Air Power, Influence and the Operational Level

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This paper is intended to provoke further discussion on: the Operational Level, the Air environment's interaction with it, and how the UK could maximise national influence from the two. An acceptance of the influence that can be generated from the Service's conceptual (re)investment in the Operational Level also underlines the fundamental importance of Air C2, a core element of environmental expertise in the understanding and employment of air and space power. Command and control are linked terms but are not synonymous: our processes and structures for the latter are only understood and exploited by the former. The term 'Influence' also has resonance across government, appearing twenty-five times in the thirty-seven pages of the UK National Security Strategy; a document that rejects any diminution in Britain's role in the world. Indeed, senior Ministers have insisted that there would be 'No strategic shrinkage' and that the UK would remain a global player, honouring and strengthening commitments, alliances and partnerships. Yet the financial backdrop to this ambition remains an age of austerity. As a result, this paper argues that influence will increasingly be at the heart of our activity.

'The National Security Council has reached a clear conclusion that Britain's national interest requires us to reject any notion of the shrinkage of our influence'.[1]

Introduction

The genesis for this paper came from a tour as the senior Airman in PJHQ J3 (Current Ops), and earlier thoughts on reinvigorating the Conceptual Component of (Air) Fighting Power. Originally conceived as a study into how best to maximise influence for the UK from the Military Instrument, a term at Oxford as a Visiting Research Fellow on a Chief of the Air Staff Fellowship demonstrated how wild had been that particular ambition. However, both Oxford and the Higher Command and Staff Course provided exceptional environments in which to actually think about our business, rather than coping with the challenges of the next 5 minutes. Most importantly, it provided an opportunity to assess and reflect on that with which I had been most closely involved as both 'Joint Officer' and Airman: the Operational Level, the Air environment's interaction with it, and how the UK could maximise national influence from the two. My intent is to use some informed subjectivity, a dash of fact, and a bit of contentious analysis to provoke further discussion on an area where we might not be as engaged – or as good – as we might like to think.

Influence matters to the UK coalition government: the National Security Strategy, published in October 2010, uses the term 25 times in a 37 page document that rejects any diminution in Britain's role in the world. The Prime Minister and senior Ministers insisted that there would be 'No strategic shrinkage': the UK would remain a global player, honouring and strengthening commitments, alliances and partnerships. The 3 instruments of national power – the Diplomatic, Economic and Military – would be employed to support the national interest within an 'Integrated Approach' across the Whole of Government. Yet the financial backdrop to this ambition was hardly encouraging. Debt reduction would be the Government's number one priority: without a sound financial basis, wider questions of national security were deemed moot. Accordingly, the Defence Vote would reduce by 8% over 4 years, albeit with increases scheduled from 2015 – a less swingeing cut than envisaged by many, but one that has necessitated significant force reductions, and with freedom for manoeuvre further limited by the ongoing involvement in Afghanistan and a heavily committed Equipment Programme.

Criticism was swift, vociferous and pointed. The near-simultaneous release of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) provided little breathing space to consider the tenets of the NSS against revised and reduced force structures: 'despite the rhetoric, the internal process was clearly running in the opposite direction: first budgets, then capabilities, then – in any time left over – a hastily retro-fitted strategy..the process rapidly changed into the familiar dynamic of a spending review'.[2] The subsequent Comprehensive Spending Review and '3 Month Exercise' have driven further force reductions, most obviously affecting the Army. There has been considerable debate over whether UK ambition is matched by resource – whether the 'Ends, Ways and Means' of Strategy are unbalanced – and calls for the SDSR to be

reopened. The House of Commons Defence Committee was blunt in its analysis: the UK would inevitably enter a period of 'strategic shrinkage'[3], regardless of the Government's protestations to the contrary.

Yet the Afghan backdrop to SDSR and NSS has been altered by the (militarily) successful campaign in Libya; the PM for one believes his critics have been proved wrong[4] and that the conclusions of both NSS and SDSR have been vindicated. President Obama's decision to 'lead from behind' on Libya and the strategic 'pivot' to the Pacific adds further texture to the debate and – importantly – provides a counterpoint to the Iraq and Afghan campaigns in assessing the influence the UK is still able to achieve. This paper will contend that the UK can retain that level of influence required to support the national interest, and that this influence is most obviously achieved and exercised at the operational level. However, limited resources dictate innovation and imagination in how the UK military instrument is employed: the moral and conceptual components of fighting power will assume even greater significance. UK military influence has no fixed value: it alters, depending on context and between the strategic, operational and tactical levels. It should be the servant of 'national strategy', fully integrated with Diplomatic and Economic levers. And it cannot be linked simplistically to the amount of equipment (and the people to man it) that we have. For too long, the private and public Defence debate has been skewed by inappropriate comparison, historical baggage and single interest (and Service) agendas: all hindering the utility of, and influence achieved from, the military instrument. We need to do better.

Influence and 'National Strategy'

The authors of a Chatham House report defined Influence as 'A systematic programme of interventions designed to alter the beliefs and actions of others so as to deliver concrete outcomes against a clearly defined strategic objective'.[5] Whilst this is usefully short, it does not include the maintenance of current positions or the variety of possible audiences. Any definitions of influence must speak to notions of will, power and adoption through a variety of cognitive and physical actions. Accordingly, military influence might be defined more broadly as:

'The maintenance of, or change in, the beliefs or actions of friendly, neutral or hostile audiences by kinetic or non-kinetic military activities in order to support or further the UK's national interest and core values'.

The UK's interest in the notion of influence can be seen as recognition of the competitive and increasingly diverse nature of the contemporary foreign policy and security environment, set against increasingly limited national resources. Harnessing 'soft' as well as 'hard' power was not merely appealing – it recognised financial realities and a shift in geopolitics. Additionally, definitions in the abstract benefit from examination in context: the UK seeks to exert influence at both the 'grand strategic'/political level, and the military strategic, operational and tactical ones. The notion of Influence is at the heart of the NSS and is matched

in the UK's doctrinal foundations for the employment and utility of hard and soft military power. It is also hard to measure, observed in hindsight as well as the present, and may well be illusory or ultimately unattainable. As operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya have shown, the amount of influence attainable is variable and dependent on numerous factors, including relative contributions, campaign duration and complexity, political and military advocacy and leadership, physical and political risk, and demonstrable success.

What influence cannot be is an end in itself: it must serve a purpose, objective or end state. The NSS links influence with securing outcomes aligned with the national interest; it provides as clear a public statement of UK strategic 'Ends' as could be expected in an unclassified document, accepting the lack of clear geographical focus,[6] and offers the context against which to test the 'Means' provided by SDSR and subsequent revisions. 'No strategic shrinkage' implies that the UK will seek to retain P5 membership on the UN Security Council, maintain a key role within NATO and the EU, and continue to work alongside G20 and Commonwealth partners and within other global trading economic alliances and partnerships. The extent of these commitments and relationships requires the UK to retain the ability and the options to operate both within coalitions and unilaterally, defending national security (homeland and overseas territories) whilst able to be a (or the) significant minority partner in US-led coalitions, or assume a lead role within other coalitions or alliances. Explicit in this is the utility of all levers of national power, with the military instrument operating alongside the Diplomatic and Economic: hard and soft power in play, the ratio dependent upon the situation, but all levers in use.

However, if the Comprehensive Approach and securing influence represented potential 'Ways' within which the military would contribute, there has been increasing disquiet regarding the overarching strategy within which they could be employed. In his RUSI address of December 2009, the then CDS's remarks on the UK's lost capacity for strategic thinking resonated with a wide audience both in Whitehall and beyond, prompting examination by Parliamentary Committee[7] and a continuing public debate and discussion. It also brought sharply in to focus a sense of unbalanced 'Ends', 'Ways' and 'Means', despite the explicit inter-relationship stated in the NSS :

"A national security strategy, like any strategy, must be a combination of ends (what we are seeking to achieve), ways (the ways by which we seek to achieve those ends) and means (the resources we can devote to achieving the ends).[8]

A cynic could contend that this has been a recurring problem for British politicians and the UK Military since the withdrawal from Empire after the Second World War. Successive UK Defence Reviews have sought to manage relative decline, refocusing resources where appropriate and if possible against the highest priority threats. However, the process was accidental rather than deliberate: exempting the 'SDR New Chapter' of 2002, the UK did not conduct a rigorous examination of its defence and security needs for 12 years, until the publication of the NSS

in October 2010. The enduring reality of unevenly matched ambition and resource has not dampened British political appetite to remain a global player and actor, although it is perhaps fortunate that post-Cold War crises have been relatively close to home and thus logistically 'do-able'.[9] Throughout this period, UK military capability has been benchmarked against the US; an almost wistful longing for past imperial glories has only reinforced this trait.

Strategic Influence with the US?

Successive post-War UK administrations have viewed influence through the prism of the 'Special Relationship': to a greater or lesser extent, all have sought to be Macmillan's Athens to Washington's Rome. This has had unfortunate and unintended consequences, blinding many to the fact that the US has become an increasingly unhelpful single frame of reference or comparator for UK Defence. It is also where the disconnect between perceived and actual Influence has become most acute: the strategic relationship between the UK and the US.

If Suez finally established the limits of independent UK freedom of action without US acquiescence, the recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have underlined to contemporary audiences the further limits on UK influence. At the strategic level, the UK's close relationship with the US has delivered Insight[10] rather than Influence: not an unhelpful outcome and certainly useful, but it should not be confused for what it is not. A senior UK commander in Iraq believed he could introduce novel ways of conducting business, but that he had never managed to change American minds.[11] This may be inevitable in a US-led coalition where the majority of forces committed are American: it recognises the reality of political and resource equity and risk, translated into campaign leadership and ownership.

The nature and dynamics of the UK/US relationship have evolved over the past 70 years, but the centrality of this relationship to UK Foreign Policy and the British Military is unlikely to change, given the shared appreciation and liberal democratic principles that underpin it: 'Our relationship with the US will continue to be essential to delivering the security and prosperity we need and the US will remain the most powerful country in the world, economically and in military terms'.[12] Indeed, it is almost unthinkable to imagine the UK opting out of the 5-Eyes intelligence community and the more specific UK/US intelligence sharing agreement. Interoperability with US Forces will remain a guiding principle for British military capability.[13] Taken together, maintaining this relationship will remain a cornerstone of British 'national strategy', even if it can never been one of equals. However, American global responsibilities, and the ability to meet the resource bill that comes with them, has provided the US with a breadth and depth of capabilities well beyond that fielded by the UK. The shared Atlanticist perspective is altering as the US looks to the Pacific and the East, at least if not more than she does to the West. Palpable frustration with the failure of European nations to invest adequately in individual and collective defence and security, and the sense of this being outsourced to a financially indulgent US, has only compounded this. Additionally, the generations of Anglophile US military personnel, fondly recalling Cold War tours in the UK focused on the Soviet threat, are being replaced by those without that same shared heritage and experience:

'If current trends in the decline of European defence capabilities are not halted and reversed, future US political leaders - those for whom the cold war was not the formative experience that it was for me - may not consider the return on America's investment in NATO worth the cost.'[14]

Taken together, the utility of the US as a comparator for our national analysis is at best questionable, and at worst actively unhelpful. Jack Fairweather and Frank Ledwidge quote the frustration (bordering on anger) of senior US officers with UK ambition falling short of reality. The then CGS recognised as much in a speech to Chatham House in 2009: '..there is recognition that our national and military reputation and credibility, unfairly or not, have been called into question in the eyes of our most important ally as a result of some aspects of the Iraq campaign. Taking steps to restore this credibility will be pivotal – and Afghanistan provides an opportunity'.[15] Ignoring the unwitting hostage to fortune offered up in the final sentence, the sense is of a nation still seeking to 'punch above its weight' at the strategic level, but increasingly failing to hit its target. It is time for the UK to look elsewhere for a meaningful comparator.

Une Nouvelle Entente?

'France and Britain..share the same set of strategic problems: preserving their international influence within the Western family in general, and vis-a vis the US in particular; assuming occasional leadership for European missions as framework nations; and doing all that at an affordable cost'.[16]

The answer may well lie across the Channel: France provides a far more credible peer comparator for the UK, with formal and full re-entry in to NATO under President Sarkozy removing the final barrier to meaningful comparison. Despite differing perspectives on the European Project, UK and French interests and outlooks are the more striking for their similarity than their differences: both nations retain post-colonial responsibilities and outposts, have long-established military and diplomatic institutions and machinery, are P5 UN Security Council members, maintain nuclear deterrent forces and are committed to supporting and operating within key international bodies and alliances. From Bosnia to Afghanistan, UK and French forces have operated alongside each other: the recent Libyan campaign provided a level of shared political ownership and direction that both reinforced these similarities and provided some convergence. Any sense that the Anglo-French Accord of November 2010 would be honoured more in the breach has been challenged by the strong cooperation over Libya, although it is still early days for the agreement and its outcomes. For those who feared that closer UK/French integration would fundamentally alter and damage the UK/US relationship, the positive US reaction reflected the American desire and need for European NATO members to take greater responsibility for their security and defence needs.

Clearly, the Franco-American relationship has enjoyed something of a roller-coaster ride ever since the Suez debacle. The consciously independent path that France chose after

1956 denied her membership of the 5 Eyes intelligence sharing club and hampered interoperability with the US and other NATO allies. However, this generated a strategic perspective based on a different calculus and with different outcomes to those of the UK: arguably, the French stance over the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has not harmed French interests or reputation over the longer term. Until recently, France committed forces to ISAF in Afghanistan, but her level of forces deployed were roughly a third of the UK contribution. One could contend that the French had maintained greater strategic balance and thus spare capacity than the UK through a more limited deployment: indeed, the French were also engaged in Cote d'Ivoire whilst simultaneously configuring for Libya. Malcolm Chalmers has also questioned what a greater UK contribution has actually generated: 'The UK has chosen to contribute substantially and disproportionately (compared with other US allies) to these missions. It is an open question as to whether these interventions have added commensurately to the UK's security or Influence'.[17]

Post-SDSR, the UK military has retained its expeditionary ethos and capability, albeit with reduced outright capacity. Importantly, it remains able to operate alongside the US, or to be a lead nation in alternate operational frameworks, such as Libya. In so doing, the military instrument has preserved political options as well as military ones, and hence supported wider UK influence. However, there remains both opportunity and threat in balancing means and ends: an answer may lie in more innovative and imaginative 'Ways'.

The Same with Less: Squaring the Circle

The fiscal drivers for the SDSR provided an easy and familiar backdrop for commentary and critiques of the review itself; it also ensured that discussion followed a traditional pattern, with the possibility of existential threats to capabilities generating considerable heat, if correspondingly and depressingly little light. As Paul Cornish has written, the tendency for the military to see things in 'input', rather than 'output' terms,[18] ensured a quantative rather than qualitative focus. Arguably, it also prevented an assessment of military capability set against the risk-based approach established in the NSS, setting 'Means' at odds with 'Ends' and denying any developed analysis of capabilities from the viewpoint of 'options offered'. The need to resource and support operations in Afghanistan during the period of the review further restricted the opportunity for bold and iconoclastic thinking. Lastly, the recent phenomenon of the sentimentalising of military service and sacrifice[19] provided an emotive edge to proceedings, especially with regard to the future size of the Army.

The Allure of the 'Niche'

In the aftermath of an Air and Maritime-centric Libyan campaign, with the specific UNSCR clause 'excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory'[20], pre-SDSR public debate over the future roles and structure of the UK Armed Forces appears particularly jejune. As previously noted, an obsession with 'inputs' and the single Service agendas that this nourishes is in part to blame, as is a failure to accept that the present is an unreliable guide to the future.[21] The one certainty is uncertainty. Mindful that successful

military campaigns are fertile territory for retrospective counter-factual analysis, there is value in assessing what political and military options UK Armed Forces 'Configured for COIN' would have been able to deliver for Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR...but not in this paper.

The prioritisation of 'niche' capabilities, supposedly of greater individual value, and the conscious move away from the retention of a balanced range of capabilities across all three environments, is often cited as an, or even the answer to cash-strapped Defence departments. Unfortunately, the allure of the niche is a meretricious one, resting largely on an analysis of 'What would the US like us to offer?'. As Libya has shown, the Government was provided with policy and military options from the decision to opt for an 'Adaptable Britain' posture in SDSR; absent expected US leadership and deployed capability, the balanced range of air and maritime ISR, Strike and C2 capability afforded the UK a level of Influence from the Grand Strategic to the Tactical that a more limited and partial contribution would not have provided. Configuring on the apparent value-added nature of niche capabilities represents a gamble on an uncertain future and may substantially limit UK influence. An unattractive option in the abstract, in the context of NSS and its attendant risk-based approach to potential threats, it may actively undermine national policy through denial of strategic choices and options.

Reinvigorating the Reserves Contribution

The 'Future Reserves 2020' report provides a compelling case for the military contribution that Reserve Forces can and should provide, and especially in a time of austerity. The rather snobbish and off-hand 'Dads Army' view is lazy and inaccurate: the challenges and complexity of the current and likely future operational environment places a premium on access to the broadest possible pool of talent. One could contend that the systematic failure to understand the complex and multi-faceted character of both the Iraqi and Afghan theatres[22] is indicative of profound failings in our existing full-time structures and processes. Used intelligently, the specific qualities offered by 'domain experts' (eg in the realm of Cyber) would be force multipliers. Augmentation of the 'analytical trades' - intelligence staffs, cultural advisers, imagery and communications analysts - by reservists drawn from academia, industry and the many diasporas resident in Britain would both broaden and deepen our understanding of key nations or regions, and of the various 'flows' generated by globalization. It will be essential if the UK is to meet the stated requirement[23] to conduct up to three concurrent operations where intelligence capability and capacity will be the foundation stone. This would be absolutely aligned with the NSS intent to identify early threats and problems, and thus prevent Tier 2 and 3 risks from being realised. It would also be extremely cost-effective. For the RAF, the potential within the A2 Branch is obvious, supporting national and coalition operations and offering much-needed capacity and resilience within constrained budgets.

Organisational Reform

'Too often … we have placed influence on the periphery of our operations, failing to understand that reinforcing, or changing, the attitude and behaviour of selected audiences can have equal, if not greater, utility than force in securing our operational objectives'.[24]

The 'Ways' in which the UK could maximise influence from the military instrument have been inadequately assessed, poorly integrated with other levers of national power and optimised largely for (mainly kinetic) warfighting. An emphasis on 'inputs' based advocacy for 'vital ground' equipment of the separate Services has ensured that key enabling capabilities have suffered in comparison. The provision of sufficient Communications and Information Systems capacity, and investment in associated networks, is an obvious example. Unsexy and lacking overt sponsorship (although the creation and remit of Joint Forces Command should change this), the communications architecture and the connectivity it affords is vital to the direction and exploitation of the combat power of all three Services.

The creation of a National Security Council and National Security Adviser broke new ground for the UK Executive: it was an overt demonstration of the new Administration's determination to provide focus and direction for the nation's security, including defence. The selection of Sir Peter Ricketts[25] could not have been coincidental either, reflecting the centrality of Foreign Policy to the coalition's approach. Chaired by the PM, the composition of the NSC reflects the cross-Departmental approach to national security, ensuring the FCO, MOD and DfiD are collectively engaged, and drawing in other departmental and specialist advice as required. The NSC(Officials) group meets both before and after NSC meetings, with the remit to enact decisions taken at Ministerial level. However, whilst the NSC and NSC(O) have provided welcome coherency across the key departments of State, the mechanisms and processes to integrate lower level working remain a work in progress. Importantly, the operational level for the MOD has no clear equivalents in other departments and thus no obvious sockets with which to connect. An early 'win' would be to institutionalise cross-departmental linkages and fora, ensuring alignment vertically and horizontally from the NSC downwards. The House of Commons Defence Committee report in to the Comprehensive Approach recognised the cultural and organisational changes required: 'There is a need for more cross-departmental working with secondments between the [MOD, FCO and DfID] to enhance the skill sets of relevant staff and to increase the mutual understanding of the different cultures in each Department'.[26]

The utility of the military instrument outside of operations, and its integration with other government departments (OGDs), has also been inadequately employed in pursuance of UK interests and influence. It may be that the almost singular emphasis on the 'Main Effort' of Afghanistan has prevented a sufficiently rigorous examination of what the military instrument can contribute, outside of current operations. Equally, the command and control of the softer elements of military power should be scrutinised. Whilst PJHQ commands all UK units employed on overseas operations, linking deployed forces with the strategic level, there is no such single ownership of those forces on overseas exercise. The significant resources committed, and the opportunities to support wider UK national policy objectives, should drive a more coherent and integrated approach. Encouragingly, the International Policy and Plans (IPP) directorate within MOD has drafted an outline Defence

Engagement Strategy, intended to map across to similar engagement planning within the FCO, DfiD and BIS.

Libya: Exception or Norm?

The successful and relatively swift interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone stand in contrast to the drawn out and inconclusive campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan: furthermore, the lack of demonstrable military success has seen political risk realised back home. On first examination, it is no surprise that a key conclusion drawn by both those in uniform and civilians alike from the NSS and SDSR was that the UK would not indulge in military intervention operations for a generation – a conclusion rudely challenged by the Arab Spring. Yet an alternative analysis of the NSS would have signposted the potential for continued UK intervention overseas, despite the sobering experiences of the previous 10 years. Although a comprehensive description of the 'UK National Interest' does not exist, the NSS provides a brief summary of the central tenets: global engagement, the ability to trade freely, the importance of alliances and partnerships within a rules-based international system, and the importance of our national values: 'Our security, prosperity and freedom are interconnected and mutually supportive. They constitute our national interest'.[27] Moreover, the NSS noted that the national interest would be engaged if core values were seen to be at threat from the actions of others: 'Our national interest requires us to stand up for the values our country believes in – the rule of law, democracy, free speech, tolerance and human rights. Those are the attributes for which Britain is admired in the world and we must continue to advance them, because Britain will be safer if our values are upheld and respected in the world'.[28]

As such, the Government's decision to press for a UNSCR authorising military intervention in Libya was entirely consistent with the NSS and its (admittedly broad) definition of the UK's national interest. Arguably, the political and Prime Ministerial calculus has only been apparent in hindsight and was in part shaped by American unwillingness to assume the traditional and expected leadership role. Libya was a war of the Prime Minister's choice, rather than one he had inherited, and in Qadhaffi the PM was provided with a figure who could be seen as the very embodiment of a threat to 'the values our country believes in'. Close alignment with French analysis and shared political appetite provided an opportunity for overt European leadership, and a central UK role. Finally, a successful military campaign would serve to justify the findings of the NSS, support the conclusions of SDSR and attendant reshaping of the British Military, and demonstrate the determination to work with the UN in securing legitimacy for intervention.

However, testimony to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee in early/mid-2011 highlighted an intriguing and previously unappreciated difference of opinion between the PM and Service Chiefs as to the nature of the UK's military capabilities post-SDSR: were they 'full spectrum' or not? The disagreement is as interesting for what it says about an absence of shared vocabulary and understanding, as it is for the specific issue. One senses a Prime Ministerial assessment in relative terms (the full spectrum of capabilities required to service

or meet UK policy and security objectives), and that of the Service Chiefs in absolute ones. Healthy debate and honestly-held divergences of opinion are natural and welcome; disagreement on a fundamental issue is surprising and may be indicative of strained civil-military relations after a decade of land campaigns in the Middle East.

UK Civil-Military Relations

'I think the relationship between a Prime Minister and the defence chiefs should be quite a robust one...but in the end it has got to be a relationship where the politicians and the military are able to have a frank and clear discussion'.[29]

Arguably, current UK Civil-Military Relations are at a low ebb and have not – until recently - been afforded the internal and external scrutiny or analysis that they deserve. That which had occurred lacked the breadth and vigour attendant to that same debate in the US; Michael Clarke's and Matthew Parris's recent comments indicate renewed and welcome interest. For the latter, 'It's time we started to ask whether the leadership of Britain's Armed Forces is actually any good…Advice offered to ministers is consistently wrong'.[30]

All wars are political, but those of the last 10 years have been particularly so, creating significant tensions between the military and the political class. The result has been a less than shared appreciation of the utility and limits of the military instrument, and the geopolitical environment within which it is employed. Prime Ministerial frustration with senior military comments during Libya was exposed in July 11 at a Downing Street press conference: 'You do the fighting, I'll do the talking'. At a recent RUSI symposium, an official close to Downing Street revealed his and others surprise that the Libyan operation had taken 215 days, whereas Kosovo had only taken 78: 'And Libya was an easier problem than Kosovo'. The somewhat questionable analysis here is not the issue in itself; rather, it is the worrying lack of an agreed assessment against which British military force was committed. The implications for UK influence, reputation and credibility are clear; perhaps less so but equally profound are those for the regard in which military advice is held.

The 'zero sum' nature of Defence Review analysis, a tendency to count platforms, and unhelpful comparison with the US may have blinded the UK to one of our most influential contributions to coalition operations: the intellectual edge provided by our people. Set against reduced physical resource, their contribution at the operational level in coalition HQs provides leverage, gearing and influence for the UK. Indeed, the innovation in Ways noted earlier puts a premium on them: they could be seen as 'Force Elements' in their own right. More broadly, the reduction in UK military 'mass' dictates a changed appreciation of the value and warfighting contribution of the conceptual and moral components. Allied to this should be a re-evaluation of the contribution of the Reserve Forces to UK defence capability.

A more recent phenomenon has exacerbated the problem: confusion over the operational level itself. If the operational level is that which plans and orchestrates tactical activities to

service strategic/policy ends, there is a palpable sense – in fighting insurgencies in both Iraq and Afghanistan - that it has somewhat lost its way: 'It is thus very easy, in the continuing absence of strategy – of political goals to which the military effort is to be adapted – for counter-insurgency doctrine to fill the gap, for operations to double as strategy'.[31] Far from 'Strategic Compression', Strachan identifies what might be termed 'Operational (Level) Expansion' in the absence of clear strategy: the clear linkage between the tactical, operational and strategic levels has been lost, and the levels themselves have been conflated. Equally, the conduct of tactical level operations as an end in themselves or to no higher intent, design or purpose – memorably described by a Task Force Helmand Brigade Commander as 'mowing the lawn' – has allowed the notion of 'operating' to become confused with the operational level.

UK Air Power and the Operational Level

The RAF has traditionally and understandably prized the Physical Component: kit, equipment...'stuff'. As a technological Service where success at the tactical level is rooted in the optimum exploitation of our aircraft, it could hardly be otherwise. But in our recent past, we have too often confused 'operating aircraft' with 'being operational', and configured in peacetime for the routine business of the former, rather than for the more important latter. Arguably, the aftermath of the loss of Nimrod XV230 has accentuated this trend: the primary peacetime concern is to ensure compliance with the regulations whilst conducting flying activity. In operational theatres, this mindset has contributed to a tendency to default to Measurement of Activity at the Tactical level, rather than the more difficult but more instructive Measurement of Effectiveness. We have mistaken the 'inputs' of sorties and hours flown, fuel off-loaded, weapons dropped and targets struck for 'outputs': what our tactical activity has achieved in furthering the operational design or campaign in order to achieve strategic success and policy objectives. The distinctive yet different character of operations in the 1990s and the first years of this century may provide some clues.

'We do No Fly Zones'

The 1990s could be seen as the high water mark for Air Power, especially in its Fast Jet form. From DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, to the No Fly Zones over Former Yugoslavia (and the coercive Air Campaign of Autumn 1995) and ALLIED FORCE over Kosovo and Serbia, Air Power seemed to provide all the answers. Yet the NFZs imposed east of the Adriatic and over northern and southern Iraq were in response to different geo-political and strategic circumstances. Save for the relatively short kinetic air campaigns of 1991, 1995 and 1999, could the air policing of the 1990s be described as any real form of campaign? Or was the Air Component conducting linked tactical activities, overseen by an Air C2 node (the CAOC), by coalition members following national, coalition and UN agendas and instructions? In Churchillian shorthand, it was the 'KBO' school of air operations, conducted in the expectation of a maintained international political consensus, and/or the hope that there might be a shift in the strategic landscape. For our airmen, it provided excellent tactical experience and exposure whilst 'on operations', but it might not have been illuminating as to Air Component

employment at the Operational Level. Nor might it have expanded and developed our associated operational thinking, and imbued in us a better developed appreciation for what one senior airman has termed 'the grubby business of campaigning'.

'The Supporting Arm'

The military and political contexts of the Iraq and Afghan conflicts have discouraged much in the way of operational level thinking as to the employment of the Air Component. Despite Air and SF being the UK's only 'Theatre level' contribution[32] to the ISAF Campaign, the default UK view through the 'Helmand Lens' has informed political, media and commentariat analysis; in particular, the popular sentimentalisation of military service, and a re-heated 'lions and donkeys' backstory, has made dispassionate analysis difficult and seemingly disloyal. It is only with recent HCDC inquiries, investigative writing and the testimonies of key high level officers and officials that both campaigns are undergoing broader and overdue scrutiny. Within the Services, the dominant and expected 'Khaki narrative' has seen all deployments outside the Land Component as assessed often only in terms of the support provided to the British Army in the 3 Districts.

The impact has been profound. The notion of 'Main Effort' has seen capacity and capability for wider global tasks reduced, and a generation of servicemen for whom their military frame of reference is essentially singular. For the RAF, the emphasis has been on tactical excellence – almost solely in support of the Land Component in a limited if vicious type of conflict – with a few individuals in Air C2 billets in either Kabul or the CENTCOM CAOC in Al Udeid. The Arab Spring and renewed tension in the South Atlantic, alongside the usual sources of global tension and disharmony, ought to act as wake up calls for the requirement to retain balance and resilience for our wider national responsibilities. Indeed, whilst the character of the Libyan campaign is of considerable interest, the headline for Defence should be that these campaigns are not exceptional: they happen, and Defence needs to be able to provide military options in support of national policy objectives. A prolonged and difficult slog in Afghanistan has not overwritten Macmillan's emphasis on 'Events, dear boy, events'.

'The Moral is as Three to the Physical': Lessons from Libya

'It is also important to ask what the UK is planning to achieve by exercising increased influence over multilateral operations. British influence is most likely to be nationally productive where there is a strong national interest in the success of a coalition effort, and where a failure to provide a substantive contribution would substantially damage its chances of success. This in turn is most likely to be the case in circumstances where the UK constitutes a relatively large part of the potential coalition, and where the US (for whatever reason) is reluctant to provide the forces necessary for a particular task'.[33]

Malcolm Chalmers' prescient assessment of early 2009 predated both SDSR and the intervention in Libya, and envisaged operations outside of the extant Iraqi and Afghan template. The UK military contribution to Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP) provides a

useful example against which to assess how effectively the UK used the military instrument to achieve influence at the strategic and operational levels. Deliberately, individual Influence Operations – those military activities designed to influence both Pro- and Anti-Qadhaffi forces in Libya – will not be assessed.[34]

Context

The uncompromising political stance of Her Majesty's Government in seeking and securing UNSCRs 1970 and 1973 dictated that any military contribution would be relatively sizeable, and would de facto be almost exclusively from the air and maritime environments. Equally, the – to some – muted American enthusiasm for the operation and limited (but vital) contribution of men and materiel ensured that UK elements would have a disproportionate value within the Alliance's ORBAT. Importantly, this would be true of the contribution of UK personnel within various key HQs, yet posed an early dilemma: the prioritisation of the UK/US Military Relationship over the more multi-lateral one within NATO had required conscious disinvestment in the latter, and especially in the Southern Region. The UK would need representation and presence, but this would be from a standing start: indeed, prior to OUP, every UK post within Combined Air Operations Centre 5 (CAOC 5) at Poggio Renatico in Northern Italy had been gapped. In addition, at the Combined Joint Task Force HQ at Naples, built in part from the 'Peacetime Establishment'-provisioned Joint Force Command Naples HQ, the UK had no senior Airman in a coalition post.

From the outset, the UK needed to establish credibility in the eyes of NATO partners whilst simultaneously re-learning how to operate within, and speak the language of, NATO. The sizeable UK Air and Maritime contribution undoubtedly provided equity from mass, but significant military diplomacy was required at SHAPE, Naples and Poggio to enable the UK to place personnel in key staff appointments. Equally, it was apparent that the lack of expected US leadership, capability and capacity had caught many off guard, and that peacetime planning assumptions regarding relative contributions had been torn up. Against this backdrop, the provision of experienced analytical, operational and other support staffs generated early, disproportionate (to actual numbers deployed) and enduring influence for the UK, most obviously at CAOC 5 but to a lesser extent at CJTFHQ Naples as well: a genuine coalition force multiplier.

MOD, PJHQ and Air Command staffs had identified early the importance of the Air Component HQ[35] and the requirement to put high quality UK officers into key appointments. The Air Component would be central to operations over Libya and would be in control of the significant UK equity deployed on OUP: as such, it was also central to UK reputation and the management of military risk with political consequences. However, and potentially due to the unique command and leadership framework for OUP generated by US decisions, the UK had not conducted a formal 'Influence Estimate' for the operation in general, and HQs in particular. To a great extent, the UK commanders on the spot were left to conduct their own analysis and back-brief the UK on their findings; the UK ACC conducted both 'Influence' and 'C2' Estimates

upon arrival at Poggio in early April. By the end of June, 97 UK personnel would be employed there in support of OUP, representing a fifth of all CAOC 5 personnel. In reality, one could argue that this is not surprising and recognises that campaigns develop their own dynamics; any initial estimate would only have been overtaken by events. But it does point to a failure to adequately think through scenarios and potential requirements in peacetime, the more so given the risk taken by disinvestment in NATO. With the conclusion of OUP and the benefit of hindsight, UK influence through the Air Component HQ can be seen in three main areas.

Firstly, through the professional and personal relationship between the 3* CFAC OUP (Lt Gen Jodice USAF) and the UK 1* Air Component Commanders. The considerable and deep shared operational experience of the RAF and USAF over 20+ years generated a level of trust and confidence that allowed UK thinking on the Libyan air campaign at the operational level to be exposed and debated. Interestingly, it offers an alternative viewpoint to ex-SECDEF Gates' comments noted earlier: genuine capacity and competence serving to maintain and underpin US confidence and trust. Additionally, all UK operations were conducted within the NATO framework – there were no 'national only' operations that would have tested alliance cohesion and damaged UK influence within both the CAOC and at Naples.

Secondly, through UK leadership of, and key staff within, the CAOC Strategy Division.[36] The 'Strat Div' was central to the planning of the Air Campaign, generating options for the Commander and developing a Campaign Plan that sought to maximise the resources available whilst minimising risks. It placed the protection of the Libyan population at its heart, whilst seeking to write down the capacity of the Regime to kill and injure its own people. Again, the UK was able to deploy high calibre individuals with the necessary skills and experience to influence the design of the Air Campaign, safeguarding national equities whilst reinforcing other Alliance perceptions of the UK contribution – a virtuous cycle.

Thirdly, the UK provided people to the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division (ISRD) who were able to 'join the dots' of an often confused and partial intelligence picture, including the Head of Division for the second half of OUP. The important lesson here is that of the pivotal contribution of UK personnel to the successful prosecution of coalition campaigns, and thus the influence that is generated for the UK beyond the deployment of physical kit. Amongst a blizzard of dictums, we sometimes forget Napoleon's understanding that the 'Moral is as three to the Physical' – the more so when the 'physical' is limited by choice or austerity.

Configuring for Influence: An Alternative Framework

Having outlined the context and challenges the UK military faces in maximising influence, it would be somewhat feeble to dodge making some recommendations; in short, how UK Defence could be configured better for influence. At the risk of attempting to win this year's 'Appalling Alliteration' prize, there are five specific themes that should be addressed. All speak to a final 'C' word, namely 'Credibility'. As the UK demonstrated in Iraq after 2003,

lack of credibility is a rapid route to reputational damage and negative influence – and is readily apparent to all audiences.

Coherency

The military instrument cannot operate in a vacuum or independently. Limited Defence means should drive closer routine integration with sister Government departments: it cannot await a crisis before individuals and teams are thrown together. The role of the NSC should be self-evident, and the potential has been shown by its performance during the Libyan crisis. However, it should be supported by a reinforced Cabinet Office that directs subsequent activity.

Communications

There is little point in integrating the Diplomatic, Military and Economic instruments if the UK is unable to explain – to all audiences – our actions and our beliefs. The importance of Strategic Communications has (albeit belatedly) impressed itself upon the Government, including the MOD; indeed, it is a key element of the institutionalised strategic capacity that the UK is seeking to regenerate and not merely 'military spin'. The 'Future Character of Conflict' paper noted that 'To win the battle of the narratives, UK Defence must be able to wield influence at all levels, across multiple media, within joint, multinational and interagency environments at much higher tempo than now'.[37] More bluntly, Professor Lawrence Freedman has stated that '..superiority in the physical environment is of little value unless it can be translated into an advantage in the information environment'.[38] Strategic Communications are a key requirement for Influence, yet the UK has only recently published a Joint Doctrine Note on the topic; even then, it speaks purely to military STRATCOM. If credibility is central to Influence, then our ability to speak with clarity to numerous audiences is of equal importance: we should ensure there is no 'Say-Do' gap between our words and our actions.[39]

Capability

The UK has the opportunity to transform the intellectual and conceptual backdrop for the 2015 SDSR. UK military operations over the last 10 years have demonstrated the requirement for balanced forces that are able to provide policy options and choices: in essence, to enable the UK to conduct independent or coalition action to support our national interest. But 'Main Effort' can all too easily become 'Sole Effort', threatening to distort our analysis, bending ourselves out of shape and limiting choices. It has also failed to generate the strategic influence that we have sought. Additionally, true capability should be seen in our people at least as much as in our equipment, and in the conceptual underpinning for their actual or threatened employment.

Capacity

The UK is not 'strategically shrunk' merely as a function of a reduction in deployed forces. Operation ELLAMY was almost a perfect (air- and maritime-heavy) fit for the 2000-strong non-enduring complex operation assumed under SDSR. It achieved for the UK a level of influence

within the coalition equal to that of France and well-matched to associated Diplomatic and Economic activity. For some, it may stand in stark relief to the enduring and costly enterprises in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the need to meet both enduring and contingent operations highlights the importance of not over-reaching ourselves: even the US is facing the realities of reduced resource and the implications for appropriate but not excessive commitment.[40] Novel use of Reserve Forces, academia and diasporas may offer a way ahead here for the UK, especially with regard to our national Intelligence capacity; all would appear aligned with NSS intent to identify and deal with issues before they become problems and crises.

Culture

If all instruments of national power are to contribute to maintaining UK influence, generating the improved coherency noted above, there will need to be a change in departmental and wider Whitehall culture – both by and within organisations. The MOD has often, if unintentionally, distanced other departments by engendering an overtly military feel to business[41]; equally, it has at times been difficult for MOD staff to identify where they connect with their opposite numbers. There have been improvements: in Afghanistan, where the DfID-led Provincial Reconstruction Team and Task Force Helmand work hand in glove, and with the role of the NSC(L) during the Libyan crisis. However, this should become the norm, requiring all parties to more readily engage and, when necessary, compromise.

Enhancing Air at the Operational Level

The revised strategic landscape, and a reduced and re-shaped UK Defence, will drive significant change in the way we do business. This paper has argued that comparisons with the US as to military capability and capacity are imperfect, and that the UK will not possess the physical size of force to expect influence through size of contribution. In large scale coalition warfighting, influence for the UK at the strategic level has for some years been more a factor of shared political risk than of size of forces contributed. At the operational level, the UK has sometimes lost its way, fixating on tactical activity and the equipment to conduct it, rather than asking ourselves the 'in order to' questions. Why are we doing this? What is the linkage of 'Strategy to Task'? What campaign objective is this supporting?

Yet there are examples and insights from the last two decades of RAF operational experience that might point the way for enhancing our thinking at, and contribution to, the operational level.

Our prowess in kinetic targeting must move into the non-kinetic domain and beyond the rather loosely-termed 'Information Operations'. If everything we do is geared to influencing opponents, allies and the home front, through multiple conduits and always against competing narratives, then the notion of Influence will be central to our conceptual development. In Libya, it was often what we chose not to do kinetically that maintained strategic breathing space and options: I would argue that we are at the point where our kinetic activity supports the Information campaign, rather than the other way round.

Generating and maintaining Influence is not a part-time activity. The Service's Engagement Strategy should be sophisticated in development but simple and clear in execution. Air Power has always been about providing options, both singly and in concert with our sister Services. Our engagement in policy debates and thinking should reflect this; hence, our understanding of political thinking and attendant risk/benefit calculus must always be well-honed. And we need to be upfront about what we can and cannot do.

A premium will need to be placed on enhanced education: we need to broaden the intellectual base of our servicemen and women earlier, to complement the excellent, tactically focused training of which we are rightly proud. There is the danger in the latter of producing superb SMEs who struggle when confronted by an operational and political context that demands more sophisticated analysis and understanding. Alongside the programmed professional development for Officers and Airmen, there is a mentoring and educating role at station and unit level to identify and bring on our most able across all branches and trades. We should assess our current collective, Joint and Coalition training to ensure it provides more than just high quality tactical training. Participation in demanding Air C2 training should become the norm, rather than the exception. Too much reliance is placed on 'OJT'[42], rather than proper, focused pre-deployment training and education; this applies equally to those personnel nominated as augmentees to other national or coalition HQs against contingency requirements. By dint (or otherwise) of innate talent, ability and commitment, most will swim, some will sink and a few will really shine. I would argue that those in the last category are the intellectually and professionally curious – the autodidacts in the Service that have flourished at least as much by their own efforts as by the mandated, formal RAF and Joint education that they have experienced. For example, our Qualified Weapons Instructors may be supremely impressive tactical operators, but we need to develop them (and their talented non-QWI peers) to think and thrive at the operational level: it is not a pre-ordained progression.

Conclusion

The political appetite for use of the UK military instrument is unlikely to be lost anytime soon, even if that usage might be more finely calibrated in the wake of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Equally, the military mass that the UK can employ in support of national objectives has reduced steadily over the last two decades. Budgetary pressures in the US and a switch in emphasis to the Asia/Pacific region has shown that old certainties regarding American support may no longer apply: the Libyan campaign and reluctance to become militarily engaged over Syria support this, at least in part. As such, the Anglo-French Accord may well have to deliver tangible and enduring outputs for both partners, quite apart from the implications for the rest of NATO.

The reduction in Means has been and is palpable: the air campaign over Kosovo generated well over a 1000 sorties a day, whilst strike missions in Libya were less than a tenth of that figure. Sophisticated employment of limited assets will be essential in all environments, not just in the Air and Space domains, and that can only be rooted in the conceptual horsepower

brought to bear before and during that employment. For the RAF, this should force us to examine the education we provide (and the widest possible engagement that informs it) to ensure that we have both breadth and depth in the human aspects of our capability. As our size reduces, we should aspire to be the broadest possible church, continually challenging convention, process and thinking. Our brightest and most thoughtful should be at the heart of this, understanding the nuances and complexities of strategic and operational contexts to maximise the contribution offered by the air component. However, our wider education and training should be targeted and tailored to develop this ethos across the Service and thus generate the required capacity as well as capability. The Operational Level is where the Service can best achieve leverage, gearing and influence for the UK from its air force: we should be identifying, nurturing and cherishing our talent, such that it can be deployed and employed for real effect in orchestrating tactical actions for strategic effect and hence desired policy objectives. Increasingly, influence will be at the heart of our activity, both 'on ops' and routine: we will deploy on exercise, as well as in anger, to reassure and deter, providing strategic messaging from our presence whilst honing our tactical capability.

An acceptance of the influence that can be generated from the Service's conceptual (re) investment in the Operational Level would also serve to underline the fundamental importance of Air C2. Command and control are linked terms but are not synonymous: our processes and structures for the latter are only understood and exploited by the former. When set in terms of joint and coalition campaigning, effective operational level Air C2 – analysis, planning, orchestration and execution – is the force multiplier sans pareil. It also underlines the need for, and is a core element of, environmental expertise in the understanding and employment of air and space power: the rationale for an independent air service.

Notes

[1] *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, 2010, 10.
[2] Matt Cavanagh. 'Missed Opportunity: How failures of leadership derailed the SDSR'. RUSI Journal Oct/Nov 2011 Vol 156 No 5 pg 9.
[3] House of Commons Defence Committee. 'The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy', 6th Report of Session 2010-11, HC 761.
[4] 'David Cameron: Armchair Generals Were Wrong On Libya'. **http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2011/09/02/cameron-armchair-generals_n_947042.html**
[5] Alex Evans and David Steven, 'Organizing for Influence: UK Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty', Chatham House, London, June 2010, 14.
[6] However, the Foreign Secretary's speech of 8 Sep 2011 outlines his intent for renewed global diplomatic engagement and enhanced presence for the FCO.
[7] *House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee: Who Does UK National Strategy?*,12 Oct 2010.
[8] *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, 2010, 10.

[9] Albeit at a price: Ledwidge quotes an estimate of the cost of keeping a single soldier in Afghanistan for one year of £400 000.
[10] Where 'insight' is defined as knowing why something has happened or is happening, Joint Doctrine Publication 2-00, Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2011, 1-7.
[11] Oxford Seminar presentation, Nov 2011.
[12] *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, 2010, 15.
[13] A RAF 'Strategic Priority' is to 'Harmonize our air power capability, concepts and doctrine with those of the US Forces'.
[14] Then US Secretary of Defense Bob Gates. NATO speech 9 Jun 2011.
[15] General Sir Richard Dannatt. 'Perspectives on the nature of future conflict' lecture, Chatham House, 15 May 2009.
[16] Etienne de Durand. 'Entente or Oblivion: Franco-British Defence Co-operation'. RUSI pg 95.
[17] Malcolm Chalmers. 'Keeping Our Powder Dry' RUSI Journal Feb/Mar 2011. No 156 Vol pg 20.
[18] 'What is required is a shift in emphasis from defence 'inputs' – weapon systems, equipment and force postures – to strategic 'outputs' – the functions required to ensure national security and defence in a challenging and changing environment'. Paul Cornish 'Strategy in Austerity' CH paper pg vii.
[19] Rob Fry has referred to the 'excessive reverence' with which the UK military are held by the British public; Michael Clark has referred to the phenomenon of 'recreational grief'.
[20] UNSCR 1973 para 4.
[21] Sir Michael Howard: "(The past is) an inexhaustible storehouse of events (that could be used to) prove anything or its contrary". Quoted by Echevarria: 'The Trouble with History'. 'Parameters', Summer 2005.
[22] As recounted in Jack Fairweather's 'A War of Choice' and Frank Ledwige's 'Losing Small Wars'.
[23] *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, 2010, 19.
[24] Joint Doctrine Note 1/12: 'Strategic Communication: The Defence Contribution', Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2012, v.
[25] Previously Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the FCO.
[26] HCDC Report: 'The Comprehensive Approach'. Seventh Session 2009/10.
[27] *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, 2010, 22.
[28] ibid,4.
[29] HCDC Report on SDSR and NSS 6th Report para 61
[30] 'These buffoons don't deserve our salutes'. The Times 25 June 2011.
[31] 'Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War'. Hew Strachan, 'Survival' vol 52 no.5 October-November 2010 pg 168
[32] Of note, the SF contribution has been discussed in term of 'strategic effect' and influence, whereas that of the Air component has been seen only (and erroneously) in terms of support to the British Army in Central Helmand, rather than to the ISAF mission across Afghanistan.
[33] Malcolm Chalmers. 'A Force for Influence? Making British Defence Effective'. RUSI Journal 153:06 pg 22.
[34] For clarity, the initial UK Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) to recover Entitled

Personnel from Libya was termed Operation DEFERENCE and was complete by late February 2011. The initial and deconflicted kinetic operations conducted by nations immediately following UNSCR 1973 were under the banner of Operation ODYSSEY DAWN (OOD); upon handover to NATO for command of Libyan operations, the Alliance intervention was named Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP). For both OOD and OUP, the UK national contribution was known as Op ELLAMY.

[35] The CAOC was originally expected to operate from Izmir, Turkey, in accordance with peacetime NATO C2 structures. The early move forward to Poggio was directed by the 3* USAF Combined Joint Air Component Commander.

[36] Lead by an RAF Group Captain, supported by two Wing Commanders: all had previous CAOC experience and immersion in air campaign planning. Of note, the Group Captain had current NATO experience.

[37] *Ministry of Defence Strategic Trends Programme: Future Character of Conflict*, 12.

[38] Lawrence Freedman. 'The Transformation of Strategic Affairs', pg20.

[39] For a senior US view, see Admiral Mullen's piece at: http://www.jcs.mil/newsarticle.aspx?ID=142

[40] See the Centre for New American Security report: 'Hard Choices: Responsible Defence in an Age of Austerity'. Oct 2011.

[41] It could be that wider use of the acronym PAG – 'Partners Across Government' – would help, rather than the MOD's use of 'OGD'.

[42] On the Job Training. In the mid-90s, RAF officers were seconded or posted to 3 CAOCs on separate but simultaneous operational duties, not including CAOC9 in the UK; we now have Al Udeid alone.