One Glenn Haughton, the Army Sergeant Major, and senior military officers, academics and commentators from overseas at the 2016 Land Warfare Conference.

6. During the course of our inquiry we visited the headquarters of the new 77 Brigade and observed the 3rd (United Kingdom) Division Combined Arms Demonstration on Salisbury Plain. We thank everyone who facilitated these visits for their assistance.

2 SDSR 2015: Headline ambitions for the Army

Strategic rationale of Army 2020

7. The Army's contributions to *Future Force 2020* were announced under the heading *Army 2020*.⁹ The MoD described *Army 2020* to our predecessor Committee in the following terms:

The strategic rationale for *Army 2020* came from the October 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the associated National Security Strategy, which laid out what the Army would be required to deliver in terms of types, frequency and concurrency of tasking. The funding envelope was set by the Ministry of Defence as a result of the so-called Three Month Exercise.¹⁰

The result was to be an Army consisting of 82,000 trained Regular personnel and 30,000 trained Reservists, which together would provide an integrated Army of around 112,000.

Army 2020 Structure

8. *Army 2020* was announced in July 2012 with the stated need for a “generational change” in the Army’s “vision, structure, composition and capability” to prepare it to meet the challenges of 2020 and beyond”.¹¹ At the time, the MoD told our predecessor Committee that *Army 2020* redefined the core purposes of the Army and determined that it should be capable of providing:

- contingent capability for deterrence and defence;
- defence engagement and overseas capacity building; and
- UK engagement and the military contribution to homeland resilience.¹²

9. These tasks would be delivered through three main elements:

- a Reaction Force at high readiness to undertake short-notice contingency tasks and to provide the Army’s conventional deterrence.¹³ The Reaction Force would be trained and equipped to undertake the full spectrum of intervention tasks and to provide the initial basis for future enduring operations;

9 HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 1085–1110](#) and HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 65–67WS](#); see also British Army, [Modernising to face an unpredictable future: Transforming the British Army](#), July 2012

10 Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, [Future Army 2020: Volume II \(Written Evidence\)](#), Ev w3

11 HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 1085–1110](#) and HC Deb, 5 July 2012, [cols 65–67WS](#); see also British Army, [Modernising to face an unpredictable future: Transforming the British Army](#), July 2012, p 2

12 Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, [Future Army 2020: Volume II \(Written Evidence\)](#), Ev w3

13 The Reaction Force would be designed to deploy rapidly to respond to events anywhere in the world and designed to deter adversaries from acting against UK interests.

- an Adaptable Force of seven infantry brigades and a logistics brigade—comprising Regular and Reserve forces—to provide headquarters and units for enduring operations as well as acting as the primary source of capability for the Army’s standing tasks plus Defence Engagement at home and overseas;¹⁴ and
- Force Troops combining Combat Support, Combat Service Support and Command Support to deliver a broad range of capabilities such as engineer, artillery and medical support from a centralised pool of Regulars and Reservists.¹⁵

SDSR 2015

10. SDSR 2015 provided a further revision of *Army 2020*. It highlighted four particular challenges which were likely to shape UK security priorities for the next decade with both immediate and longer-term implications:

- the increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability;
- the resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition;
- the impact of technology, especially cyber threats and wider technological developments; and
- the erosion of the rules-based international order, making it harder to build consensus and tackle global threats.¹⁶

Joint Force 2025

11. To deliver the Armed Forces’ missions (which are set out in Appendix 1), SDSR 2015 announced the development of *Joint Force 2025* which would build on the work of *Future Force 2020*.¹⁷ According to the MoD, the ambition for *Joint Force 2025* was to provide the UK with the capabilities to fight in the information age and to be better able to undertake the most difficult operations, including warfighting under NATO Article 5 obligations.¹⁸ *Joint Force 2025* would also be constructed in a way which would allow the Armed Forces to fulfil more missions in more locations in the UK and abroad, and achieve greater interoperability with allies and partners.¹⁹

12. The Army’s contribution to *Joint Force 2025* would include:

- a new warfighting division, optimised for high-intensity combat operations, and with the ability to deploy three brigades rapidly over long distances;

14 Overseas defence engagement is the use of defence assets and activities short of combat operations building to achieve influence. In the UK it is the Armed Forces’ contribution to homeland resilience, for example supporting civilian emergency organisations in times of crisis.

15 Force Troop Brigades would provide a broad range of Regular and Reserve capabilities. These would include engineer, artillery and medical support from a centralised pool as well as a coordination and control function for key tasks such as overseas capacity building.

16 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 3.3

17 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.38

18 Ministry of Defence, [SDSR 2015 Fact Sheets](#), January 2016, p 4

19 Ministry of Defence, [SDSR 2015 Fact Sheets](#), January 2016, p 4

- two innovative brigades, comprising a mix of Regulars and specialist capabilities from the Reserves with the ability to contribute to strategic communications, tackle hybrid warfare and deliver better battlefield intelligence; and
- a number of infantry battalions reconfigured to make an increased contribution to countering terrorism and building stability overseas.²⁰

The detailed reorganisation to achieve this would be undertaken by the *Army Refine* project.²¹

13. On 15 December 2016, Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP, Secretary of State for Defence, announced the outcome of *Army Refine*.²² The Regular Army would remain at a level of 82,000 personnel with a whole force of 112,000 Regular and Reserve troops. Large parts of the Army would remain unaffected but units would be required to change their roles, equipment or location.

14. A modernised warfighting division, centred on 3 (UK) Division, would comprise four brigades (two Armoured Infantry and two Strike) to replace the existing three Armoured Infantry Brigades.²³ The MoD considered this to be a significant uplift in capability with one of each type of brigade held at high readiness rather than the current single Armoured Infantry brigade. This would enable the Army to deploy a “credible division of three brigades” at a time of crisis.

15. In order to develop and transition to this new posture, the division would be delivered and developed through the establishment of the Strike Experimentation Group with the objective of establishing the first new Strike Brigade by 2020.²⁴ According to *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, the *Army Refine* project will involve over 4,500 soldiers transferring to new units and 40 major units being reconfigured to establish the warfighting division and form its two new Strike Brigades.²⁵ It will also require changes to the roles or brigade assignment, personnel numbers, basing, and equipment for 97 battalion-sized units. The target is for all the changes to be complete by 2025, when the second Strike Brigade is expected to be fully operational.

SDSR 2015 commitments to Army equipment

16. In the Financial Statement of 8 July 2015, the Government committed to continue to meet the NATO minimum of 2% of GDP to be spent on defence.²⁶ In order to fulfil this undertaking, the MoD’s budget would see an annual real-terms increase of 0.5% until 2020–21 which would enable the Government to maintain its pledge to provide a 1% annual increase in the Defence Equipment Plan over the next decade.²⁷ SDSR 2015 reaffirms these pledges.²⁸ Whilst this was generally welcomed, it must be seen in the

20 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.48

21 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

22 [HCWS367](#)

23 [HCWS367](#)

24 [HCWS367](#)

25 *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, [Details emerge of major British Army re-organisation](#), 16 March 2017

26 HC Deb, 8 July 2015, [col 337](#)

27 HM Treasury, [Summer Budget 2015](#), HC 264, July 2015, para 1.81, and also HM Treasury press release: [Summer Budget 2015 Key Announcements](#), 8 July 2015

28 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.33

context of a significant number of procurement projects for the Army, highlighted in SDSR 2015, which the MoD considers to be vital to provide modern ground manoeuvre warfighting capability which underpins the Army element of *Joint Force 2025*.²⁹

17. Together, these plans represent a fundamental change to the structure and direction of the Army. Our Report first considers the core tasks assigned to the Army: the warfighting division, Defence Engagement and National Resilience. We then consider the MoD's policies for recruitment and retention in the new structure. In the final section we consider the major procurement programmes for the Army.

18. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review sets out ambitious plans for the British Army, including a reset of its roles, a major reorganisation of its structures and an extensive new equipment programme. The headline ambition of recreating a warfighting division is of considerable significance in the light of the resurgence of state-based threats. However, this programme of change is accompanied by significant financial risks and challenges for its fulfilment.

3 A new warfighting division

Introduction

19. The creation of the new warfighting division is the most important element of SDSR 2015's vision for the Army. In this section we consider how the new division will meet the threats and general vulnerabilities identified in our SDSR checklist Report published in November 2015.³⁰ In particular, whether it will be able to counter:

- Non-state actors and hybrid warfare undermining the international rules-based order;
- Potential for Russian aggression in Europe and the High North and possible dilution of the commitment to Article 5; and
- A lack of numbers in UK Armed Forces and gaps in capabilities.

Vision for the new warfighting division

20. Under *Army 2020*, the MoD regarded the Army as “already prepared to deliver a division capable of operating within the context of a non-enduring warfighting intervention”.³¹ However, the MoD conceded that this was a “best effort” capability which would require adequate warning and additional resource for it to be both generated and sustained.³² *Joint Force 2025* is tasked with rebalancing and modernising the Army to provide a division which is available at “higher readiness”.³³

21. The warfighting division will consist of three brigades, drawing on two Armoured Infantry Brigades and one of the two new Strike Brigades,³⁴ together with associated combat and combat service support elements. The two Strike Brigades will be able to deploy rapidly over long distances using the new AJAX armoured vehicles and new Mechanised Infantry Vehicles. The SDSR states that this will double the number of brigades ready for operations.³⁵ Together with 16 Air Assault Brigade's very high readiness forces, the SDSR asserted that the UK would have an improved ability to respond to “all likely threats”.³⁶

22. In oral evidence, General Sir Nicholas Carter, Chief of the General Staff (CGS), considered the capacity to field a warfighting division as central to the credibility of the Army,³⁷ and described the change as “one of the great outcomes from the SDSR”.³⁸ He likened it to the Royal Navy's Aircraft Carrier programme which provided a capability where “the full orchestra comes together”.³⁹

30 Defence Committee, First Report of Session 2015–16, [Flexible response? An SDSR checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities](#), HC 493

31 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

32 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

33 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

34 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#)); HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.48

35 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.48

36 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.48

37 Q39

38 Q3

39 Q3

23. The new warfighting division will also be configured to counter the potential for adversaries to conduct “anti-area access denial”⁴⁰ and particularly where an adversary could impede the ability of either the RAF or the Royal Navy to dominate either the littoral or air space.⁴¹ A key aspect of this will be the ability of the warfighting division to project combat power “at reach” over distances of up to 2,000km; and to disperse and concentrate rapidly in order to dominate ground and population mass in a different manner from at present.⁴²

24. The warfighting division has the potential to address the re-emergence of a potential state-on-state conflict; but witnesses to our inquiry highlighted challenges to its implementation. The Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR), the Army’s own think-tank, argued that the warfighting division would be created in the context of:

- reductions in the Regular forces and the requirement for the use of Reserves to provide additional manpower;
- gaps in air-defence capability;
- the changing character of warfare, including cyber, electronic warfare, and information operations; and
- gaps in interoperability within UK Armed Forces and with allies.⁴³

Furthermore, the CHACR said that “the prospect of ‘losing the division in an afternoon’ will weigh heavily on the chain of command, with strategic-to-tactical command compression almost inevitable as politicians appreciate the stakes involved in committing the division to battle”.⁴⁴ The Centre added that the Army must be able to “regulate how much risk” the UK’s sole warfighting division is exposed to during conflict “unless we are prepared to lose it”.⁴⁵

25. Dr Warren Chin, from the Defence Studies Department at King’s College London, highlighted the argument raised in some quarters that the creation of the warfighting division was to achieve the “covert goal” of “protecting the Army from the prospect of further cuts”.⁴⁶ He was not convinced that a division was the best organisational way to deploy the various elements of land capabilities. Given the financial constraints, he argued that the MoD should have thought more boldly and given more consideration to the brigade as “the most important currency unit”.⁴⁷ Dr Chin cited the Chilcot Inquiry which, he asserted, had challenged the assumptions that the commitment of a division would

40 “The objective of an anti-access or area-denial strategy is to prevent the attacker from bringing its forces into the contested region or to prevent the attacker from freely operating within the region and maximizing its combat power.” (Sam. J. Tangredi, *Anti-Access Warfare. Countering A2/AD Strategies*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2013, p.2)

41 Q3

42 Q3 and Q62

43 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016. It should be noted that the views expressed are those of individual contributors and not the official views of the Army, the MoD, or any components thereof.

44 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, p 12

45 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, p 12

46 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 28

47 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), paras 28–29

increase the UK's influence in the military or political domain. In relation to Iraq, he highlighted the suggestion contained in the inquiry that a smaller and more discrete force package would have produced the same level of power and influence while exposing the UK to less risk during the occupation phase in Iraq.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Dr Chin, cautioned that the success of the new division would depend greatly on the acquisition and timely delivery of the new AJAX armoured vehicle and other vehicles in the AJAX fleet (which we consider later in this Report).⁴⁹

26. Lieutenant General (retired) Sir Paul Newton, former Commander Force Development and Training for the Army, was, however, more optimistic and contrasted the vision of a warfighting division with the “unambitious” outcome of the 2010 SDSR:

I think 2010 was dangerously unambitious for the Army, because what it said was, “Well, we’d like you to deploy a division, but only at best effort.” So it set an aspiration that the UK might do this, but without resourcing it. What 2015 said was, “No, we want you to be able to deploy a war-fighting division.”⁵⁰

He concluded that as long as the Army’s budget “does not get raided” it was a “credible” proposal.⁵¹

27. General (retired) Sir Richard Shirreff, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, agreed that SDSR 2015 represented a positive reversal of the “severe cuts made by the coalition government”.⁵² He believed that the warfighting division gave the UK an opportunity to re-establish credibility in the eyes of its allies who were “disappointed at the diminished stance of Western Europe’s premier military power”.⁵³ However, he cautioned that the effect of the 20% cuts in regular manpower inflicted by the 2010 SDSR, and an increased dependence on under-recruited, under-trained Reserves presented the risk of a force “hollowed out” to the extent that “the deployment of a brigade, let alone a division, at credible readiness would be a major challenge”.⁵⁴ This was also raised by the Human Security Centre who questioned the ability of the Army to deploy at the divisional level, in particular against a capable state-based opponent.⁵⁵

28. We welcome the Ministry of Defence’s commitment, set out in SDSR 2015, to recreate a warfighting division as part of the restructuring of the Army. We agree with General Carter’s observation that its delivery is central to the credibility of the Army. It is also a key part of the UK’s ability to contribute effectively to NATO’s collective deterrence and defence. However, the development of the division is a major increase in ambition when considered in the context of the “best effort” approach of SDSR 2010 for a deployment of smaller forces under Army 2020. Although the programme for the new division is in its infancy, the MoD needs to be alive to the challenges and

48 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 29

49 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 26

50 Q216

51 Q216

52 Atlantic Council, Alliance at Risk: [Strengthening European Defence in an age of turbulence and competition](#), February 2016, p 9

53 Atlantic Council, Alliance at Risk: [Strengthening European Defence in an age of turbulence and competition](#), February 2016, p 9

54 Atlantic Council, Alliance at Risk: [Strengthening European Defence in an age of turbulence and competition](#), February 2016, p 9

55 Human Security Centre ([ARM0006](#)), paras 5.1–5.5

risks in providing this capability—not least the importance of maintaining the Army’s budget. We therefore recommend that the MoD should provide us with detailed annual reports on progress towards the establishment of the warfighting division. These should include detailed timelines, regular updates on progress against each planned stage of delivery of the division, and financial statements to demonstrate that the Army’s budget is sufficient to enable the proposed timetable to be met.

Air superiority and protection of the warfighting division

29. In the previous section, we touched on concerns about air superiority and the UK’s ground-based air defence capabilities. When he gave evidence to us, the Chief of the General Staff accepted that the Army had “bent itself out of shape” during operations in Afghanistan with tactics, equipment and doctrine focused on a specific counter-insurgency challenge.⁵⁶ The challenge now for the Army was to counter the current range of threats and for it to improve its readiness to fight in a combined arms battlefield.⁵⁷ He described this as “‘Back to the Future’ type stuff” in which most Western armies were used to owning the airspace—which was not the reality against sophisticated state threats. He stressed to us the importance of investing “significantly” in the Army’s ability to operate in a “much more demanding environment” because that was where the Army was “most vulnerable” at present.⁵⁸

30. Dr Chin cited Russia’s air power in its western military district and its sophisticated “anti-access area denial” capability, as examples of state capabilities which presented significant challenges to those of the UK.⁵⁹ He was cautious of General Carter’s assertion that the warfighting division’s new Strike Brigades, utilising the new AJAX vehicles and new technology, could offer an alternative way of conducting long-range strikes against aggressive Russian forces, a role traditionally allocated to airpower.⁶⁰ Despite the potential for the new Strike Brigades, using the AJAX vehicles’ new technology, to project combat power “at reach” over distances of up to 2,000km, and to disperse and concentrate rapidly in order to dominate ground and people in a different way, he was uncertain how UK and NATO forces would survive in a battlespace in which control of the air was “at best contested”.⁶¹ To illustrate this point, Sir Paul Newton recalled being told, during his Army career, that trying to manoeuvre without ground-based air defence was an “expensive form of suicide”.⁶² Sir Paul agreed that this capability gap needed to be closed as a priority, if the UK was to have a credible warfighting division.⁶³

31. The Human Security Centre argued that the solution—in part—was to shift the balance for fire support back to ground forces, particularly the new Strike Brigades. The Centre noted the introduction of the Common Anti-Air Modular Missile (CAMM) as a useful asset in this context but cautioned that it had a fairly short range and would equip only one regiment.⁶⁴ A better solution would be the introduction of an enlarged Guided

56 Q5

57 Q5

58 Q5

59 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 31

60 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 31

61 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#)), para 31

62 Q148

63 Q215

64 Human Security Centre ([ARM0006](#)), para 13.5

Multiple Rocket System capability, alongside an additional regiment equipped with an extended-range variant of the CAMM.⁶⁵

32. The Secretary of State for Defence acknowledged that there were capability gaps which need to be addressed, in particular with respect to air defence.⁶⁶ However, he argued they were being tackled, in part, through the commitment in SDSR 2015 to enhance the Army's Apache helicopters which would deliver a significant improvement in air attack capability.⁶⁷ Lieutenant General Mark Poffley, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Military Capability), also pointed out that air defence was a tri-service responsibility,⁶⁸ and that the RAF took the lead for ground-based air defence. That said, he highlighted the fact that the MoD was planning to replace the Rapier missile system—currently deployed in the Falklands—with the Future Local Area Air Defence System (FLAADS) which could also be deployed by a Division.⁶⁹ The proposed 'layered defence' for the Army would include these elements, alongside a point defence provided by a High Velocity Missile (HVM) system.⁷⁰ The HVM system will be considered as part of the next MoD planning round and General Poffley agreed to provide us with regular updates. He added that "judgments about the structure and size of that [HVM] contribution" would also be made as part of the *Army Refine* work. However no details were included in the Secretary of State's announcement on the outcomes of *Army Refine*.

33. The new warfighting division will have to operate without the assurance of 'owning' the airspace, when it faces a modern state adversary. This presents MoD and Armed Forces' planners with significant challenges. Whilst we note that air defence is a tri-Service responsibility, led by the RAF, we are greatly concerned about the level of detail and timescale of the plans to provide ground-based air defence for the new warfighting division. Addressing this vulnerability must be given the highest priority. The MoD has promised to provide us with regular updates on this matter. *In its response to our Report, the department should set out the timetable for the decisions on replacement of both Rapier and the High Velocity Missile systems and by when these replacements will be delivered.*

Enhanced forward presence and deployment of the new warfighting division

34. In SDSR 2010, the Government took the decision that there was no longer "any operational requirement" for UK forces to be based in Germany and that the combination of financial costs, disruption to the lives of personnel and their families, and opportunity costs in terms of wider Army coherence, required a withdrawal from that country.⁷¹ As a result, the UK's Army would be almost completely UK-based for the first time in many years.⁷²

65 Human Security Centre ([ARM0006](#)), para 13.4

66 Q238

67 Q239

68 Q239

69 Qq239–243

70 Q240

71 HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, [Cm 7948](#), October 2010, p 28 and paras 2.D.12–2.D.13

72 HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, [Cm 7948](#), October 2010, p 28 and paras 2.D.12–2.D.13; see also British Army, [Transforming the British Army: an update](#), July 2013, p 2

35. SDSR 2015 emphasised the re-emergence of state-based threats, in particular from a Russia which has become “more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist, increasingly defining itself in opposition to the West”.⁷³ That security consideration led DefenceSynergia to question the wisdom of the withdrawal and suggested that it should be reversed, not least to facilitate the potential need for UK armoured units to be committed to NATO ARRC formations.⁷⁴ In a similar vein UKNDA believed the withdrawal was premature in the light of the US decision to re-base heavy armour in Germany to counter the threat from Russia.⁷⁵

36. General Carter told us that although the withdrawal would still go ahead, the UK would retain certain assets in Germany in order to provide “jumping-off points” for other exercises and other activity which might be necessary.⁷⁶ Although he acknowledged the concerns raised by the UK’s posture (including through NATO) in relation to the threat in eastern Europe,⁷⁷ General Carter argued that the capacity to operate with eastern European partners meant that a base in western Germany would not necessarily be more helpful than a UK base. He believed that operating and exercising “further east” was a better priority.⁷⁸

37. The Secretary of State highlighted the deployment of UK Forces (and those of NATO allies) to the eastern border of NATO as a better form of an enhanced forward presence.⁷⁹ As examples, he cited the 800 UK personnel deployed to Estonia—which was being mirrored by other countries deploying to Latvia, Lithuania and Poland—and the deployment of RAF Typhoon aircraft to Romania in May 2017 as part of policing NATO’s southern border. Those forward deployments, he argued, would act as an early “tripwire” as well as offering reassurance as a NATO deterrent to any potential aggression.⁸⁰

38. However, a more fundamental concern was the ability of the UK rapidly to deploy a division to a front-line NATO state, given Russia’s investment in area denial technology. The Secretary of State told us:

A key part of the preparation of both enhanced forward presence and the preparation of the very high readiness taskforce is to deal with these issues of border crossing—of movement across NATO borders internally. Huge progress has been made in the last two years in ensuring that forces can deploy more rapidly across NATO’s internal borders; that the various permissions that are needed, have now been sorted out. I am satisfied that that has improved enormously.⁸¹

39. Lieutenant General Poffley told us that the ability to move by land was being examined very carefully so that the necessary cross-border permissions were in place

73 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, paras 3.19–3.22

74 DefenceSynergia ([ARM0005](#))

75 United Kingdom National Defence Association, *UKNDA Commentary No. 13: Strategic Defence & Security Review 2015: One year on*, January 2017

76 Q22

77 Q23

78 Q23

79 Q233

80 Q233

81 Q245

and that “associated bureaucracies” were diminished.⁸² This would also ensure that the relevant logistics were in place to be able to facilitate deployment. However, he argued that for some parts of Europe it would be quicker to deploy by sea and therefore the investment the UK was making to “re-establish our ability to protect our home waters and our near-abroad waters” was important in countering “anti-area access denial”.⁸³

40. We welcome the Government’s commitment to deploy UK Armed Forces to NATO’s eastern and southern borders as part of NATO’s enhanced forward presence. We also welcome the MoD’s work to resolve the challenges of deploying across NATO’s internal borders. This is a matter that must be kept under constant review, particularly given the re-emergence of potential threats from peer adversaries. In particular, the prospect of retaining some Army basing on the continent should not be ruled out if Russian assertiveness to the east and north continues to intensify.

Training

41. The changes to the Army’s structure have required a new cycle of training—Formation Readiness Mechanism (FORM).⁸⁴ The intention is that formations and units will rotate through different levels of training with a graduated approach to readiness in order to optimise force preparation.⁸⁵ This will enable different units to share standing commitments and other tasks, and maintain institutional resilience through regular and varied training. The MoD explained that the new FORM cycle would deliver:

Greater productivity by doubling the number of brigades held at readiness, offering Defence choice in the force packages available for deployment, whilst maintaining the Army’s commitment to fixed tasks. It also supports wider Defence Engagement and capacity building by providing enduring training, assistance and mentoring to our partners.⁸⁶

42. The Army would continue to use the training estate in the UK, for small-scale training needs, while the UK’s overseas training estate—primarily in Canada, Kenya and Belize—would provide larger-scale training opportunities.⁸⁷ Overseas training also offers the opportunity to train in different climatic and environmental conditions. Following SDSR 2015, the Army is now also considering an increase in training in Oman where it intended to make “a significant contribution to the UK’s Gulf Strategy”.⁸⁸

43. SDSR 2015 acknowledged that the UK would operate on its own only on rare occasions and, therefore, training would be targeted to deliver an Army which is “interoperable by design”.⁸⁹ In 2016–17, the Army took part in 17 NATO Assurance Measure exercises across eleven European countries, including the deployment of the UK battlegroup to Poland, and 16 Air Assault Brigade alongside a French Brigade and the 82nd (US) Airborne Division to Poland and Germany.⁹⁰ The Army also held a number of exercises

82 Q245

83 Q245

84 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

85 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

86 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

87 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

88 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

89 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#)) and HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.39

90 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

with the United States in order to identify and close interoperability gaps between the two forces. The MoD explained that such events would enable the Army better to exploit the capabilities of allies as well as their scale.⁹¹

44. Sir Paul Newton told us that Army training needed to prepare the Army for the most probable types of operations it would need to undertake.⁹² In that respect, he believed that the Army's training estate was in need of modernisation⁹³ and that the priorities should be:

operating with allies, operating with air forces, urban and forests, and probably somewhere hot, because of the problems in the world.⁹⁴

Sir Paul highlighted Army training in north-west Europe and the decision to have a training hub in Oman as good examples of the MoD addressing these training needs, and noted that they better matched the potential risks set out in SDSR 2015.⁹⁵

45. Despite the MoD's commitment to training and the establishment of a new FORM, concerns continue to be expressed that training levels might be reduced as part of the MoD's savings programme. For example, there have been reports recently of a potential reduction in the level of training at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Canada.⁹⁶ In our Report, *Shifting the Goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge*, we noted that the MoD was unable to provide a breakdown of the costs associated with individual and collective training.⁹⁷ In its response the MoD stated that the large number and differing types of training activities made it difficult to provide these figures.⁹⁸ However the Department did recognise that an increased understanding of training costs would be beneficial, and therefore the Army and RAF were working on developing a better understanding of the costs of training.

46. We welcome the Army's intention to continue training overseas and the Army's reassessment of its training requirements in the light of the increased threat of peer adversary conflict as described in the SDSR. We expect the MoD to update us on the outcome of the Army's assessment of its training requirements.

47. We remain concerned about the MoD's lack of data on the costs and spending trends of training investment. As we identified in our previous report on defence expenditure, there is currently no mechanism by which such expenditure and projected future costs can be scrutinised. This is of greater concern given reports of possible reductions in training due to MoD cost pressures. Such reductions could potentially risk the Army's capabilities, particularly those of the new warfighting division. In its response to our Report, we ask the MoD to provide the projected levels of spending on collective training for the constituent parts of the division for each year until 2025. The response should also include the number of overseas and UK training events cancelled since SDSR 2010.

91 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#)) and Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

92 Q193

93 Q193

94 Q197

95 Q198

96 "[British Army cuts threaten crucial battlefield training](#)", The Times, 12 April 2017

97 Defence Committee, Second Report of Session 2015–16, [Shifting the Goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge](#), HC 494, para 27

98 Defence Committee, First Special Report of Session 2016–17, [Shifting the Goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2015–16](#), HC 465

Integrated Action

48. SDSR 2015 also highlighted the need to address modern information warfare,⁹⁹ and the Army identified “the impact of the contemporary information environment” as the most significant new dimension to warfare and operations.¹⁰⁰ The experiences of recent and current operations, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria and Ukraine demonstrated that warfare has entered the ‘Information Age’, with operations taking place in front of a worldwide audience.¹⁰¹ In response to these challenges the Army is evolving its core doctrine to deliver ‘Integrated Action’ which will require the Army to be “adept at orchestrating a wide range of non-kinetic actions and activities and incorporating them into new tactics”.¹⁰² During our inquiry, the MoD told us that the Army’s “Integrated Action” had now been incorporated into the updated Army Doctrine Publication, *Land Operations*, which was published on 31 March 2017.¹⁰³

49. To reflect these changes the Army has given greater focus to developing the capabilities of 77 Brigade and 1 (Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance) Brigade. In particular, the two Brigades have been tasked to:

Improve situational intelligence, counter adversaries’ hybrid warfare techniques, and better integrate non-lethal effects into operations, which when task organised with combat elements from the Division, will enable different and novel approaches to counter both conventional and unconventional threats.¹⁰⁴

50. General Carter told us that this would require commanders at all levels to analyse the results they are seeking to achieve and to then consider the broadest audience relevant to reaching the required outcome.¹⁰⁵ That audience would extend beyond the population in the UK and the area of deployment to include allies, opponents and other broader adversaries and actors on the ground. This, in essence, is the role assigned to 77 Brigade.¹⁰⁶

51. In June 2016, we visited 77 Brigade to see at first-hand the development of the Brigade’s capabilities. The Brigade is intended to provide the single integration hub to support all levels of command in the specialist planning and delivery of Information Activities and Outreach.¹⁰⁷ The MoD’s planning assumption is that 77 Brigade will reach full operating capability in December 2019.¹⁰⁸

52. The Chief of the General Staff saw the establishment of 77 Brigade as a key part of the evolution of the Army’s core doctrine but acknowledged that the Army still had some challenges to face:

I think we still have some distance to go. We will look very hard at how we combine intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance with information

99 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, paras 3.3, 3.25–3.31 and 4.38; see also Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

100 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

101 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

102 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

103 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

104 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

105 Q91

106 Q91

107 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#)); see also British Army website, [77 Brigade](#)

108 [PQ40346](#) (Armed Forces: Information Warfare)

warfare, cyber and information services more broadly. I suspect we will look hard at the structures of our Royal Signals. I think we will want to differentiate between infrastructure and networks, and the smart bit of data management and information services and all that goes with applications, to take us to a different level. I would not be surprised if we initiate an experiment to pull those capabilities together around 77 Brigade over the course of the next year or two.¹⁰⁹

53. In addition, the Chief of the General Staff pointed out that although language training was now a prescribed competence for command of a company or squadron, the Army did not have the linguists it needed to meet the challenges of the modern world.¹¹⁰ The Chief of the General staff conceded that the Army was playing ‘catch up’ in this area.

54. There is wide support for the concept of Integrated Action and the establishment of 77 Brigade. TechUK saw them as a part of the means of meeting the challenges of war in the information age,¹¹¹ whilst Sir Paul Newton saw the two as a natural consequence of the Army’s experience in Iraq and Afghanistan:

They come out of the notion of understanding the environment you are in, understanding the mosaic of conflict, understanding the people you are encountering—your adversaries, innocent bystanders or whatever—and then being able to influence those people and being able to talk to them, ideally in their own language.¹¹²

55. Sir Paul was also confident that the concept of 77 Brigade would be supported by the wider Army:

I think you would find that there are probably more applicants for the jobs in 77 Brigade than in many of the more conventional parts of the Army. So does it have buy-in? Yes it does. It now needs to be enshrined in the doctrine, because the doctrine is your body of knowledge and that is what is taught at the staff college, so it goes into the DNA.¹¹³

56. The Secretary of State pointed out that not only does integrated action apply to all land forces, including the Royal Marines and the RAF Regiment, it is also aligned with NATO’s comprehensive approach.¹¹⁴ The Army doctrine publication on land operations had also been reviewed by the RAF and Royal Navy warfare centres, and similar future publications would be specifically aimed at informing Service personnel in the other Services, and also civil servants who work alongside the land forces.¹¹⁵

57. We welcome the Army’s development of an Integrated Action doctrine, which should provide the capability to deliver an innovative response to both conventional and non-conventional threats. However we note with concern the Chief of the General Staff’s warning that the Army does not have a sufficient number of linguists even though this is a prescribed competence for a company or squadron commander. We

109 Q91

110 Q91

111 techUK ([ARM0010](#)), paras 2.1–2.8

112 Q171

113 Q171

114 Q236

115 Q236

expect the MoD to set out how it plans to address this matter and the timescale for doing so. We also welcome the establishment of 77 Brigade and the integrated nature of its tasks. The challenge for the MoD will be to ensure that it is fully integrated with the other Services, UK Government Departments and UK allies. We ask that the MoD keep us informed of progress in the development of 77 Brigade and other similar units within the Armed Forces as they progress towards becoming fully operational.

Regeneration and reconstitution

58. The number of regular soldiers in the UK regular Army is at its lowest level in history,¹¹⁶ which can be seen by the force levels set out in Appendix 2. This has led to concerns about the Army's ability to regenerate¹¹⁷ and reconstitute¹¹⁸ itself, particularly in the event of an unexpected emergency or a major conflict with another state. In oral evidence, the Chief of the General Staff told us that this was a matter which the Army took seriously, in particular in the context of the re-emergence of the potential for state versus state conflict.¹¹⁹

59. The Chief of the General Staff cited two mechanisms for the rapid growth of the Army: the Army Reserve (volunteers) and the Regular Reserve (ex-regular personnel who retain a liability to be prepared to be mobilised or recalled).¹²⁰ Major General Crackett, Director, Reserves, saw the change in the defence planning assumptions as enabling the Army to re-examine and refine the roles of the Reserve Army:

An important part of that role, as well as the force's driving requirement to sustain a division as it goes out of the door, will be around regeneration and reconstitution—in other words, thinking about how the division could be sustained after conflict or over a long period, or even if the force expanded at a later stage. This is very early days. We are just working through the early stages of how we assimilate these new equipment types and what the concepts of the operation will be, so we have barely started this work yet, but that would be the first means of regeneration and reconstitution.¹²¹

60. The Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR) identified advantages in the utilisation of the volunteer Army Reserve for regeneration and reconstitution. It saw them as “reasonably assured, available (albeit at longer readiness times), medically and physically fit, trained as soldiers, and with a basic trade skill”.¹²² In addition, it argued that the Reserves were a flexible resource which could be retrained to suit the need of the moment.¹²³

116 Q8

117 Army Strategy Branch definition: Regeneration is the timely activation, in full or part, of existing force structures and infrastructure, including the restoration of manning, equipment and stocks to designated levels (see Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, p 23).

118 Army Strategy Branch definition: Reconstitution is the expansion of force structures and infrastructure beyond existing levels, including the restoration of manning, equipment and stocks to designated levels (see Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, p 23).

119 Q7

120 Q8

121 Q9

122 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, pp 24–26

123 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, pp 24–26

61. Although the Regular Reserve should also be able to provide capacity for rapid growth of the Army, an historic concern has been the Army's inability to keep track of former personnel with a liability to be recalled. Major General Crackett acknowledged the need for a "sharper mechanism for training assurance and recall".¹²⁴ The Chief of the General Staff told us that this was of particular importance in some of the more "esoteric capabilities" such as attack helicopter pilots.¹²⁵ However, Air Vice-Marshal (retired) Paul Luker, from the UK Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team, pointed out to us that in times of national emergency, Regular Reserves had a "habit of coming forward and volunteering again".¹²⁶

62. Lieutenant General Poffley informed us that work on the Regular Reserve had to date (November 2016) classified more than 27,000 of those who had left in the previous five years and that the database was growing continually.¹²⁷ He added:

We are particularly looking at those who have niche skills that are pressure points inside the structure, ensuring that we now track them as they retire in a far more deliberate fashion than we did previously.¹²⁸

63. The Army is now undertaking further work on the use of the Regular Reserve with a focus on how it can be "best utilised and better targeted".¹²⁹ It had also conducted a skills survey which suggested that whilst skill fade was an issue "re-learning to regain currency can be rapid, especially if the skills were learned to a high standard of performance initially".¹³⁰ CHACR suggested that both skills fade and tracking could be addressed either by incentivising some form of annual training weekend or to persuade more Regular Reservists to become Volunteer Reserves.¹³¹

64. CHACR also suggested that consideration should be given to the greater use of sponsored reserves (civilians, employed by defence contractors, who are required to have a Reserve commitment as part of their employment).¹³² These Reservists are designed specifically to deliver particular capabilities to reconstitute or regenerate the force. The Army currently has three separate contractual arrangements for the provision of sponsored Reserves, two of which are in the recruitment phase.¹³³

65. The MoD is now providing us with six monthly updates on regeneration and reconstitution.¹³⁴ In its October 2016 update, the MoD stated that the Army had been directed to explore the optimal regeneration and reconstitution framework to deliver a second division.¹³⁵ At the same time, the Army also has two complementary workstrands which impact on Reserves:

124 Q9

125 Q8

126 Q130

127 Q279

128 Q279

129 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

130 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

131 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, pp 25–26

132 Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, Ares & Athena: [Warfighting at Scale: Regenerating and Reconstituting Mass](#), November 2016, p 25

133 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

134 Q10

135 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

- The development of more effective recall and training plans for the Regular Reserve, together with work to make the Regular Reserve more usable; and
- The Army Reserve Development Programme: this is currently on track to grow the Army Reserve to a trained strength of 30,000 by 1 April 2019, leading to 32,000 by 2025.¹³⁶

66. We are concerned about the lack of detail on how the MoD could regenerate a warfighting division or reconstitute a greater force in the face of significant strategic challenges. *In its response to our Report, we ask the MoD to confirm when the work to improve the mechanism for tracking, recalling and retraining the Regular Reserve will be completed. We also ask that the MoD set out the timetable for the completion of the work exploring the optimal regeneration and reconstitution framework necessary to deliver a capable second division. We are also concerned that there is no systematic strategy linking these two pieces of work. We therefore recommend that the MoD includes in its promised six-monthly updates on regeneration and reconstitution details on how the Army is fulfilling both ambitions.*

4 Defence engagement and national resilience

Introduction

67. In this section we consider the other two core tasks of the Army: overseas defence engagement,¹³⁷ and civil engagement and homeland/national resilience.¹³⁸

68. SDSR 2015 set out the Government's ambition to make broader use of the Army better to support missions other than warfighting.¹³⁹ Changes envisaged under SDSR 2015 included:

- increasing support to UK resilience and overseas training tasks through the use of the existing brigades to support engagement and resilience activity. Within these brigades reconfigured infantry battalions will be formed to provide an increased contribution to countering terrorism and building stability overseas. They will conduct Defence Engagement and capacity building, providing training assistance, advice and mentoring to UK partners; and
- developing a group of culturally-aware regional specialists to focus on geographical areas in which the UK has the greatest interest, in order to build long-term relationships and understanding.¹⁴⁰

Defence engagement

69. Under the *Army 2020* plan, delivery of Defence Engagement was the responsibility of 1st (UK) Division, with the Adaptable Force Brigades and some Force Troops Command Brigades assigned responsibility for specific world regions. This approach enabled brigades to develop an understanding of the geography, culture and language of their specified region.¹⁴¹ The MoD explained that in 2016 the Army participated in over 300 overseas tasks,¹⁴² including 173 overseas training exercises, 98 short-term training teams and 38 individual training activities. This represented a 15% increase on activity in 2015.¹⁴³

70. SDSR 2015, for the first time, made defence engagement a funded core task for the MoD, meaning that the Armed Forces would have to prioritise this alongside other core tasks.¹⁴⁴ On 17 February 2017, the FCO and the MoD published an updated defence engagement strategy, *UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy*.¹⁴⁵ The strategy

137 Overseas defence engagement is the use of defence assets and activities short of combat operations building to achieve influence.

138 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#)); the core tasks of the Army under *Army 2020* are: contingent capability for deterrence and defence; overseas engagement and capacity building; and civil engagement and homeland resilience; (see also British Army, [Modernising to face an unpredictable future: Transforming the British Army](#), July 2012, p 2).

139 Ministry of Defence, [SDSR 2015 Fact Sheets](#), January 2016, p 12

140 Ministry of Defence, [SDSR 2015 Fact Sheets](#), January 2016, p 4

141 British Army, [Transforming the British Army: an update](#), July 2013, p 21

142 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

143 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

144 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 5.14

145 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), February 2017

envisaged the UK building strategic relationships with key countries and acting as a leader of international organisations such as the UN and NATO. In a statement on the announcement of the strategy, the Defence and Foreign Secretaries said:

Defence engagement projects influence, promotes our prosperity and helps to protect our people. It enables the UK to respond to threats and crises when they emerge, and strengthens our position as the world's leading soft power. In short, it is vital to UK interests.¹⁴⁶

71. In support of its commitment to defence engagement, the Government also announced:

- the establishment of three new regional British Defence Staffs for defence engagement in the Gulf, Asia Pacific and West Africa;
- new Defence Sections in Albania and Finland, and new Attaché posts in Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia (for the South Caucasus), Qatar, Japan, Pakistan and Afghanistan;
- a new Defence Section for the Sahel, covering Senegal, The Gambia, Mali and Niger;
- increased military exercises with NATO partners and allies, including in Ukraine, Poland and Estonia;
- leading development of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) with Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway; and
- exercising and training with partners in the Five Power Defence Arrangements such as Exercise Eastern Venture.¹⁴⁷

72. Central MoD funding for defence engagement is currently around £80 million and is planned to rise over the next four years.¹⁴⁸ In addition, defence programmes supporting broader Government strategies are funded from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF),¹⁴⁹ at a level of around £56 million. According to the MoD and FCO, the resources committed to defence engagement are now “greater than ever before”, and are underpinned by a “whole of Government” approach.¹⁵⁰ However the strategy acknowledged that in the sphere of defence engagement, demand would invariably exceed supply.

73. In evidence, the Chief of the General Staff said that while defence engagement was an important task for the Army,¹⁵¹ it presented the Army with a number of challenges:

146 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), February 2017, p 1

147 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence press release, [UK's global role reinforced in new International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), 17 February 2017

148 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), February 2017, p 18

149 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), February 2017, p 18

150 Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, [UK's International Defence Engagement Strategy](#), February 2017, p 18

151 Q3

Our conventional infantry battalions, who have been at the forefront of doing this, have had to send many of their leaders away to do what is fundamentally a task, when you come to train indigenous forces, that is very much heavy on leaders and less on soldiers. Actually, what we have discovered is that we want bespoke structures that are longer on leaders, longer on cultural expertise and longer on the ability to be able to train and perhaps to take greater risk in terms of that task.¹⁵²

74. As part of meeting these challenges SDSR 2015 announced the creation of specialised infantry battalions. These will be relatively small, consisting of 300 personnel,¹⁵³ and will come with cultural and linguistic skills and expertise to enable them to provide a variety of outputs. General Carter explained that these specialisms would allow a smaller force to have a greater impact:

I want them, for example, to be able to go into the heart of Nigeria and be able to train a Nigerian division to go into the fight against Boko Haram. I want them to be able to train the Kurds to go and fight against Daesh in Iraq. I want them to be able to train the Ukrainian armed forces to be able to provide an effective deterrent to Russia. I want them to do tasks that are at the higher end of risk, and to be able to really do something that is quite specialised. I won't be able to create that many. I don't want them any larger than they actually are.¹⁵⁴

The first two new Specialised Infantry battalions would be established in 2017, with two further Specialised Infantry battalions anticipated.¹⁵⁵

75. Sir Paul Newton believed that this approach would link well with the Army's warfighting capability. He argued that, if an Army Division was deployed into a theatre of operations, the special infantry battalion based there would have already established a network of partnerships, which would inform the understanding and awareness of that environment. In addition, the work of 77 Brigade, which we mention earlier in this report, would feed into that understanding.¹⁵⁶

76. Other witnesses, while supportive of defence engagement, highlighted several concerns. Jie Sheng Li, an independent researcher on international development and human security, supported the policy of the regional alignment of brigades, but highlighted the fact that there remained significant gaps in the Army's geographical footprint.¹⁵⁷ He argued that defence engagement and diplomacy should have a wider focus than countries where threats currently existed, so that units were trained to meet unexpected future threats and different environments.¹⁵⁸

77. Professor Timothy Edmunds, Professor of International Security at the University of Bristol, also cautioned that experience of previous defence engagement operations demonstrated that lessons had to be "continuously relearned" and that a key challenge

152 Q3

153 Qq76-77

154 Q77

155 [HCWS367](#)

156 Q180

157 Jie Sheng Li ([ARM0001](#))

158 Jie Sheng Li ([ARM0001](#))

would be sustaining activities once the immediate project had finished.¹⁵⁹ He believed that for UK defence engagement to be successful a “sharper focus” on engaging local ownership was necessary.¹⁶⁰

78. We welcome the establishment of the new specialised infantry battalions to deliver the MoD’s programme for defence engagement and the decision to fund it as a core Defence task. Given the positive influence these activities can have on conflict prevention and stability, it is essential that these tasks are funded sufficiently. However, this should not be at the expense of the Army’s, or the other Services’, warfighting capabilities. In its response to our Report, the MoD should commit to set out, on an annual basis, expenditure on defence engagement tasks (including associated training costs), together with expenditure on collective and individual training for warfighting operations to enable comparison.

National resilience

79. SDSR 2015 also highlighted the support provided by the Armed Forces to UK civil authorities:

The Armed Forces support civil authorities when needed in times of emergency. This ranges from providing specialist teams after aircraft crashes, to ensuring continuity of essential services during industrial action. We have helped local responders understand the support that the Armed Forces can provide and how to access it quickly. We have integrated military experts and planners more closely into local planning and emergency response, and conducted more preparatory exercises at local and regional levels.¹⁶¹

80. In 2016, the Army had participated in excess of 105 national resilience tasks, including 56 tasks in support of civilian agencies (Police/Border Force) and had provided the Defence real estate to civil agencies for training or operations on 40 occasions.¹⁶² In addition it held around 5,000 soldiers at readiness to respond to a terrorist attack in the UK.¹⁶³ According to the MoD, this level of support reflected a doubling of the requests placed upon the Army and other Services in comparison with 2013.¹⁶⁴

81. In support of the Army’s homeland security tasks, SDSR 2015 committed to place military planners in key Government departments to provide the military with a wider and more formal role in supporting national resilience contingency planning.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, the National Risk Register and associated contingency plans would be regularly reviewed to identify areas where the Armed Forces could contribute more. The Secretary of State highlighted this work as a key contribution to improving national resilience:

159 Q179

160 Q179

161 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.148

162 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

163 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

164 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

165 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.149

You will see that we are optimising our support to the civil authorities in this country to strengthen our resilience, and we maintain through Operation Temperer a trained and ready force of around 10,000 personnel that can respond very rapidly to a national emergency such as a terrorist attack.¹⁶⁶

The Chief of the General Staff subsequently confirmed that the 10,000 military personnel available on standby were in addition to the personnel that would form the planned warfighting division.¹⁶⁷

82. The Chief of the General Staff also told us that the requirement for regional commanders to align themselves with the emergency services and with the civil administrative systems had ensured that relations between commanders and civil powers had been developed and tested, before they needed to be used.¹⁶⁸ This had been reflected in the Army's readiness plans, so that soldiers and units had the ability to respond, at short notice, to a terrorist threat or other incident.¹⁶⁹

83. We support the MoD's decision to designate national resilience as a core defence task. However, we seek assurances from the MoD that this task will in no way undermine the primary function of the Army—to succeed in warfare given the manifest constraints on Defence expenditure. We recommend that the MoD provides us with an annual breakdown of expenditure on national resilience tasks (including associated training costs) together with expenditure on collective and individual training for warfighting operations to enable comparison.

166 Q235

167 Q41

168 Q90

169 Q88

5 Army personnel

Background

84. The Coalition Government, in its 2010 SDSR, envisaged a Regular Army of 95,000.¹⁷⁰ However, the *Army 2020* plan, published in 2012, reduced this figure to 82,000 Regulars supported by around 30,000 Reserves, with a training margin of 8,000.¹⁷¹ The Army was expected to reach the Regular strength target by 2015 and the Army Reserve target by 2018.¹⁷²

85. Responding to the reduction, our predecessor Committee recommended that the MoD develop a concept of a “critical mass” for the Armed Forces in order to establish a clear, measurable statement of the minimum threshold of operational effectiveness to enable effective verification and monitoring by Parliament.¹⁷³ This concept was important given the acknowledgement of the then Secretary of State for Defence that the *Army 2020* plan had been designed to fit a financial envelope.¹⁷⁴ He told our predecessor Committee:

We have available to us a fixed envelope of resources, and making the decision to proceed with the draw-down of Regular force numbers to the target of about 82,000 and to build the reserve over a period of five years allows us to take the dividend from the reduced size of the Regular force and invest in the recruitment, training and equipment provision of the Reserve forces.¹⁷⁵

86. Following SDSR 2015, General Sir Nicholas Carter, Chief of the General Staff, went some way toward this when he declared that the credibility of the Army would be based on its capacity to field a warfighting division.¹⁷⁶ He explained that SDSR 2015 had identified a figure of 50,000 to deliver an expeditionary force and that:

The 80,000-odd [Regulars] that we have at the moment, give or take 3,000 or 4,000 here or there, and the Reserve we have, provide us with the essential capacity to be able to deliver a division like that.¹⁷⁷

He argued that the MoD had “carefully calculated” the capacity of the Army to deliver a warfighting division although he conceded that the margins were “quite tough”.¹⁷⁸

170 HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, Cm 7948, October 2010, para 2.D.6

171 The 8,000 would be additional personnel in training to sustain the overall number of 30,000 trained Reservists; HC Deb, 19 January 2012, col 939W.

172 The MoD expects to reach its target for 30,000 trained Reservists by 2018 (see British Army, *Modernising to face an unpredictable future: Transforming the British Army*, July 2012, p 9). The reduction in Regular Army personnel to 82,000 was expected to be completed by mid-2015 with the restructuring of the Regular component by 2016 (see Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, *Future Army 2020*, HC 576, Q 67, Q 125 and Q 271).

173 Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, *Future Army 2020*, HC 576, paras 35–42

174 Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, *Future Army 2020*, HC 576, paras 27–32

175 Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2013–14, *Future Army 2020*, HC 576, Q270

176 Q39

177 Q39

178 Q39

87. General Carter also emphasised that any consideration of critical mass should focus on the “target end strength of 120,000 personnel” rather than distinguish between Regular and Reserve personnel.¹⁷⁹ He told us:

If you take the whole number that I have described and you bring readiness criteria into it—how quickly you would expect us to field this thing—the plain fact is that that provides you with the ability to do a one-off divisional intervention, probably in a multinational context, and then it probably provides you with the opportunity to reorganise and to keep something behind thereafter while also watching your back in the UK, but there is not much margin for error thereafter.¹⁸⁰

88. Although the warfighting division would be able to undertake a one-off intervention, General Carter conceded that the capacity did not exist to replace the full division following its deployment although it might be possible to find a replacement divisional headquarters at readiness and to deploy a brigade on an enduring basis.¹⁸¹

89. We note the MoD’s view that the critical mass required by the Army to deliver a warfighting division will comprise the overall combined strength of trained Regulars and Reservists. This makes it critically important that the full strength of trained Regulars and Reservists is achieved. If it is not, the credibility of the warfighting division will be undermined. We also note the Chief of the General Staff’s acknowledgement that, at present, the capacity does not exist to replace the full division following its deployment on a one-off intervention. We recommend that the MoD and the Army undertake work to establish the critical mass required for the Army to be able to deploy the warfighting division on a one-off deployment and to be able to replace it with a capable second division.

Trained personnel

90. The trained strength of the Army was formerly defined as the number of Service personnel who had completed their Phase 2 training; the ‘Special to Arms’ training which is specific to a particular type of unit. In June 2016, the MoD changed the definition of trained strength to include Regulars and Reservists who had passed Phase 1 training: entry training to provide basic military skills.¹⁸² This change provided an increase in the Army’s available force size; however, it was limited to responses to a crisis within the UK.

91. In November 2016, following a public consultation (which received no external responses) the Secretary of State announced that the term “Trained Strength” would now include all personnel trained to undertake the core functions of the Army (Phase 1 trained) and that this would be reflected in the monthly Service personnel statistical publication from 1 October 2016.¹⁸³ Full-Time Trained personnel who had also passed Phase 2 training

179 Q44

180 Q44

181 Q45

182 [HCWS49](#)

183 [HCWS248](#)

would now be classified as ‘Trade Trained’.¹⁸⁴ This would enable continued reporting on “Trade Trained” personnel which would allow consistent comparisons with the previous statistical time series.

92. There is logic in the MoD’s decision to include, in numbers of Trained Strength, Army personnel who have completed Phase 1 Training so that they can be deployed on national resilience tasks. However, we seek assurances from the MoD that the target strengths for Regulars and Reservists set out in the Army 2020 plan—which were based on personnel who had completed Phase 2 training—remain unchanged.

Army strength and recruitment

Regular Army

93. The target figure of 82,000 for the Regular Army was reconfirmed in SDSR 2015, together with a commitment that the Regular Army would not be reduced below that level.¹⁸⁵ However, although over 8,100 new recruits joined in 2015–16,¹⁸⁶ the MoD confirmed that this target had not been reached.¹⁸⁷ Statistics published by Defence Statistics on 9 March 2017 gave the Full-Time Trade Trained Strength of the Regular Army as 78,620.¹⁸⁸

94. Several reasons were given for the current shortfall in Regular Army personnel. The MoD cited a “highly competitive” recruitment market as a result of falling unemployment and rising earnings;¹⁸⁹ the Army highlighted a “steady decline” in applications from traditional recruiting areas alongside an increasing BAME population which historically has not been attracted to a career in the Armed Services.¹⁹⁰ Other factors cited were the Raised Participation in Education Agenda and rising levels of obesity.¹⁹¹ Dr Warren Chin agreed that the MoD should cast its net wider,¹⁹² and Sir Paul Newton believed that the MoD would benefit from a greater focus on women and BAME recruits.¹⁹³ Sir Paul also highlighted an end to combat operations as another contributory factor, as those operations had been an attraction for some recruits.¹⁹⁴

95. In summer 2015, the MoD set itself targets to increase the diversity of both Regular and Reserve personnel: to increase female personnel to 15% of total intake by 2020 and to increase BAME personnel to a minimum of 10% of total intake by 2020 with progress towards 20%. The current position for the Army is set out in the tables below:

184 Ministry of Defence, *Consultation outcome: MoD personnel statistics: change to Army trained strength definition*, November 2016

185 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, Cm 9161, November 2015, paras 4.33 and 4.51

186 The MoD advised the Committee that the recruiting year covers the same period as the financial year.

187 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

188 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 February 2017*, March 2017, p 6

189 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

190 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

191 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

192 Q200

193 Q201

194 Q201

Table 1: Army strength by gender as at 1 April 2016

	Strength	Percentage
Regular (Trained Strength)		
Total Female	7,660	9%
Total Male	77,380	91%
Reserve (Total Strength)		
Total Female	3,710	12.9%
Total Male	24,970	87.1%

Source: Ministry of Defence (figures are taken from Defence Statistics (Tri) Biannual Diversity Report)¹⁹⁵

Table 2: Army strength by ethnicity as at 1 April 2016¹⁹⁶

	Strength	Percentage (of those known)
Total Army Strength Regular		
BAME:	8,660	10.2%
<i>of which UK BAME</i>	3,650	4.3%
<i>of which non-UK BAME</i>	5,010	5.9%
White	76,190	89.8%
Unknown	190	—
Total Army Strength Reserve		
BAME	1,600	5.6%
White	26,880	94.4%
Unknown	200	—

Source: Ministry of Defence (figures are taken from Defence Statistics (Tri) Biannual Diversity Report)¹⁹⁷

96. When he came before us, the Chief of the General Staff acknowledged the need to improve the Army's recruitment performance, in particular, to target a wider recruiting base.¹⁹⁸ However, the MoD remained confident the Army had the manpower it currently needed to meet all the operational demands placed on it and that it would achieve the target of 82,000 Regulars by April 2020.¹⁹⁹

97. The Armed Forces monthly personnel statistics, published on 9 February 2017, did offer some encouragement with a significant increase in the number of applications to join the Regular Army. Compared to the previous year, 2016 had seen an overall increase of 23,840 applications to join the Regular Army.²⁰⁰ However, these figures relate only to the number of applications received and not the number of applicants. Therefore the headline figures could mask the fact that some candidates may submit several applications

195 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

196 Explanatory note by the Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#)): The total Regular BAME figure is comprised of both UK Nationals and non-UK Nationals (including Gurkha transfers, the BAME element of the Commonwealth who do not have Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Commonwealth who already have ILR, and non-White personnel). While there are non-UK BAME in the Army Reserve, they require a minimum of 5 years' residency to be eligible to join so are not counted separately here.

197 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

198 Q46

199 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

200 Ministry of Defence, [UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 January 2017](#), February 2017, pp 11–12

and others may decide against a career in the Army after submitting an application.²⁰¹ Therefore, intake figures are not comparable to the application figures for the equivalent period.²⁰² Furthermore, it is worth noting that the outflow of personnel from the Regular Army in each year since 2010 has exceeded intake, and that compared to the 12 months to 31 January 2016, intake to the Army had decreased by 6.1%.²⁰³

98. **The target establishment of the trained Regular Army was for 82,000 trained soldiers by 2015. However, despite the fact that this target was lowered from 95,000 in 2012, the strength of the Army remains below 80,000. Although the MoD asserts that the current level of personnel is sufficient for the Army to meet current operational demands, we do not believe this figure is adequate to counter a sudden unexpected threat. The MoD has to address this shortfall. An Army which falls below the already historic low target of 82,000 makes itself dangerously vulnerable to external aggression.**

99. *We welcome the MoD's acknowledgement that its traditional recruiting grounds are no longer sufficient for the Army's needs and that it must access a wider pool of talent. In its response to our Report, the MoD should set out the progress it is making to achieve its targets for women and Black and Minority Ethnic recruits.*

Reserves

100. One of the most controversial aspects of *Army 2020* was the proposed growth of the Army Reserve to 30,000 trained personnel,²⁰⁴ with a requirement for 8,000 to be in training at any one time. The deadline set for delivery of this new Reserve was the end of the 2018–19 financial year.²⁰⁵ Following the MoD's decision to redefine "Trained Strength" for the Army, the Secretary of State agreed a revised growth profile for the Army Reserve.²⁰⁶ The original and revised Army Reserve growth figures for future financial years can be found in the table below:

Table 3: Planned Army Reserve Growth Profile

	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	31 March 2019
Original Target (phase 1 and phase 2 trained)	22,900	26,100	30,100
Revised Target (phase 1 trained)	26,700	28,600	30,100

Source: Ministry of Defence

101. In December 2013, the MoD also published target recruitment figures, for each financial year, for the volunteer Reserve element of each Service.²⁰⁷ These targets were

201 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 January 2017*, February 2017, p 11

202 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 January 2017*, February 2017, p 11

203 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 February 2017*, March 2017, p 7

204 Reservists who had completed their Phase 1 and Phase 2 training; see Ministry of Defence, *Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued*, Cm 8655 July 2013, p 11, footnote 5.

205 HC Deb, 19 January 2012, [col 939W](#)

206 [HCWS248](#)

207 HC Deb, 19 December 2013, [col 124WS](#); Paper deposited in the House of Commons Library by the Ministry of Defence Future Reserves 2020, 19 December 2013 (Ref: DEP2013–2063), available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/>

further broken down between trained entrants (who would immediately count against the trained strength) and new recruits.²⁰⁸ The former were predominately former Regular Service personnel. The targets for the Army Reserve are shown in the table below:

Table 4: Recruitment Targets for the Army Reserve

Target	FY 14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Trained entrants	1,300	1,270	1,270	940	910
New recruits	3,600	6,000	8,000	8,000	7,000
Total	4,900	7,270	9,270	8,940	7,910

Source: Ministry of Defence

102. Following the decision to change the definition of “trained strength”, the MoD discontinued publication of data on the progress against these targets, as external reporting of the growth of the Reserves would be based on strength profiles only.²⁰⁹ As at 1 February 2017, the Army Reserve Total Strength stood at 29,770 and the trained (phase 1) strength was 26,530 (against a target of 26,700 to be achieved by 31 March 2017).²¹⁰

103. The MoD exceeded its target for the recruitment of Reservists in 2015–16. However, while the UK Future Reserves External Scrutiny Team (EST) acknowledged this improvement, it was not confident that the final target of 30,000 trained Army Reservists would be achieved by March 2019.²¹¹ Air Vice-Marshal (retired) Paul Luker, Clerk to the EST, anticipated that it would take one or two more years beyond March 2019 to achieve the target.²¹²

104. The Secretary of State emphasised that the target was important and that progress had already been made towards it.²¹³ He also believed that the EST had been too pessimistic and not taken full account of some of the improvements already taking place, for example, the reduction from 240 days to 120 days in the average time to join the Reserves.²¹⁴ In written evidence, the MoD told us that even if the target were missed, it would not have a significant impact on capability.²¹⁵ However, it acknowledged that not reaching the target to time would “reduce the capacity of the Reserve to provide regeneration and reconstitution” and would also impact on the reputation of the Army.²¹⁶ Commenting on the potential reputational damage, the Secretary of State contended that this was currently hypothetical as it had not yet happened. However, he acknowledged that Ministers would be accountable for the target.²¹⁷

208 HC Deb, 19 December 2013, [col 124WS](#); Paper deposited in the House of Commons Library by the Ministry of Defence Future Reserves 2020, 19 December 2013 (Ref: DEP2013–2063), available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/business-papers/commons/deposited-papers/>

209 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 October 2016*, November 2016, p 3

210 Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Statistics: 1 February 2017*, March 2017, p 9

211 Council of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, *The United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team Annual Report 2016*, paras 1 and 4

212 Q127

213 Qq259–264

214 Qq 259 and 261

215 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

216 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

217 Qq268–269

105. We are not convinced by the MoD's assertion that missing its manpower targets for the Army Reserve "would not impact significantly on capability", particularly given the Chief of the General Staff's evidence that the critical mass to deliver a warfighting division will comprise the total combined strength of Regulars and Reserves. A failure to recruit the necessary numbers of Reservists is not so much a threat to the Army's reputation but a threat to the credibility and competence of the MoD's approach to delivering a revitalised Reserve. *The MoD must conduct a review of its recruitment policy to identify the blockages that exist in the system which are hindering the recruitment of sufficient Reservists.*

Recruitment Partnership

106. In March 2012, a ten-year recruitment partnership contract was signed with Capita to deliver recruitment services for the Army. Air Vice-Marshal (retired) Paul Luker, clerk to the EST, argued that although there had been an uplift in recruits coming through the system, there remained a number of structural faults within the initial recruiting process, and the time it took for a Reserve candidate to go through the medical process was too long.²¹⁸ Whereas previously the EST had given Capita and the Army the benefit of the doubt over the partnership; it now questioned whether the contract was fit for purpose. In particular, the EST argued that Reserve units were spending too much time engaged in administrative matters and were undertaking tasks which were the responsibility of the recruitment partnership. AVM Luker, added:

I am not saying for a moment that they should not nurture [new recruits], but I don't think they should be taking on so much of the role, which they are necessarily having to do at the moment. The whole of the process needs a firm look. I also think that we need to look very carefully at how we manage medicals and whether in all cases the criteria for joining remain valid, and we definitely need to look at the referrals and deferrals process.²¹⁹

107. Despite being signed in 2012, the Recruitment Partnership has yet to reach full operational capability. According to the MoD, the declaration of full operating capability was dependent on the implementation of a Capita-provided 'Information & Communication Technology solution'.²²⁰ The 'go-live' date was currently under consideration by Defence Ministers and the Treasury.²²¹ The interim ICT systems currently being used were performing adequately but the implementation of the new ICT solution has been subject to a series of delays.²²² In response to a Parliamentary Question on 31 October 2016, Rt Hon Mike Penning MP, Minister for the Armed Forces, informed the House that a revised 'go-live' date had been set for November 2017, although Capita was working to deliver an earlier date of Spring 2017.²²³

108. **It is unacceptable that the Recruitment Partnership for the recruitment of both Regulars and Reserves, which was signed in 2012, is still not fully operational and that evidence presented to us pointed to the Recruitment Partnership contract being not**

218 Q107

219 Q108

220 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

221 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

222 Q281

223 [PQ49994](#)

fit for purpose. In its response to our Report, the MoD must set out the problems which need to be addressed and the timetable for the delivery of the new ICT systems and for fully-operational status to be achieved. We expect urgent action from the MoD and Capita to resolve the outstanding issues.

Other recruitment and retention initiatives

Whole Force Concept

109. As well as the recruitment challenges faced by the Army, it also needs to ensure the retention and development of its personnel to ensure efficient delivery of the Army's element of *Joint Force 2025*. Much of this work will be delivered through the 'Whole Force Concept'. This concept envisages Defence being supported by the most sustainable, effective, integrated and affordable balance of Regular military personnel, Reservists, MoD civilians and contractors.²²⁴

110. The MoD stated, that over the past 5 years, the Army has sought vigorously to exploit current legislation and policy, to enable it to begin to operate as an integrated force.²²⁵ Initiatives announced under SDSR 2015 provide further legislation and policy opportunities to enable the Army to adopt modernised ways of working and conditions of service.²²⁶ A key challenge, however, will be how the Army engages with the Civil Service, as it reduces in size and evolves under the SDSR, to ensure that the Army's new structures are a complementary part of the Whole Force Concept.²²⁷

Maximising Talent Initiative

111. The Maximising Talent Initiative is intended "to deliver a sustainable manned and motivated whole force, with the best talent and right skills at an affordable cost which is representative of UK society by 2025".²²⁸ The initiative has six elements: skills, culture, career structure, contractual framework, manning numbers and human potential. This work will be underpinned by the development of the Army as an inclusive employer through the roll-out of the Army Leadership Code and an Inclusivity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

112. Future changes to terms and conditions outlined in SDSR 2015 include:

- the Flexible Engagements System, which will enable Regular and Reserve personnel to vary their commitment in terms of time and liability for deployment;
- the Future Accommodation Model, which will broaden choice for soldiers and officers by enabling them to rent accommodation and to assist in home ownership, whilst reducing capital investment in Service accommodation;
- the New Offer for New Joiners, which will enable the recruitment and retention of future soldiers and officers in sufficient numbers and with the correct skills to support the Army proposition in an affordable manner; and

224 Ministry of Defence, *Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued*, Cm 8655, July 2013, p 86 (Glossary)

225 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

226 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

227 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

228 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

- the Enterprise Approach which is working with industry to explore how to make the most of scarce skills across Defence.²²⁹

113. The Chief of the General Staff emphasised that if the Army were to maximise talent, it needed to re-examine career structures which had been primarily designed for men, so that they could be adapted for all personnel.²³⁰ Flexible working was being introduced to give Service personnel the opportunity to change the pace of their careers—for example to meet family obligations—and then return at a faster pace at a later date. In addition, the traditional Army career path was being modified to promote a career structure which valued specialisms but did not necessarily require those personnel to be commissioned.²³¹

114. There is general support for these innovations, but cautionary notes have been sounded in respect of flexible engagement. Varying levels of commitment will need to be clearly understood and valued by defence stakeholders.²³² The Regular Army rightly has a strong service ethic where continuous availability is seen as part of the identity of being a soldier. Professor Vince Connelly, of Oxford Brookes University, warned that this ethos must be taken into account as the Army changes its employment options:

The behavioural norms associated with commitment are conflated with the notion of affective commitment—failure to demonstrate the former is evidence of failure of the latter. This is why a large proportion of Regular personnel when asked their opinions “questioned whether individuals in the Reserves ‘took it seriously’” and this was also demonstrated in recent research for the Army where Regulars and Reserves each had quite different views of professionalism and thus what commitment meant to them and how they judged it.²³³

New Employment Model

115. The New Employment Model (NEM) is a business change programme which emerged from the 2010 SDSR.²³⁴ The NEM covers four broad areas of policy: Pay and Allowances; Accommodation; Training and Education; and Career Structures and Career Management. Some changes have already been introduced, for example, loan schemes to assist Service personnel with financial help to buy or rent accommodation and a new pay model. An Officers’ Talent Management scheme was also established in Autumn 2016, focusing on improving operational capability by ensuring that the Services have the tools to identify, develop and assign officers in a more structured and objective way. Although the NEM programme is expected to close in 2018, certain strands will continue to transition up to 2020 and beyond.²³⁵

116. There is some concern that the NEM work and the Flexible Engagement initiative are seen as “cost cutting” measures.²³⁶ This has been cited as one of the key concerns amongst Service personnel. Professor Connelly told us:

229 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

230 Q48

231 Q48

232 Professor Vince Connelly ([ARM0009](#))

233 Professor Vince Connelly ([ARM0009](#))

234 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

235 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

236 Professor Vince Connelly ([ARM0009](#))

The difficulty of course is that these proposals do indeed have an affordability agenda but they also have much more behind them in terms of encouraging and retaining the diverse workforce the Army requires for the future. The potential benefits of a diverse workforce with varied forms of commitment have yet to be accepted by many in the Regular Army and in wider society.²³⁷

Army culture

117. A particular ambition of the Chief of the General Staff is to challenge and change certain parts of Army culture and to demonstrate that the Army is a caring employer.²³⁸ His aim is to instil an understanding in the Army that its culture is changing and that, as it does so, it will become a more inclusive organisation. This change, he asserted must be led from the senior levels of the Army.²³⁹

118. In September 2016, the CGS gathered together all commanding officers and their regimental sergeant-majors to launch a new Army Leadership Code, which set out the expectation that leaders had to live up to the values and standards which the Army espoused and that its leaders should be accountable for this.²⁴⁰ The CGS also wanted the Army to be transparent about the challenges it faces and how it addresses them. As examples, he highlighted what he described as an overly sexualised culture and problems involving alcohol, bullying and harassment.²⁴¹

119. We support the Chief of the General Staff's commitment to changing the culture of the Army through initiatives on employment, talent management and leadership. Successful implementation of these initiatives could provide a structure within which all soldiers can achieve their full potential. However, we recognise that this must not be to the detriment of the Army's ability to undertake its core role of warfighting. We note the concerns expressed about cultural resistance within the Army to this agenda, particularly in respect of Flexible Engagement. *In response to our Report, we should like to receive further details on how the Army's various initiatives will dovetail, and how the MoD will ensure that resistance to a changing culture is overcome.*

Women in ground close combat roles

120. In July 2016, the Government announced that women would be allowed to serve in "ground close combat" roles.²⁴² Roles in the Royal Armoured Corps were opened up to women in November 2016, while those in Infantry units will become available in 2018.²⁴³ To achieve a successful roll-out, measures are being implemented for these two phases:

- by November 2016, the Army will have delivered a revised Physical Training policy, initiating a series of steps to adjust training regimes (but not standards) in order to drive down the incidence of musculoskeletal injuries across the Corps; and

237 Professor Vince Connelly ([ARM0009](#))

238 Q46

239 Q52

240 Q52

241 Qq52–58

242 Prime Minister and Ministry of Defence press release, 8 July 2016, [Ban on women in ground close combat roles lifted](#)

243 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

- in order to meet the 2018 target for the Infantry, the Army is developing, through extensive scientific research, an up-to-date set of Physical Employment Standards, in order to ensure it generates the right physical capabilities in its soldiers for the military tasks it requires them to perform.²⁴⁴

121. Sir Paul Newton was uncertain whether there would be a vast number of women volunteering for these roles, but he did not consider it to be a profound change which would undermine the Army's warfighting ethos.²⁴⁵ He thought it important to make equipment as light as possible for all soldiers, and stressed that maintaining the fitness and training standards was the important factor.

122. We support the decision to allow women to undertake ground close combat roles, provided that standards of fighting effectiveness can be maintained. As part of the roll out of this initiative, the Army is revising its training policies and undertaking a review of the physical demands placed on all Army personnel. We believe that these changes can be delivered without diminishing the fighting capability of the Army and other Services. *However, we wish to receive regular updates on the introduction of women in ground close combat roles. These updates should include the outcomes of the scientific research being undertaken into the physical demands placed on all Army personnel.*

244 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))

245 Q210

6 Army equipment

Introduction

123. In addition to setting out the mission for the Army, SDSR 2015 contained details on an extensive equipment programme for it. In this section we will consider the Army's major projects and the risks attached to their delivery.

Army equipment projects

124. The key elements of the Army's equipment plan are as follows:

- AJAX, the armoured cavalry vehicle project, which will support both the armoured infantry and new Strike Brigades;
- the Challenger 2 main battle tank life extension project to sustain the current main battle tank capability; and
- the Warrior infantry fighting vehicle capability sustainment project (to deliver enhanced lethality and protection).²⁴⁶

The MoD considered these capabilities to be critical to delivering a modern ground manoeuvre warfighting capability.²⁴⁷

125. By 2025, the Army should also start to take delivery of the new Mechanized Infantry Vehicle (MIV) and Multi-Role Vehicle (Protected) (MRV-P) projects.²⁴⁸ In the same timeframe, the delivery of the next generation of Attack Helicopters (at a cost of \$2.3 billion)²⁴⁹ should be well underway alongside the continued build-up of the new Wildcat armed utility helicopter, the modernisation of the Puma force, an upgrade of the Chinook heavy lift helicopter, and the replacement of the Sea King by the Merlin Mk 4 in the Commando Helicopter Force.²⁵⁰

126. According to the MoD, this ambitious programme will add "significant capability to the warfighting division".²⁵¹ The MoD told us that:

Underpinning all of these new capabilities will be the new land environment tactical communication and information systems project. By 2025, this will have delivered the next generation of combat net radio and wide area network for both voice and data communications across the warfighting division.²⁵²

246 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

247 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

248 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

249 Ministry of Defence press release, 11 July 2016, "[MoD orders new fleet of cutting-edge Apache helicopters for the Army](#)"

250 Ministry of Defence, [SDSR 2015 Fact Sheets](#), January 2016, p 12

251 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

252 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

The AJAX programme

127. The AJAX fleet of armoured reconnaissance vehicles is being developed for the British Army's armoured cavalry regiments in both the armoured infantry and the new planned Strike Brigades.²⁵³ Between 2017 and 2024, 589 AJAX will be manufactured at a cost of £4.5 billion and will replace the Army's Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (tracked) armoured vehicles.²⁵⁴ The reconnaissance vehicle will contain a family of variants in support and logistic roles. The breakdown of the AJAX variants will be as follows:

- 245 AJAX Reconnaissance vehicles: surveillance and fire control;
- 93 Ares Reconnaissance Support: carries Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Weapon or troops for dismounted patrols;
- 51 Argus Combat Engineer Reconnaissance;
- 112 Athena Command: mobile battlefield headquarters;
- 38 Atlas Recovery: to recover damaged and immobilised vehicles; and
- 50 Apollo Support Repair: repairs and tows damaged vehicles.²⁵⁵

128. According to the MoD, the new multi-role AJAX armoured fighting vehicle will transform the Army's medium armour and advanced intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capability.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, it will be able to conduct sustained, expeditionary, full spectrum operations with a reduced logistic footprint, in a wide range of combat situations and operating environments. The Chief of the General Staff regarded the procurement of the AJAX vehicles as an important component of the strategy to counter the re-emergence of the state-on-state threat and the ability of potential adversaries to conduct "anti-access area denial".²⁵⁷

129. Those AJAX vehicles assigned to the Strike Brigades will provide the capability to project combat power across distances of up to 2,000km; to disperse and concentrate very rapidly; and to dominate ground and population mass.²⁵⁸ The Chief of the General Staff described AJAX as genuinely networked and genuinely mobile, with good firepower and good protection. He also explained that the Army was taking a "methodical and deliberate" approach to the AJAX capability and the plan was to "test it to destruction and to experiment with it" at an early stage so that, by 2021, the Army would have a known initial operating capability.²⁵⁹

130. Each regiment equipped with AJAX will have between 50 and 60 vehicles,²⁶⁰ and the two Strike Brigades are each predicted to have two AJAX regiments and two mechanised infantry battalions. Once the Army reaches full operating capability, the Chief of the General Staff expected that one of those brigades would be at 30 days' notice to move.²⁶¹

253 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

254 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, February 2017, p 85

255 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, February 2017, p 85

256 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

257 Q3

258 Q3

259 Q63

260 Q64

261 Q70

131. AJAX will come with very sophisticated electronic systems to allow it to conduct networked-enabled warfare to create a battle picture for the divisional HQ.²⁶² This will provide the Army with a significant uplift in capability. However, it should be noted that a similar previous project, the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES), had also encountered difficulties during procurement due to its complexity, affordability and delivery timetable.

132. Dr Warren Chin questioned whether General Dynamics—the producer of AJAX—had learned the lessons of the FRES programme.²⁶³ He was particularly concerned about factors which lay outside the control of the Army, such as “affordability, technological feasibility and the means to ensure that it came off the production line successfully”.²⁶⁴ He was concerned that AJAX was being portrayed as a ‘silver bullet’ for the Army to succeed under an airspace which it did not control and in theatres to which the sea lanes of communication might be in jeopardy.²⁶⁵ Sir Paul Newton agreed:

I don't see Ajax as the silver bullet. If you look back two years and think how far upgrading the capability has gone in that time, the Warrior programme is being upgraded for the armoured infantry, the Challenger programme is being upgraded; attack helicopters are being upgraded, Chinooks are being upgraded. Those are not rhetorical; they are actual programmes that are happening. Ajax is essential to be able to give close recce, because our capability there is a gap.

Warren [Chin] makes an important point about not over-specifying. My understanding is that the Army, as it looks at the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle—the sister project to AJAX—is thinking very hard about making sure it states the absolute requirements, rather than an unachievable shopping list of everything.²⁶⁶

Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank and Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles

133. The Army has 227 Challenger 2 main battle tanks, a reduction of 98 from 2010. These are used by the Armoured Infantry Brigades as the Army's all-weather, mobile, protected, direct-fire anti-tank capability. Challenger 2 is best suited for high-tempo mobile operations against an army of similar sophistication and is equipped with weapons that can engage a wide range of targets—in particular enemy Armoured Fighting Vehicles.²⁶⁷ The tanks are currently divided between the deployable field force, training establishments, storage and long-term maintenance.²⁶⁸ In the context of the restructuring of the Army post-SDSR 2015, the intention is to have four, rather than three, mounted close combat regiments comprising of two Challenger 2 and two AJAX regiments.

134. Challenger 2 is subject to a £700 million Life Extension programme²⁶⁹. This will address key aspects of obsolescence in order for the Army to keep it in service until 2035. In December 2016, the MoD announced that the two preferred bidders for the project's

262 Q3 and Q168; Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))

263 Q168

264 Q168

265 Q169

266 Q170

267 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

268 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

269 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

competitive phase would now develop upgrades. However, the MoD were unable to provide us with any information on the number of tanks that would be upgraded, as this would depend on both the solutions presented by the bidders and lessons identified by the Strike Experimentation Group.²⁷⁰

135. The Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle provides protection and support to infantry soldiers on foot.²⁷¹ In combination, the Warrior and its infantry personnel form a tightly integrated unit. These vehicles are currently part of a programme, *Armoured Infantry 2026*, which is tasked with the delivery of an upgraded vehicle platform, and extending the out-of-service date from 2025 to 2040. The Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme element of this is expected to cost some £1.3 billion.²⁷²

136. The Army's Warrior fleet (including all variants) stands at 769. As with the Challenger 2 life extension programme, the MoD was unable to provide an estimate of upgraded Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles which the *Armoured Infantry 2026* programme would deliver as, again, this was subject to assessment and consultation.

137. Equally, the MoD refused to provide, us with information on the numbers of Challenger 2 tanks and Warrior vehicles held at specific levels of readiness—as to do so, they contended, would “compromise operational security, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces”.²⁷³

Mechanised Infantry Vehicle and Multi-Role Vehicle (Protected)

138. The Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV) is a new programme which was announced in SDSR 2015.²⁷⁴ It is currently in ‘concept’ pre-design phase, but the MoD's intention is to procure an off-the-shelf design which would be equipped with a minimum number of UK sourced sub-systems such as remote weapons station, communications, battle management system and seating.²⁷⁵ The MIV will equip the mechanised infantry within the new Strike Brigades. According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, it is expected that the MoD will buy between 300 and 350 MIVs with a potential initial operating capability in 2023. However, as the project is in ‘concept’ pre-design phase, the MoD is unable to provide costings for the programme.²⁷⁶

139. In addition, the MoD's Equipment Plan, set out the requirements for a Multi-Role Vehicle (Protected) (MRV-P) to provide the Army with a family of adaptable, protected general purpose vehicles for command and logistics.²⁷⁷ Two classes of vehicle are required. MRV-P Group 1 will provide logistics, command and control, and liaison, while MRV-P Group 2 will provide specialist platforms, including Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) and protected ambulances.

270 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

271 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

272 National Audit Office, *Ministry of Defence Major Projects Report 2015 and Equipment Plan 2015–2025: Appendices and Project Summary Sheets*, p 205

273 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))

274 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 4.48

275 *Jane's Defence Weekly*, [DVD 2016: Bidders line up for British Army's MIV 8x8 requirement](#), 9 September 2016

276 [PQ50000](#)

277 Ministry of Defence, [Equipment Plan 2016, January 2017](#), p22

140. In January 2017, it was confirmed that the Army had started negotiations to purchase the Oshkosh Joint Light Tactical Vehicle from the United States to fulfil the MRV-P Group 1 requirement.²⁷⁸ The expectation is that 750 such vehicles will be acquired. For MRV-P Group 2, which will require a larger platform, we understand that three potential suppliers remain in the competition. A contract is expected to be agreed within two years, and initially the Army is expected to buy 150 APCs and 80 ambulances, with this later rising to 300 of each if the money is available.²⁷⁹

Delivery of the Army component of the equipment plan

141. In his Financial Statement of 8 July 2015, the then Chancellor, Rt Hon George Osborne MP, stated that the Government had committed to continue to meet the NATO minimum of 2% of GDP to be spent on defence.²⁸⁰ In addition, the Government committed to an annual real-terms increase in the defence budget of 0.5% until 2020–21 plus a 1% annual increase in the Defence Equipment Plan.²⁸¹ Details of this can be found in our Report, *Shifting the Goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge*.²⁸² In addition, the Government established the Joint Security Fund (JSF) which could provide a further £3.5 billion to fund new defence and security capabilities.²⁸³ The MoD would have access to £2.1 billion of this money, over the current Parliament.²⁸⁴ However access to this additional funding would be dependent on the MoD realising ‘efficiency savings’.²⁸⁵ The SDSR stated that £11 billion of savings had been identified from within the MoD, the security agencies and counter-terrorism funding.²⁸⁶ In order to ensure the affordability of the Equipment Plan 2016–2026, the MoD would be required to achieve ‘efficiency savings’ of £7.3 billion (£5.8 billion from within the Equipment plan itself and £1.5 billion from elsewhere in the Defence budget).²⁸⁷ Together the MoD’s “growing budget”, the JSF and the savings are expected to fund, in full, the commitments contained in SDSR 2015, including the new Strike Brigades.²⁸⁸ In total, the MoD’s 2016 Equipment Plan commits £178 billion over the next decade, of which £19.1 billion is earmarked for land equipment which includes the programmes listed above.²⁸⁹

142. The Army is currently in the process of developing a series of ‘efficiency measures’.²⁹⁰ These measures will cover personnel, activity levels and support assumptions.²⁹¹ Despite the increase in Departmental funding and the forecast ‘efficiency savings’, the NAO was highly cautious about the affordability of the Equipment Plan. It highlighted the fact that SDSR 2015 had added £24.4 billion of new commitments, the majority of which would

278 *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, [UK confirms FMS JLTV buy for MRV-P](#), 26 January 2017

279 *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, [UK confirms FMS JLTV buy for MRV-P](#), 26 January 2017

280 HC Deb, 8 July 2015, [col 337](#)

281 HM Treasury, *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*, [Cm 9162](#), November 2015, para 1.72

282 Defence Committee, Second Report of Session 2015–16, [Shifting the Goalposts? Defence Expenditure and the 2% pledge](#), HC 494

283 HM Treasury, *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*, [Cm 9162](#), November 2015, para 1.72

284 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#)) (This was based on the assumption that the Parliament would last until 2020)

285 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

286 HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*, [Cm 9161](#), November 2015, para 7.6

287 National Audit Office, [Ministry of Defence: The Equipment Plan 2016–2026](#), HC 914, January 2017, para 2.9

288 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))

289 Ministry of Defence, [Equipment Plan 2016](#), January 2017, p 22

290 Q284

291 Q284

need to be funded from within the existing plan.²⁹² Indeed Army Command had seen a 21% increase in its equipment budget when compared to the 2015 plan, of which the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle was the largest new component.²⁹³

143. The NAO concluded that these new commitments had “considerably increased cost uncertainty in the Plan” and that the number of “immature cost estimates”—including those for the MIV—had increased and would be in need of future revision.²⁹⁴ Several of our witnesses highlighted the MoD’s poor record on controlling costs as a significant risk which could have implications for the delivery of equipment and capability.²⁹⁵ Sir Paul Newton also raised the concern that while the Levene reforms had delegated budget choices to front-line commanders, previous experience had shown that, if costs increased elsewhere in the Armed Forces, it was the Army’s budget that was raided in terms of its equipment plan and training.²⁹⁶

144. Lieutenant General Poffley maintained that the Army’s equipment plan was not only affordable, but offered the opportunity to upgrade equipment to meet the new challenges presented by technology:

There is therefore a very definite ambition there to adjust the force structure, to provide a degree of more choice going forward for political decision-makers. You would quite clearly expect us, I would hope, to exploit the very best technologies that are available at the time while making sure that is sustainable well into the future. There is a balance to be struck across the Army’s equipment programme that attends to that. Absolutely, this is as much about improvement as it is dealing with obsolescence.²⁹⁷

145. The Secretary of State considered the programme as “a mixture of investment in entirely new vehicles and equipment and an upgrade to some of the existing programmes”.²⁹⁸ The Army’s equipment programme was now intended to be part of restructuring *Army 2020* to meet the re-emergence of the potential for state-on-state conflict as the main priority as well as being able to cope with other potential scenarios.²⁹⁹

146. We welcome the SDSR’s commitment to invest in the new AJAX vehicles and in the life extension of the Challenger Mark 2 as well as the upgrades to the Warrior vehicles and the Apache Attack Helicopters. Any reduction in the number of Challenger Mark 2 tanks would be fraught with risk. Therefore, we seek reassurance about the numbers of main battle tanks which will be retained. We believe that the challenge will be for the MoD, the Army and industry to ensure that these projects are delivered on time and within budget. The failure of previous programmes to achieve this must not be repeated. To do so will seriously impair, if not fatally undermine, the Army’s ability to deploy the SDSR’s envisaged warfighting division and the new Strike Brigades.

292 National Audit Office, [Ministry of Defence: The Equipment Plan 2016–2026](#), January 2017, HC 914, Summary, para 6

293 National Audit Office, [Ministry of Defence: The Equipment Plan 2016–2026](#), January 2017, HC 914, Figure 5, p 19

294 National Audit Office, [Ministry of Defence: The Equipment Plan 2016–2026](#), January 2017, HC 914, Summary, para 14

295 Q214

296 Q215

297 Q251

298 Q251

299 Qq257–258

147. It is disturbing that the NAO highlights the fact that SDSR 2015 has added an additional £24.4 billion of new commitments to the MoD's Equipment Plan. This includes the Army's, as yet uncosted, programme for the new Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV). The NAO concluded that these new commitments had "considerably increased cost uncertainty in the Plan" and that the number of "immature cost estimates" had increased and would be in need of future revision. *In response to our Report the MoD must provide a clear statement that all of these programmes are affordable, in each financial year, alongside an assurance that funding for personnel and training will not be used to address shortfalls. The MoD should also set out how the new Mechanised Infantry Vehicle will be funded and the impact it will have on existing projects.*

Conclusions and recommendations

SDSR 2015: Headline ambitions for the Army

1. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review sets out ambitious plans for the British Army, including a reset of its roles, a major reorganisation of its structures and an extensive new equipment programme. The headline ambition of recreating a warfighting division is of considerable significance in the light of the resurgence of state-based threats. However, this programme of change is accompanied by significant financial risks and challenges for its fulfilment. (Paragraph 18)

A new warfighting division

2. We welcome the Ministry of Defence's commitment, set out in SDSR 2015, to recreate a warfighting division as part of the restructuring of the Army. We agree with General Carter's observation that its delivery is central to the credibility of the Army. It is also a key part of the UK's ability to contribute effectively to NATO's collective deterrence and defence. However, the development of the division is a major increase in ambition when considered in the context of the "best effort" approach of SDSR 2010 for a deployment of smaller forces under Army 2020. Although the programme for the new division is in its infancy, the MoD needs to be alive to the challenges and risks in providing this capability—not least the importance of maintaining the Army's budget. *We therefore recommend that the MoD should provide us with detailed annual reports on progress towards the establishment of the warfighting division. These should include detailed timelines, regular updates on progress against each planned stage of delivery of the division, and financial statements to demonstrate that the Army's budget is sufficient to enable the proposed timetable to be met.* (Paragraph 28)
3. The new warfighting division will have to operate without the assurance of 'owning' the airspace, when it faces a modern state adversary. This presents MoD and Armed Forces' planners with significant challenges. Whilst we note that air defence is a tri-Service responsibility, led by the RAF, we are greatly concerned about the level of detail and timescale of the plans to provide ground-based air defence for the new warfighting division. Addressing this vulnerability must be given the highest priority. The MoD has promised to provide us with regular updates on this matter. *In its response to our Report, the department should set out the timetable for the decisions on replacement of both Rapier and the High Velocity Missile systems and by when these replacements will be delivered.* (Paragraph 33)
4. We welcome the Government's commitment to deploy UK Armed Forces to NATO's eastern and southern borders as part of NATO's enhanced forward presence. We also welcome the MoD's work to resolve the challenges of deploying across NATO's internal borders. This is a matter that must be kept under constant review, particularly given the re-emergence of potential threats from peer adversaries. In particular, the prospect of retaining some Army basing on the continent should not be ruled out if Russian assertiveness to the east and north continues to intensify. (Paragraph 40)

5. We welcome the Army's intention to continue training overseas and the Army's reassessment of its training requirements in the light of the increased threat of peer adversary conflict as described in the SDSR. We expect the MoD to update us on the outcome of the Army's assessment of its training requirements. *We expect the MoD to update us on the outcome of the Army's assessment of its training requirements* (Paragraph 46)
6. We remain concerned about the MoD's lack of data on the costs and spending trends of training investment. As we identified in our previous report on defence expenditure, there is currently no mechanism by which such expenditure and projected future costs can be scrutinised. This is of greater concern given reports of possible reductions in training due to MoD cost pressures. Such reductions could potentially risk the Army's capabilities, particularly those of the new warfighting division. *In its response to our Report, we ask the MoD to provide the projected levels of spending on collective training for the constituent parts of the division for each year until 2025. The response should also include the number of overseas and UK training events cancelled since SDSR 2010.* (Paragraph 47)
7. We welcome the Army's development of an Integrated Action doctrine, which should provide the capability to deliver an innovative response to both conventional and non-conventional threats. However we note with concern the Chief of the General Staff's warning that the Army does not have a sufficient number of linguists even though this is a prescribed competence for a company or squadron commander. *We expect the MoD to set out how it plans to address this matter and the timescale for doing so.* We also welcome the establishment of 77 Brigade and the integrated nature of its tasks. The challenge for the MoD will be to ensure that it is fully integrated with the other Services, UK Government Departments and UK allies. *We expect the MoD to set out how it plans to address this matter and the timescale for doing so.* We also welcome the establishment of 77 Brigade and the integrated nature of its tasks. The challenge for the MoD will be to ensure that it is fully integrated with the other Services, UK Government Departments and UK allies. *We ask that the MoD keep us informed of progress in the development of 77 Brigade and other similar units within the Armed Forces as they progress towards becoming fully operational.* (Paragraph 57)
8. We are concerned about the lack of detail on how the MoD could regenerate a warfighting division or reconstitute a greater force in the face of significant strategic challenges. *In its response to our Report, we ask the MoD to confirm when the work to improve the mechanism for tracking, recalling and retraining the Regular Reserve will be completed. We also ask that the MoD set out the timetable for the completion of the work exploring the optimal regeneration and reconstitution framework necessary to deliver a capable second division. We are also concerned that there is no systematic strategy linking these two pieces of work. We therefore recommend that the MoD includes in its promised six-monthly updates on regeneration and reconstitution details on how the Army is fulfilling both ambitions.* (Paragraph 66)

Defence engagement and national resilience

9. We welcome the establishment of the new specialised infantry battalions to deliver the MoD's programme for defence engagement and the decision to fund it as a

core Defence task. Given the positive influence these activities can have on conflict prevention and stability, it is essential that these tasks are funded sufficiently. However, this should not be at the expense of the Army's, or the other Services', warfighting capabilities. *In its response to our Report, the MoD should commit to set out, on an annual basis, expenditure on defence engagement tasks (including associated training costs), together with expenditure on collective and individual training for warfighting operations to enable comparison.* (Paragraph 78)

10. We support the MoD's decision to designate national resilience as a core defence task. However, we seek assurances from the MoD that this task will in no way undermine the primary function of the Army—to succeed in warfare given the manifest constraints on Defence expenditure. *We recommend that the MoD provides us with an annual breakdown of expenditure on national resilience tasks (including associated training costs) together with expenditure on collective and individual training for warfighting operations to enable comparison.* (Paragraph 83)

Army personnel

11. We note the MoD's view that the critical mass required by the Army to deliver a warfighting division will comprise the overall combined strength of trained Regulars and Reservists. This makes it critically important that the full strength of trained Regulars and Reservists is achieved. If it is not, the credibility of the warfighting division will be undermined. We also note the Chief of the General Staff's acknowledgement that, at present, the capacity does not exist to replace the full division following its deployment on a one-off intervention. *We recommend that the MoD and the Army undertake work to establish the critical mass required for the Army to be able to deploy the warfighting division on a one-off deployment and to be able to replace it with a capable second division.* (Paragraph 89)
12. There is logic in the MoD's decision to include, in numbers of Trained Strength, Army personnel who have completed Phase 1 Training so that they can be deployed on national resilience tasks. *However, we seek assurances from the MoD that the target strengths for Regulars and Reservists set out in the Army 2020 plan—which were based on personnel who had completed Phase 2 training—remain unchanged.* (Paragraph 92)
13. The target establishment of the trained Regular Army was for 82,000 trained soldiers by 2015. However, despite the fact that this target was lowered from 95,000 in 2012, the strength of the Army remains below 80,000. Although the MoD asserts that the current level of personnel is sufficient for the Army to meet current operational demands, we do not believe this figure is adequate to counter a sudden unexpected threat. The MoD has to address this shortfall. An Army which falls below the already historic low target of 82,000 makes itself dangerously vulnerable to external aggression. (Paragraph 98)
14. *We welcome the MoD's acknowledgement that its traditional recruiting grounds are no longer sufficient for the Army's needs and that it must access a wider pool of talent. In its response to our Report, the MoD should set out the progress it is making to achieve its targets for women and Black and Minority Ethnic recruits.* (Paragraph 99)

15. We are not convinced by the MoD's assertion that missing its manpower targets for the Army Reserve "would not impact significantly on capability", particularly given the Chief of the General Staff's evidence that the critical mass to deliver a warfighting division will comprise the total combined strength of Regulars and Reserves. A failure to recruit the necessary numbers of Reservists is not so much a threat to the Army's reputation but a threat to the credibility and competence of the MoD's approach to delivering a revitalised Reserve. *The MoD must conduct a review of its recruitment policy to identify the blockages that exist in the system which are hindering the recruitment of sufficient Reservists.* (Paragraph 105)
16. It is unacceptable that the Recruitment Partnership for the recruitment of both Regulars and Reserves, which was signed in 2012, is still not fully operational and that evidence presented to us pointed to the Recruitment Partnership contract being not fit for purpose. *In its response to our Report, the MoD must set out the problems which need to be addressed and the timetable for the delivery of the new ICT systems and for fully-operational status to be achieved. We expect urgent action from the MoD and Capita to resolve the outstanding issues.* (Paragraph 108)
17. We support the Chief of the General Staff's commitment to changing the culture of the Army through initiatives on employment, talent management and leadership. Successful implementation of these initiatives could provide a structure within which all soldiers can achieve their full potential. However, we recognise that this must not be to the detriment of the Army's ability to undertake its core role of warfighting. We note the concerns expressed about cultural resistance within the Army to this agenda, particularly in respect of Flexible Engagement. *In response to our Report, we should like to receive further details on how the Army's various initiatives will dovetail, and how the MoD will ensure that resistance to a changing culture is overcome.* (Paragraph 119)
18. We support the decision to allow women to undertake ground close combat roles, provided that standards of fighting effectiveness can be maintained. As part of the roll out of this initiative, the Army is revising its training policies and undertaking a review of the physical demands placed on all Army personnel. We believe that these changes can be delivered without diminishing the fighting capability of the Army and other Services. *However, we wish to receive regular updates on the introduction of women in ground close combat roles. These updates should include the outcomes of the scientific research being undertaken into the physical demands placed on all Army personnel.* (Paragraph 122)

Army equipment

19. We welcome the SDSR's commitment to invest in the new AJAX vehicles and in the life extension of the Challenger Mark 2 as well as the upgrades to the Warrior vehicles and the Apache Attack Helicopters. Any reduction in the number of Challenger Mark 2 tanks would be fraught with risk. Therefore, we seek reassurance about the numbers of main battle tanks which will be retained. We believe that the challenge will be for the MoD, the Army and industry to ensure that these projects are delivered on time and within budget. The failure of previous programmes to

achieve this must not be repeated. To do so will seriously impair, if not fatally undermine, the Army's ability to deploy the SDSR's envisaged warfighting division and the new Strike Brigades. (Paragraph 146)

20. It is disturbing that the NAO highlights the fact that SDSR 2015 has added an additional £24.4 billion of new commitments to the MoD's Equipment Plan. This includes the Army's, as yet uncosted, programme for the new Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV). The NAO concluded that these new commitments had "considerably increased cost uncertainty in the Plan" and that the number of "immature cost estimates" had increased and would be in need of future revision. *In response to our Report the MoD must provide a clear statement that all of these programmes are affordable, in each financial year, alongside an assurance that funding for personnel and training will not be used to address shortfalls. The MoD should also set out how the new Mechanised Infantry Vehicle will be funded and the impact it will have on existing projects.* (Paragraph 147)

Appendix 1: Armed Forces' Missions

Armed Forces' Missions

To support the delivery of this strategy, our defence policy sets the Armed Forces eight missions. Routinely, they will:

Defend and contribute to the security and resilience of the UK and Overseas Territories. This includes deterring attacks; defending our airspace, territorial waters and cyber space; countering terrorism at home and abroad; supporting the UK civil authorities in strengthening resilience; and protecting our people overseas.

Provide the nuclear deterrent.

Contribute to improved understanding of the world through strategic intelligence and the global defence network. This includes close and enduring work with our allies and partners during peace and conflict.

Reinforce international security and the collective capacity of our allies, partners and multilateral institutions. This includes work to help shape the international security environment, and to strengthen the rules-based international order including through conflict prevention, capacity building and counter proliferation.

The Armed Forces will also contribute to the Government's response to crises by being prepared to:

Support humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and conduct rescue missions.

Conduct strike operations.

Conduct operations to restore peace and stability.

Conduct major combat operations if required, including under NATO Article 5.

Appendix 2: Army Personnel Statistics

UK Regular Army and Reserve Land Forces strength as at 1 April (1980–1997)

Year	Full Time Regulars (thousands)		Reserve Land Forces (thousands)		
	Overall Strength of the Regular Army ^{1,2}	Trained Strength of the Regular Army ³	Regular Reserve ⁴	Regular Reserve ⁵	Total Volunteer Reserve ⁶
1980	159.0	139.1	71.4	133.1	63.3
1981	166.0		76.8	137.5	69.5
1982	163.2		75.4	140.2	72.1
1983	159.1		68.4	138.3	72.8
1984	161.5		66.3	143.2	71.4
1985	162.4	145.9	61.9	150.1	73.7
1986	161.4		58.6	153.9	77.7
1987	159.7		57.8	160.4	78.5
1988	158.1	142.6	58.1	167.7	74.7
1989	155.6	139.5	62.2	175.3	72.5
1990	152.8	137.2	65.8	183.4	72.5
1991	147.6	135.6	65.2	187.7	73.3
1992	145.4	133.3	63.1	188.6	71.3
1993	134.6	126.6	57.4	190.1	68.5
1994	123.0	116.1	54.9	192.5	65.0
1995	111.7	104.5	53.4	195.3	59.7
1996	108.8	99.5	48.5	195.5	57.3
1997	108.8	97.8	41.2	190.1	57.6

Source: House of Commons Library

Notes:

1. Between 1980 and 1994 UK Regular Army figures come from ONS Annual Abstract of Statistics. From 1995 the MoD's UK Defence Compendium; UK Armed Forces Quarterly Personnel Report; UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics.

2. UK Regular Army includes full time service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS).

3. Trained strength comprises individuals who have completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training. Figures come from UK Defence Statistics Compendium 1994, 1995 and 2001.

4. Does not include those liable to be recalled. Figures collected from MoD Reserves and Cadet Strengths.

5. Includes those liable to be recalled. Figures collected from ONS Annual Abstract of Statistics.

6. The Territorial Army. Includes Officer Training Corp and Non-Regular Permanent Staff. Does not include the Ulster Defence Regiment or the Home Service Force. Figures collected from ONS Annual Abstract of Statistics.

Figures are rounded.

UK Armed Forces (Army) and Reserve Land Forces strength as at 1 April (1998–2017)

Year	Full Time UK Armed Forces (Army) (thousands)		Reserve Land Forces (thousands)		
	UK Regular Army/ UK Armed Forces (Army) ¹	UK AF (Army; trade trained P1+P2) ²	Regular Reserve ⁴	Regular Reserve Total ⁵	Total Volunteer Reserve (trained and untrained) ⁶
1998	109.8	100.9	36.6	186.2	57.6
1999	109.7	99.9	34.8	180.5	52.3
2000	110.1	100.2	34.2	175.5	45.6
2001	109.5	100.4	33.7	169.8	41.7
2002	110.1	100.4	33.4	161.1	40.7
2003	112.1	102.0	32.4	151.5	39.3
2004	112.7	103.6	31.1	141.9	38.1
2005	109.3	102.4	31.4	134.2	37.3
2006	107.7	100.6	32.2	127.6	38.5
2007	106.3	99.1	33.8	121.8	36.8
2008	105.0	98.1			35.0
2009	106.7	99.5			30.2
2010	108.9	102.3			28.9
2011	106.2	101.3			27.2
2012	104.3	98.6	31.3	31.3	27.2
2013	99.7	93.9	31.5	31.5	26.2
2014	96.1	87.2	31.3	31.3	24.2
2015	92.2	82.2	30.0	30.0	25.8
2016	90.8	79.7	29.8	29.8	28.9
As at 1st of month					
Jan 2016	90.4	80.3	30.2	30.2	28.4
Feb 2016	90.5	80.0			28.7
Mar 2016	90.6	79.8			28.9
Apr 2016	90.8	79.7	29.8	29.8	29.0
May 2016	90.5	79.6			29.1
Jun 2016	90.5	79.5			29.2
Jul 2016	90.1	79.4	29.8	29.8	29.3
Aug 2016	89.8	79.4			29.5
Sep 2016	89.7	79.4			29.6
Oct 2016	90.3	79.1	29.7	29.7	29.7
Nov 2016	90.2	79.0			29.8
Dec 2016	90.0	79.0			29.9
Jan 2017	89.4	79.1	29.5	29.5	29.9
Feb 2017	89.3	78.6			30.0

Source: House of Commons Library**Notes:**

1. Between 1998 and 2013 figures show strength of UK Regular Army; from 2014 onwards figures show the Army component of the UK Armed Forces. UK Regular Army includes full time service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS). UK Armed Forces (Army) includes full time Regular Army, Gurkhas and Full Time Reserve Service personnel (FTRS).

2. Comprises individuals who have completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training. Figures from UK Defence Statistics Compendium 2001 onwards. UK Armed Forces (Army) includes full time Regular Army, Gurkhas and Full Time Reserve Service personnel (FTRS).

3. From 1 October 2016 there was a change in definition for trained strength in the Army only. From 1 October 2016 those who had passed Phase 1 training were considered trained. For continuity in the time-series series the MoD still provides the Trade Trained Strength (those who have passed Phase 1 and Phase 2). Only the Trade Trained Strength is counted against the SDSR 2015 target for 2020. UK Armed Forces (Army) includes full time Regular Army, Gurkhas and Full Time Reserve Service personnel (FTRS).

4. Does not include those liable to be recalled. Figures from 1998–2011 are collected from MoD Reserves and Cadet Strengths. Figures between 2012 and 2015 are from MoD Strength of the UK reserve forces. Figure for 2016 is from MoD UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics.

5. Between 1998 and 2007 Regular Reserve includes those persons liable to be recalled. From 2012 does not include those liable to be recalled. Figures collected from ONS Annual Abstract of Statistics between 1998 and 2008. Figures between 2012 and 2015 are from MoD Strength of the UK reserve forces. Figure for 2016 is from MoD UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics.

6. The Territorial Army; from 14 May 2015 renamed Army Reserve. Includes University Officer Cadets (until 2009), mobilised and High Readiness Reserves (HRR), volunteer personnel serving on ADC and FTRS, Non-Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI). Does not include the Ulster Defence Regiment or the Home Service Force. Figures between 1998 and 2008 are collected from ONS Annual Abstract of Statistics. Figures between 2012 and 2015 are from MoD Strength of the UK reserve forces. Figure for 2016 is from MoD UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics.

Dotted lines indicate break in time-series. See note 3 and 4.

Figures are rounded.

Sources:***UK Regular Army***

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 1989–1990: Table 7.3, p. 132

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 1997–1998: Table 7.3, p. 157

MOD, UK Defence Statistics Compendium, years include 1994–1995; 2001–2004; 2006–2012

MOD, UK Armed Forces Quarterly Personnel Report 2015: April

MOD, UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics: February 2017

Army Reserves

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 1989–1990: Table 7.3, p. 132

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 1997–1998: Table 7.3, p. 157

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 2005: Table 4.6, p. 19

ONS, Annual Abstract of Statistics 2010: Table 4.6, p. 21

MoD, Strength of the UK reserve forces, various years.

MoD, UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics: February 2017

Appendix 3: Historical figures for Main Battle Tanks and Warrior Vehicles

Main Battle Tanks

Figures below are compiled from official sources. Challenger 2 numbers remained unchanged at 227 tanks following SDSR 2015. See notes below the table for more details.

British Army Main Battle Tanks (MBT)

	1990 ¹	1997 ²	2010 ³	At the time of the SDSR 2015 ⁴
Challenger 1	408	396	8	9
Challenger 2	–	19	325	227
Chieftain	752	98	18 ⁵	3
Centurion	38	–	6 ⁵	3
Total⁶	1198	513	357	242

Source: Ministry of Defence (ARM0018)

Notes:

1. 1990 figures compiled from *Statement on Defence Estimate: Britain's Defence for the 90s Volume 1 1991*, p 35. The figures presented in this document are from those presented as part of the declaration on Conventional Forces in Europe, dated November 1990.

2. 1997 figures compiled from *UK Defence Statistics 2010* table 4.11. The figures presented in this document are from the information presented as part of the declaration on Conventional Forces in Europe, dated January 1997.

3. 2010 figures compiled from *UK Defence Statistics 2010* table 4.11 and the UK holdings as recorded in the return for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe treaty (ICOD January 2010).

4. 2015 figures for Challenger 2 are from the current Army equipment holdings. Figures for other tanks are as recorded in the return for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (ICOD January 2016).

5. Chieftain and Centurion now listed as obsolete equipment.

6. Figures may include non-MBT variants of equipment (for example Chieftain Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE)), vehicles in training establishments and equipment used for gate guarding and museum pieces.

Warrior vehicles

The table below sets out the number of Warrior vehicles in the British Army's inventory declared as part of the UK's annual declaration on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe return for the stated timescales. These figures are compiled from official sources. See notes below the table for more details.

British Army Warrior Vehicles

	1990 ¹	1997 ²	2010 ³	At the time of the 2015 SDSR ⁴
Warrior AIFV	326	523	357	375
Warrior variants (Warrior RA, Rec, Rep)	Not available	194	149	124
Total	N/A	717	506	499

Source: Ministry of Defence (ARM0018)

Notes:

1. 1990 figures compiled from *Statement on Defence Estimate: Britain's Defence for the 90s Volume 1 1991*, p 35. The figures presented in this document are from those presented as part of the declaration on Conventional Forces in Europe, dated November 1990 and only include vehicles located within the UK and Europe.

2. 1997 figures compiled from *UK Defence Statistics 2010* table 4.11. The figures presented in this document are from the information presented as part of the declaration on Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (ICOD January 1997) and only include vehicles located within the UK and Europe.

3. 2010 figures compiled from *UK Defence Statistics 2010* table 4.11 and the UK holdings as recorded in the return for the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (ICOD January 2010) and only include vehicles located within the UK and Europe.

4. 2015 figures compiled from the return for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (ICOD January 2016). These represent the closest official statistics to the publication date of SDSR 2015 and only cover vehicles located within the UK and Europe.

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 25 April 2017

Members present:

Rt Hon Julian Lewis, in the Chair

James Gray

Rt Hon John Spellar

Gavin Robinson

Draft Report (*SDSR 2015 and the Army*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 147 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Appendices agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighth Report of the Committee.

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

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

[The Committee adjourned

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 14 June 2016

Question number

General Sir Nicholas Carter KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC, Chief of the General Staff; **Major-General John Crackett CB, TD**, Director, Reserves, and **David Stephens**, Director, Resources and Command Secretary (Army)

[Q1–101](#)

Tuesday 5 July 2016

Air Vice-Marshal (retired) Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL RAF, Chief Executive, Council of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association, and Clerk, United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team

[Q102–144](#)

Tuesday 11 October 2016

Lieutenant General (retired) Sir Paul Newton KBE CBE, Professor of Strategy, University of Exeter, **Professor Timothy Edmunds**, Professor of International Security, University of Bristol, and **Dr Warren Chin**, Senior Lecturer, Defence Studies Department, King's College London

[Q145–222](#)

Tuesday 1 November 2016

Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, **Lieutenant General Mark Poffley OBE**, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Military Capability, and **Paul Wyatt**, Head of Defence Strategy and Priorities, Ministry of Defence

[Q223–300](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

ARM numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 ADS Group ([ARM0014](#))
- 2 Child Soldiers International ([ARM0007](#))
- 3 Child Soldiers International ([ARM0008](#))
- 4 DefenceSynergia ([ARM0005](#))
- 5 DefenceSynergia ([ARM0017](#))
- 6 Dr Warren Chin ([ARM0011](#))
- 7 Human Security Centre ([ARM0006](#))
- 8 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0002](#))
- 9 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0012](#))
- 10 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0015](#))
- 11 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0016](#))
- 12 Ministry of Defence ([ARM0018](#))
- 13 Mr Jie Sheng Li ([ARM0001](#))
- 14 Professor Vince Connelly ([ARM0009](#))
- 15 techUK ([ARM0010](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

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

Session 2016–17

First Report	Russia: Implications for UK defence and security	HC 107 (HC 668)
Second Report	UK military operations in Syria and Iraq	HC 106 (HC 1065)
Third Report	Restoring the Fleet: Naval Procurement and the National Shipbuilding Strategy	HC 221 (HC 973)
Fourth Report	Exposing Walter Mitty: The Awards for Valour (Protection) Bill	HC 658 (HC 1000)
Fifth Report	Open Source Stupidity: The Threat to the BBC Monitoring Service	HC 748 (HC 1066)
Sixth Report	Who guards the guardians? MoD support for former and serving personnel	HC 109 (HC 1149)
Seventh Report	Investigations into fatalities involving British military personnel	HC 1064
First Special Report	Shifting the goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2015–16	HC 465
Second Special Report	Beyond endurance? Military exercises and the duty of care: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16	HC 525
Third Special Report	An acceptable risk? The use of Lariam for military personnel: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 648
Fourth Special Report	Russia: Implications for UK defence and security: Government Response HC 973 to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 668
Fifth Special Report	Restoring the Fleet: Naval Procurement and the National Shipbuilding Strategy: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2016–17	HC 973
Sixth Special Report	Exposing Walter Mitty: The Awards for Valour (Protection) Bill: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1000

Seventh Special Report	UK military operations in Syria and Iraq: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1065
Eighth Special Report	Open Source Stupidity: The Threat to the BBC Monitoring Service: Responses to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1066
Ninth Special Report	Who guards the guardians? MoD support for former and serving personnel: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1149

Session 2015–16

First Report	Flexible response? An SDSR checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities	HC 493 (HC 794)
Second Report	Shifting the goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge	HC 494 (HC 465)
Third Report	Beyond endurance? Military exercises and the duty of care	HC 598 (HC 525)
Fourth Report	An acceptable risk? The use of Lariam for military personnel	HC 567 (HC 648)
First Special Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2013–14: Government response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 365
Second Special Report	Re-thinking defence to meet new threats: Government response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 366
Third Special Report	Decision-making in Defence Policy: Government response to the Committee's Eleventh Report of Session 2014–15	HC 367
Fourth Special Report	Flexible Response? An SDSR checklist of potential threats and vulnerabilities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 794