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LIGHTER THAN AIR OR HOT AIR? INFLUENCE, DEFENCE ENGAGEMENT AND THE AIR POWER CONTRIBUTION

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ABSTRACT

Britain’s role as a major power requires power projection and increasingly, in an unpredictable world destabilised by globalisation, a need achieve this through soft power and influence rather than hard power and coercion. Influence requires understanding, which the military apparatus can support through defence engagement. Working under 4 pillars of stability, exports, diplomacy and security, the strength of the UK aerospace industry dictates that exports is where air power can deliver most. This paper concludes that air power has a leading role to play and that export policies, methods of defence procurement and government strategy for industrial growth are all areas where more could be done to support Britain’s National Security Strategy.
INTRODUCTION

"In a world of startling change, the first duty of Government remains: the security of our country".

UK National Security Strategy

The world is changing. Major Powers “need new ways of understanding the shifting dynamics of the international landscape, a landscape marked by emerging centres of influence, but also by non-traditional, even non-state actors, and the unprecedented challenges and opportunities created by globalization”.¹ A lighter touch is arguably more effective in today's world and that of the future than hard power. While Britain may be a small island, it remains a key global economic and political actor with a need to project influence worldwide. The increasing relevance of soft power dictates that this global projection will be best supported through defence engagement and a lighter approach to the use of military apparatus and air power.

The British Government believes security at home is delivered by stability overseas. English is one of the most commonly spoken languages throughout the world. British people live all over the world and there is much cultural diversity within Britain itself, indeed 10% of Briton’s live overseas and 13% of the current population in Britain are not originally British.² Sterling is recognised as a major currency in foreign exchange performance, Britain is a nuclear power and has a conventional military capability with proven intent and willingness to use it globally. It is a permanent member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC), has a rich history of global activity and a proven track record of successful diplomatic and physical intervention based on values of democracy, the rule of law, free speech, tolerance and human rights. For these reasons, Britain remains a major power, some might even argue a great power, despite a reducing global status from the height of the British Empire in the 1900s. Indeed the Commonwealth, the remnants of a powerful imperial structure, remains a strong diplomatic medium and a valuable source of solidarity, commitment and loyalty. Britain’s National Security Strategy (NSS) recognises these points by declaring that “national interest requires [it] to reject any notion of the shrinkage of influence” and that Britain, as “an outward-facing nation”, must “protect interests at home, [by] projecting influence abroad” with a “strategic presence wherever [Britain] needs it”.³

This ambition needs to be realised in an uncertain world. The terror attacks in the USA in 2001 and in London in 2007, followed by uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa since 2011, have shaped the western approach to liberal internationalism but have also provided an opportunity to

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create stable, resilient, institutionally supported societies,\(^4\) vital to the UK due to the adverse effects that violence in one region can have on others.

Despite this uncertainty, since the post war peak in 1952 British Defence Spending has steadily declined from 7% of the Gross Domestic Product to its current 2.8% with a predicted fall to 2.4% by 2016 after the next Strategic Defence and Security Review.\(^5\) Other countries now spend significantly more than Britain in this area, with some such as China spending more on defence than France, Britain and Germany combined. With a realisation that ambition is starting to exceed resources, there is recognition that prevention of these conflicts is better and cheaper than attempting to cure. This has meant a change in focus amongst government think-tanks and policy makers, reflecting that in order to achieve the outward looking global status desired, a shift is needed from reliance on hard power and physical deterrence to soft power, influence and upstream intervention. Indeed the Strategic Defence and Security Review laid out in 2010 that the UK would take a “new approach to developing and employing the Armed Forces” through an “emphasis on deterrence”, an “integrated approach to build stability overseas” and through increased “defence diplomatic engagement”.\(^6\) More recently the latest issue of the Defence Joint Operating Concept highlights that the “starting point is the importance of strategic understanding… contributing to national influence, security and prosperity”.\(^7\) In order to achieve this, there has to be a step change in the methods used to tackle issues affecting Britain’s interests and greater understanding amongst senior decision makers about how to utilise the levers of power to best effect. The NSS calls for a greater use of soft power, engagement, understanding and influence and the government has responded through the Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) and the International Defence Engagement Strategy (IDES).\(^8\) However, there has to also be a recognition that prevention has practical limits, soft power is only really convincing when underpinned by hard power,\(^9\) so the traditional role of the military is likely to remain, despite the shift in focus.

It is not only financial considerations which are driving these changes. The emphasis on softer, upstream engagement and intervention is also influenced by a lack of perceived existential threat to the UK and hence a lack of motivation and support from the voting population. Any democratic government needs to protect their own survival and the dichotomy of managing security at a micro or individual level, rather than dealing with it at a macro or national level, is difficult to overcome. Voting populations are often more concerned about personal security such as health and

\(^{4}\) UK Building Stability Overseas Strategy, Published jointly by the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, July 2011, p1.


\(^{7}\) Defence Joint Operating Concept, DCDC, UK Ministry of Defence, Mar 2014.

\(^{8}\) UK National Security Strategy published by the UK Government in 2010.

\(^{9}\) Future Character of Conflict, DCDC Strategic trends programme, UK Ministry of Defence, 2 Feb 2010.
education whereas the government also needs to manage the wider security issues, physical or otherwise, affecting the UK, its prosperity and interests.

Coupling austerity and popularity with a changing and unstable world, Britain must exploit every ounce of capability it has to make best use of its limited military, capitalising on the opportunities that soft power can bring. Non-kinetic activity and a cross-government, inter-agency and multinational approach will dominate future issues. The role of the military will increasingly be defence engagement, the projection of soft power, gaining understanding and influence rather than employing brute force and coercion. In the words of the then Chief of the Defence Staff “strategic influence, support and engagement activity [will be] essential to modern operations”. Chinese investment in infrastructure, roads and railways in Africa has shown how a positive impression can be created. Polls suggest that “the number of [African] people who now view China as a positive influence in their country is very close to, and in some cases surpasses, those viewing the USA as a positive influence”. Yet success this way is far from assured. David Tal describes the failure of the British in 1945-55 to secure influence over the Egyptians through a trade relationship. This lack of conclusive evidence will be a common theme in this paper, which looks at the changing world and the case for soft in preference to hard power. It focusses on the psychological aspects of whether influence is really possible and if so, how it might be achieved through working with other governments and industry to gain understanding. It analyses how diplomatic channels can be supported by military activity and considers how Britain might best develop relationships to maximise return for investment. It argues that history, trade agreements, bilateral arrangements and strategic partners put Britain in a unique place to lead the world in a softer form of defence. Finally it uses this combined knowledge base to argue a case that air power has a key role to play at the centre of that activity, exploiting the brand reputation of the Royal Air Force to capitalise on Britain’s aerospace industry and export market to build on the relationships already established on multinational projects to further Britain’s understanding and influence. It recognises that the overseas bases, operations and exercises the RAF are engaged with are a networking opportunity, the defence training and in-service support contracts are all building capacity and stability and finally it recognises the network of defence attaché, loan service and exchange personnel, discussing how updated career management could significantly increase our ability to gain influence.

Globalisation is rapidly reshaping the world, the nature of security and defence in the future.\textsuperscript{13} The effect of these developments is changing demographics as an ever expanding, more connected, more aware and culturally diverse population dissatisfied with their conditions migrate. Power will rely on economics and diplomacy rather than military might to dominate and means that struggles of the future will not be for nuclear deterrence and aircraft carriers, but will be for intergovernmental influence and access to ever dwindling natural resources such as hydrocarbons, food and water.\textsuperscript{14} Political direction will be increasingly population determined, meaning a vertical shift in power, biasing control from government to population. Governments will need to recognise and understand this, adapting to provide governance in that construct. In addition, globalisation and connectedness are likely to couple with increasing inter-reliance between nations as the fight for resources means that remote issues and unexpected countries could become increasingly influential. Therefore a horizontal power shift could also be perceived, moving more control to nations which a decade ago would be unexpected, including developing and third world countries.

Population requirements are expected to increase as citizens become more aware of both strategic and current events in the world through access to the internet and social media. 22\% of the world’s population live below the poverty line\textsuperscript{15} and an increasing understanding of this inequality is likely to mean stronger vocalisation of opinions and pressure on governments to provide.\textsuperscript{16} Also, set against a backdrop of increasing constraint and legislation, military advanced technologies will be of reducing relevance set against widespread modern information technology\textsuperscript{17}, which is already creating borderless economies and communities. Popularised as a shift from ‘brute force to brain force’,\textsuperscript{18} this may well affect business behaviour, values, judgements and preferences, and open ‘black market’ arms trading such that weapon proliferation and the subsequent arming of dissatisfied populations may increase criminal activity to a level where governmental control measures may not cope. Exacerbated by reduced spending in real terms on military development, state and non-state enemies once perceived inferior are likely to become better equipped and more able to hold governments to ransom, meaning that negotiated solutions, however unpalatable they may be, are likely to become more common.\textsuperscript{19}

Access to another countries resources is not a given right and to take by force will rarely ensure security long term. Diplomacy and trade agreements are probably the only viable strategy, which will be difficult in the face of opposition from non-state actors such as transnational corporations,

\textsuperscript{13} Global Strategic Trends Out to 2040, 4\textsuperscript{th} Edition, DCDC.
\textsuperscript{14} Future Character of Conflict, DCDC.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid, p173.
\textsuperscript{17} Strachan H, \textit{The Direction of War}, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2013, p47.
lobby groups and public-political movements. Indeed, the ownership of natural resources on sovereign territory could be considered a key negotiating power and Nelson reports that the increasing production of hydrocarbons in the USA means that by 2020 “the likes of Saudi Arabia and Russia will no longer [be able] to hold it to ransom… the ‘E-bomb’ could transform world politics as profoundly as the collapse of the Berlin Wall”. 20 However, Hough argues that the case for natural resources becoming a cause of conflict is unproven21 and given the current broad sufficiency in the world, this case appears to be well founded. However, it does not look to the future enough where in 50 years, the world may be a very different place, and the valuable assets being fought over, very different from those of today.

There may also be a reducing gap in military advantage as the US hegemonic status is challenged and as civilian equipment capabilities catch up with military. The common thought that technology can outweigh mass may well be overtaken as this technological gap narrows, placing a greater reliance on people and the ability to influence rather than coerce. The world is already becoming multi-polar as developing countries such as ‘BRIC’ nations catch up with the developed world, indeed the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and UK Influence reported that it is hard to exaggerate the ‘mega-shifts’ currently underway in global power,22 which may cause instability as the US loses its grip on global domination. Therefore the ability to operate in an unpredictable and unstable environment without relying on military force will be a useful skill. Unlikely alliances may form, diplomacy may be the only practicable way to achieve resolution.

Military forces are also expensive and national industry difficult to sustain, again placing a huge reliance on cooperation. Military action usually has a significant detrimental effect on an economy, not just due to the cost of operations but stock market values too. For example, following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001, the New York Stock Exchange fell by 14% in one week in anticipation of a USA response to the attack and the prospect of conflict, the biggest single loss in NYSE history.23 Therefore the choice of how to spend critically lacking public finances to gain maximum popular support is likely to reduce focus on the military lever of power. While the Clauswitzian view that “the end for which a soldier is recruited, clothed, armed and trained… is simply that he should fight at the right place and the right time”24 remains valid, the 2013 vote against using force in Syria in the UK House of Commons and in US Congress, demonstrated an already reducing political appetite to commit troops to battle. This makes western hegemony look weak and fails on Britain’s strategic narrative of a ‘Responsibility to Protect’,

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indicating that the era of conscience interventions may be coming to an end, with interest based
decision making becoming more prevalent.

Some have argued that the end of the cold war and decolonisation should have promoted peace
and stability, and indeed in the late 1900s this looked to be the case with occurrences of conflict falling year on year. However, this has now plateaued and the bleak outlook discussed above, means that soft power and influence may be the only viable options in future conflicts.

INFLUENCE

"A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790

Influence is the "power or ability to affect someone’s beliefs or actions, or a person or thing with such power"; the critical word in the context of this paper being ‘beliefs’. Conversely, coercion is the practice of forcing an individual or group to act against their will, by the use of force or the threat of force, to induce a desired response. The quote from Franklin is key, if influence succeeds in changing the outcome of a course of action, but it is done without the full support of the influenced, it will only be temporary, and in fact could be considered to have been coercion rather than influence. Coercion, following Franklin’s analogy, will usually not deliver a stable long term solution.

The idea of influence is not new but it has only recently that it has come to prominence in British military doctrine. Indeed great military commanders and philosophers have recognised the importance of psychology since the times of Clausewitz, who stated that war is “a duel and a psychological phenomenon” and Napoleon who agreed that “there are but two powers in the world, the sword and the mind.” Until the early 1900s, war remained predominantly a test of mass and strength. Throughout the 1900s this evolved to recognise the manoeuvrist approach, out-thinking the enemy, and from there the importance of psychology developed rapidly with the advent of effects based operations, the comprehensive and now integrated approach, and a focus on using all levers of power. In the early 1900s Liddell-Hart stated that “the real target in war is the mind of the enemy” but it wasn’t until 2003 when doctrine started to talk in terms of the ‘centrality of influence’.

However, influence is no panacea. The relationship between coercion and persuasion is very close, indeed lighter touch coercion is no different to persuasion and so on this sliding scale of interaction, influence relies on kinetic capability as an ultimate persuasive tool. Influence is also difficult to measure. There is often no definitive point when it is possible to state that a country’s behaviour has changed and even if this point can be defined, it is usually difficult to pin that behavioural change on the influence that attempted to create it. In addition, the mind-set of the military machine is such that a softer approach to war is often not accepted. Professor Anthony King from the University of Exeter uses Richard Dawkins study of human cultural evolution and his

28 Clausewitz C, On War, Wordsworth, Ware, UK, 1997.
‘meme’, a combination of genealogy and culture, to discuss this. He argues that a ‘meme’ has been created amongst military leadership such that they are disinclined to adapt to changing environments. Despite the commitments stated in the NSS and SDSR, these factors highlight why a shift to soft power may be resisted.

This leads to the conclusion that soft power and influence have an important role to play but vitally, only as part of an overall package of intervention. Hillary Clinton adds that “the geometry of global power has become more distributed and diffuse as the challenges we face have become more complex and cross-cutting...as the world has changed, so too have the levers of power that can most effectively shape international affairs”. Nye describes soft power as the employment of attraction rather than coercion and outlines why influence cannot be achieved without hard power. He cites four reasons: the likely devastating results of the use of nuclear weapons which effectively rules out conflict between the major powers; aversion to the significant costs of military operations; growing reluctance to use military force in discretionary situations, fuelled by popular opinion in democratic societies; and the effect of globalisation and interdependence on economic trade and national prosperity. Keohane and Nye support this by outlining that “the world is now one in which security and force matter less [because] countries are connected by multiple social and political relationships”. The UK House of Lords Select Committee also reported this year that “military force, though undoubtedly vital, is proving insufficient for defending the international interests of modern states” and that “international relations are becoming ever more important as many nations become increasingly interconnected and interdependent”.

Regardless of the pros and cons, in the current economic climate, possibly the strongest argument for influence is the fact it is cheap. The FCO, which has traditionally delivered the majority of UK influence, is funded by some £1.6Bn in the 2014 budget whereas the traditional provider of hard power, the MoD, has been allocated some £38bn with further separate funding to support the additional costs of some military operations. This 4% differential is a good ratio in comparison to countries like the USA and Japan who invest just 0.3-0.5% but shows it is actually finances which dictate, to a certain extent, how far the UK can pursue its military and political ambitions. The complexity and cost of military intervention will drive engagements of choice to be increasingly rare and predominantly interest based, rather than defending values and morals, leaving outward

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39 ibid, p5.
looking nations, such as the UK, relying on partnerships, alliances and influence rather than military strength. Sun Tzu said that “to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill, to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill”\(^{41}\) and the influence this needs can require the full scope of the use of power to achieve objectives. Maj Gen Binns, stated that it can be “anything from 155mm artillery to hosting visits”\(^{42}\) and the potential vehicles for gaining influence can hence be discussed within the traditional levers of power – diplomatic, military and economic. In the diplomatic sphere there are the relationships built through embassy networks, the partnerships forged at various political and trade levels and the more formal treaties and alliances created between governments. Similarly on the economic front, the offer of financial rewards and incentives to comply with Britain’s wishes is the influence end of the spectrum while the threat or application of economic sanctions moves towards coercion. Finally, as discussed, soft power needs hard power in the form of the military as a background measure to achieve credibility. Robert Cialdini’s ‘Weapons of Influence’ set out a useful academic framework to achieve best effect\(^{43}\) which can be applied within those levers of power. Pinker supports him by outlining which human motivations can be targeted to allow “orientation towards cooperation and altruism”, the motivations he discusses mainly being self-control, morals and reason.\(^{44}\) Cialdini’s 6 key themes are reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking and finally, scarcity, which can be analysed from a social science perspective to apply to real world international relations.

Society exists to build on the skills and emotional support individuals can bring together to prosper as a group. Reciprocity, doing someone a favour, can ‘buy’ allegiance so while western governments in hard economic conditions tend to look very closely at international aid budgets and anything that could class as philanthropy, psychology and social science would say that these acts of reciprocity are money well spent in terms of future influence. In terms of commitment and consistency, a good example is the French and UK 2010 Lancaster House Agreement, which since its concept has seen relationships and scale of effort on both sides of the English Channel increase markedly. The social proof aspect is a key attribute for the UK. A country with a poor historical record, would be unlikely to be able to influence another more moralistic country. The leadership exercised by countries such as the UK, France and the USA in the spread of liberal internationalism is only possible for current or past global powers and good examples of stable democracy. Indeed, taking this to the extreme, the USA think tank ‘Fund for Peace’ outlines how failing states are unable to interact with other states as a full members of the international community due to lack of credibility.\(^{45}\) It is worth noting that there has been a slight decline in the

USA’s democratic ranking in recent years,\textsuperscript{46} perhaps caused by their approach to terrorism, for example phone tapping and surveillance, which if left unchecked may alter their position of authority in the world. It could be argued however, that leading states need to be a little less democratic in some circumstances to ensure that democracy, but it is vital to monitor this and maintain credibility in international relations in order to ensure continued social proof.

Certain cultures recognise Cialdini’s 4\textsuperscript{th} point, authority, as being more important than others. In general, Western cultures are less concerned by hierarchy and authority than cultures in the Far East. Indeed, the Chinese can be offended if a junior person is sent to negotiate with them. Authority also enables decisiveness and comprehensive defence of ideologies, thus supporting influence. Haslam and Reicher support Cialdini on his 5\textsuperscript{th} point, liking, in discussing how influence hinges on the ability to create a shared social identity with those whose beliefs need to be changed.\textsuperscript{47} This has its roots in the importance of human relationships and sincerity meaning it is vital to persuade through reason, not emotion. Humans are group animals and want to form relationships so this characteristic should be exploited. Finally Cialdini discusses scarcity. British history as a Great Power and ‘Union Flag branding’ create an element of scarcity, which should be capitalised upon. However, there is little room for complacency noting there are also many negative connotations associated with Britain’s imperial past.

In conclusion, if done right, influence is possible providing sufficient investment is committed upstream in terms of time and resources to understand the target country or government and providing the right tools or methods are used to best effect that influence. It is important to recognise that operating in this softer psychological space is as dangerous from a political perspective as the application of hard military power. There is a risk with any influence attempt that the political decisions which might be prompted, potentially going against Britain’s aspirations, will do more damage than good, this risk being amplified if the right degree of understanding isn’t in place before engagement. The next section looks at understanding and how best to achieve it.


UNDERSTANDING

“Knowledge is power”\textsuperscript{48} \hspace{1cm} Sir Francis Bacon

Understanding a country or government is not a simple task. Indeed, France may be just 20 miles away from Great Britain across the English Channel, but the two nations often misinterpret each other. Centuries of history show that proximity and knowledge of another country does not necessarily mean understanding in the true meaning on the word. UK doctrine prescribes that “understanding is a non-discretionary part of decision making”.\textsuperscript{49} To fully understand a group or individual in order to attempt to influence them, it is important to consider societal constructs and human interaction before applying situational factors such as culture, religion, traditions and to ensure that both internal and external pressures are factored in.

Looking first at societal construct, the many variable situations and environments around the globe mean the possible directions of development of a particular human group are infinite. As mentioned earlier, humans have tended to group together to achieve prosperity as members of society cannot all be skilled in all trades. Waller links this to the softer aspect of contentedness saying that “man has a personal destiny as well as a social destiny… he has an inner progress to make as well as to contribute to the outer progress we call prosperity.”\textsuperscript{50} So, in addition to emotional support, societies formed at many levels to enable prosperity.

The importance of family and friends is almost ubiquitous around the world but community set-ups vary greatly. Therefore societies across the world are diverse in nature and to try and treat them all the same is unlikely to yield success when attempting to apply influence. There are three main aspects of relevance – religion, culture and morals. Religion incorporates morals but culture must be considered separately. Most societal practices for acceptable human interaction followed today are based on religion which also teaches the self-sufficiency needed for the work ethic which makes societies prosper. Also, humans are instinctively selfish by nature and religion has provided a moderating force to enable cooperation. Wright supports this when he says that religious leaders have been “finding overlap between their [religious] interests and the masses [society] interests and that this overlap has grown as the social and economic organisation has grown.”\textsuperscript{51}

It can be seen that while their words, practices and ‘flavour’ are different, the underlying themes of religions are very similar. While each has its own individual specialism, it can be argued that

\textsuperscript{48} Sir Francis Bacon, Religious Meditations of Heresies, 1597.
\textsuperscript{49} JDP-04, Understanding, DCDC, UK Ministry of Defence, Dec 2010, iii.
\textsuperscript{50} ibid, p80.
religion fundamentally causes similar behaviour and is therefore not a critical factor in understanding and influence. Culture is different. Traditions, borne out of cultural development over many millenniums, play a large part in how different societies think and act and hence how a group will respond to an attempted application of influence. Geertz supports this in his comment that the “contemporary state of cultural traditions … is of greater significance than the system of government [itself]”. Careful research and planning is needed to avoid causing offence. These factors will be amplified when an individual or group is working under and therefore an understanding of why governments exist and how they might behave is also relevant.

At a basic level, they exist to organise and provide security for their population. A common theme across the vast majority of nations is that security, both internally and externally, forms a fundamental part of national strategy. Externally, providing deterrence and capability to repel attack and ensuring free trade to facilitate prosperity. Internally, providing rule of law and an operational judiciary system to ensure domestic peace and security. Strategy setters, be they governmental or non-governmental, are strongly tied and significantly influenced from their own population, particularly in the context of a democratically elected leadership. Indeed, the impact of non-state actors and the growing role of domestic political pressures, and of public opinion, must also be considered. The main driver affecting governmental behaviour might either be the desire to be re-elected, or could be a particular strong leader within the group. Frans De Waal describes social hierarchy in groups through the formation of coalitions and discusses the principle of exchanging or trading support. Another possible mechanism is ‘Groupthink’, a psychological phenomenon, first described by Irving Yanis in 1972, that occurs in a group of people resulting in individuals acting or deciding differently in a group compared to when acting alone. It can be seen that the way a government might behave is, to a large extent, modelled and predictable and therefore providing the right understanding is in place, international relations largely ought to be able to be designed from the outset to create a good chance of success.

There are therefore many variables which can play a part in understanding. This complexity has become the subject of increased interest to military and political leadership in recent years and has led to significant changes being implemented in the military operating environment. However, historians and anthropologists point out that if an attempt is made at using cultural understanding but it is not applied properly, a risk is created that the attempt could do more damage than good. Therefore leaders are embracing the concept of culture and anthropology, recognising they are a dimension that must be understood and harnessed both for successful military and diplomatic engagements. In the USA, during his 2008 election campaign against Barrack Obama, John

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McCain spoke of a need to recreate the Office of Strategic Services to act as a centre of excellence for language and culture\textsuperscript{56} and in the UK the Building Stability Overseas Strategy outlines the establishment of a 3* led Building Stability Overseas Steering Group bringing together DFID, the FCO and MOD to provide this understanding function to the Cabinet Office. This commitment from the very top of government supports the gathering of cultural and intelligence detail from countries in which “political, economic and security shocks” could require military or political intervention.\textsuperscript{57} At the operational level, the military is embedding anthropologists and social scientists into its ranks to reduce reliance on kinetic effect at the tactical level. Operators in theatre are also seeing increasing tour lengths to recognise the importance of developing cultural understanding and the time it takes for that understanding to develop.

However, understanding is also the subject of academic caution and scepticism. Many believe the latest focus is merely another way of looking at a historic problem, possibly recognition or open acknowledgement of Samuel Huntington’s theory on the clash of civilisations. As per realism theories, Huntington agrees that nation states are the dominant actors, but takes it further to argue that the principle cause of conflicts are the divisions between their cultures\textsuperscript{58}. Huntington wrote his book at the end of the cold war and probably as a counter to Francis Fukuyama’s argument that the advent of Western spreading of democratic values, may mean that humanity’s sociocultural evolution is coming to an end and that democracy will be the final form of human government across the globe.\textsuperscript{59} Huntington suggests that international politics has moved away from the ‘western phase’, referring to the cold war, and into a confrontation between western and non-western civilisations. Contrary to Fukuyama, he describes how the liberal internationalism being practiced by the USA and UK will almost certainly fail and that the stability desired through modernisation can be achieved without necessarily imposing westernisation.

Melissen describes soft power and influence as “the ability to pursue [political ambitions] through culture, values and ideas”\textsuperscript{60} but having shown how complex societal construct can be, it can be seen that understanding cannot be gained overnight. While military and political leaders are recognising the need to adjust to an influence-reliant era, and taking policy action accordingly, it may be the case that this recent focus will do little to change an age-old cause of conflict. The next section will consider the military contribution to gaining understanding through the vehicle of defence engagement.

\textsuperscript{57} UK Building Stability Overseas Strategy, Published jointly by the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, July 2011, p20.
\textsuperscript{58} Huntington S, The Clash of Civilisations, quoted in Foreign Affairs, Vol 72, No 3, 1993, p22.
DEFENCE ENGAGEMENT

“The soft power of a country rests upon three resources: its culture, its political values and its foreign policies”\(^\text{61}\)

Joseph Nye

One method of gaining cultural understanding of another country might be to exploit physical access through the use of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance assets. This direct and essentially hard power access will enable a country profile to be built, providing a picture of a country’s physical assets, geographic resources, their population distribution and daily habits but it cannot give you the softer understanding of how that culture operates. Also, being enforced access and falling under the category of hard power, it runs the risk of souring any established relationship in the process and closing the door to further soft power intervention in the future. A better approach is to utilise diplomacy and soft power, building relationships and providing incentives rather than using threats, coercion and force to achieve objectives.

Diplomacy is defined as “the adjustment of relations between states by mutual agreement”\(^\text{62}\) but in practice today, in the unstable and unpredictable world outlined, the roles and responsibilities of diplomats have become less defined\(^\text{63}\) and more purposeful, aiming not merely to maintain relations but more assertively to “advance interests and extend values”.\(^\text{64}\) As discussed earlier, the military have a role to play in supporting this projection of influence through the process of defence engagement, which exploits routine military activity around the globe to garner understanding of nations and their cultures, in addition to increasing national support as part of the process. Examples of defence engagement might include foreign students attending UK military courses or participating in UK based exercises, running exercises and operations in or with countries of interest in their home nation or abroad, the provision of military training in other countries, high level and working level engagement, heads of services relationships, loan or exchange personnel, the defence attaché network, defence sales and the development of international programmes for defence procurement in addition to the provision of long term support for those equipment packages. In addition, while these engagement mechanisms all look outward, it is important to also look inward at the cultural diasporas based in the UK and within the military ranks themselves.

Through all these mechanisms, relationships can develop, partnerships can form, understanding can be gained and the ability to influence can be increased.

It is not a new concept. Since the demise of the cold war in the late 1900s, armed forces and defence ministries have been taking on a growing range of peacetime engagement tasks, both at home through civilian and military partnerships and abroad through combined exercises, military reform, security dialogue, peacekeeping operations and multilateral defence cooperation agreements. Armed forces have therefore gained a much more integral role in overall national security strategy. This is an evolution rather than revolution noting that the practice of appointing defence attachés has been in existence since the nineteenth-century. Indeed the UK established the Imperial Defence College in 1922 to train senior military officers from around the British Empire. However, these embryonic activities were aimed primarily at collective defence and providing security for allies and partners. British involvement in defence engagement really started in earnest through their support for the USA’s strategy of containment against communism in the 1950s. Britain supported the same liberal internationalist approach to the promotion of democracy, often with little support from its populous and with grudging support from its own government, which has bought influence with the USA, as can be seen in modern politics today. Britain and the USA are not alone either in their move towards a soft power bias or the drivers for pursuing this direction in policy. Other countries such as Singapore have vocalised their own similar strategies in press releases such as “we seek to develop mutually beneficial relationships with friendly countries and armed forces to contribute to a stable international and regional environment”. However, despite its existence since the mid-1900s, it wasn’t really until the 1998 Strategic Defence Review that the concept of Defence Diplomacy, as it was termed then, was recognised formally. Rather than merely providing a facilitating vehicle to achieve force or strength through the formation of an allied coalition, its purpose became to build relationships with allies and more importantly with potential enemies, thus the armed forces became a tool of policy rather than purely blunt military force.

Although support for this shift to a softer is growing in momentum, concerns regarding its effectiveness, cause some to argue that the use of proxy forces, in country militia or military forces trained and motivated to support British influenced causes, might be a better investment. However, not only is there a significant publicity issue with this mercenary approach, there is no guarantee that proxy forces will act as intended. Where proponents of both approaches agree is that the likelihood of state-on-state war is reducing, meaning be it defence engagement, proxy war or another indirect approach, the traditional role of the armed forces is changing. Indeed, Cline argues in his RUSI paper that the most important lesson learnt from Iraq and Afghanistan “does not regard tactical manoeuvres, counterinsurgency or asymmetric warfare but rather that victory

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cannot be achieved through brute force alone, with defence engagement increasingly viewed as a prerequisite for understanding".  

There are plenty of examples where defence engagement has been successful and plenty where it has not. Consider Uganda, in the 1970s immediately after Idi Amin had seized power, Britain invested much time and effort in training Ugandan Army officers at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the UK and their soldiers in Uganda, provided a police reform team, £10M in aid and sold them military equipment. However, following Britain’s inability to meet Uganda’s continued requests for finance and military equipment, the relationship turned sour, with expropriation of British companies and a large migration of British nationals out of the country. In this situation, investment in the country failed to provide a long term meaningful relationship or any degree of influence or understanding. Conversely, in Sierra Leone in 2000, Britain focused on building legitimate civil-military relations conducive to development, poverty reduction and democracy, committed significant funding to equip the Sierra Leone army and provided training teams to rebuild their capability. This work not only stabilised Sierra Leone, as borne out by the largely peaceful democratic election process in 2007, but also created a country oriented along British lines and sympathetic to British interests in Africa, despite the colonial associations which many believed might have hampered relationships.

Uganda may have shown how little defence engagement could achieve set against a government determined to extract the most from the relationship and with little or no intention of offering loyalty in return. Conversely Sierra Leone demonstrated that defence engagement investment has produced a country both conducive to western interests with the wherewithal and stability to look after its own population.

Regardless of the historical background or indication of effectiveness, the fiscal constraints and perception of the changing world are driving the UK to invest more heavily in defence engagement and through the IDES, it has articulated a clear commitment to this line of development. It has established a Defence Engagement Board (DEB), led at 3* level, in MoD Main Building and has organised a working level structure based around a 1* led Strategic Regional Implementation Group for Defence Engagement (STRIDE). Their intent is to work in conjunction with International Policy and Plans (IPP) in MoD to prioritise countries most important to British interests set in the context of which are most likely to be able to be influenced. Clearly the work will achieve little in isolation so the links from the MoD to the FCO are strong and the approach has been to set out the

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‘ends’, articulating the ultimate objectives, before managing the ‘ways’ and ‘means’ of achieving them.

The ends are primarily to understand other nation’s security objectives, capabilities and intent, aimed in the majority at providing useful “day-one” understanding if the relationship ever reaches conflict. However, the secondary and possibly overarching priority is to build international capability, capacity, security, stability and will, while gaining understanding of cultural and social structures to assist in the diplomatic mission. In addition, more mechanical benefits such as gaining access to basing, overflight agreements and support to UK trade and exports are naturally desired side effects. The ways incorporate the defined defence engagement activities such as security and non-combat operations including peacekeeping and training, defence diplomacy such as higher level visits and the attaché network, defence and security exports in addition to regional stability promotion, conflict prevention, post conflict reconstruction and stabilisation operations. It is the means that create the main issues as while there is a market there for UK engagement, indeed there is a huge appetite for UK military expertise, these activities like every other military training exercise and operation are constrained by ongoing operational commitments elsewhere and hence resource and financial shortages. Defence engagement is cheap but the UK MoD faces challenges in terms of the long term nature of the task. Not only does it need personnel to remain in post for significant periods of time, not generally conducive to the current career models, it also needs patience and a commitment to continue to invest even when results are not immediately forthcoming. The varied nature of the tasks it mandates also means a need for coherence across government, not just in terms of defence or diplomatic engagement but also more generally in terms of regional strategies, something which has not been achieved successfully in the past. Progress has been made on this with a cross-government priority matrix created broken into regional, sub regional and country level objectives for all departments to contribute towards. Similarly, in terms of finance, £200M has been allocated specifically to defence engagement in recent financial plans, split into core, pool and other specialist funds to support cross government activity. Much defence engagement activity has duel purposes, for example overseas exercises, so significant funding also comes from Service budgets elsewhere. Finally, recognition by the government that this is an area to invest in has been shown by the £1billion allocated in 2015-16 for a new Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). This builds on the success of the Conflict Pool by bringing together existing UK capabilities and resources from across government (including conflict resources worth £683 million in 2014-15) and £100 million of new funding, to fund a broad range of engagement and stabilisation activities.

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Before turning to the air power contribution specifically, more understanding of the defence engagement mechanisms is needed. The IDES groups them into four pillars of security, diplomacy, exports and stability. However, they can also be grouped more tangibly under three of the eight Defence Lines of Development (DLoDs), lines which are suitable for export and sharing with other nations. These are Training, Personnel and Equipment, the remaining 5 DLoDs being less applicable.

Looking at training first, every year, the British Armed Forces host a significant number of foreign students and military personnel both on UK military courses and through participation in UK military exercises. These courses are administered through the MoD’s International Defence Training teams, one for each service plus one at the Defence Academy,\(^\text{74}\) and focus on officer training at Dartmouth, Sandhurst and Cranwell for the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force respectively and on the Defence Academy’s Joint Service Command and Staff College and College of Management and Technology. A good example of work in this area is the joint agreement with the Kuwaiti Staff College which has been set up with the assistance of the UK and with the support of UK personnel embedded in the staff there. Individual courses are also available in the UK, covering role specialisations, and are again administered through the four International Defence Training Teams. In addition to training in the UK, the British Armed Forces train and operate in over 80 countries around the world on all 7 continents. These operations include defence of UK sovereign territory overseas, peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, anti-terrorism enforcement and anti-drugs trafficking in addition to the current Defence main effort in Afghanistan. Exercises are also run internationally with agreement from host nations around the world, which provide the opportunity to demonstrate UK military capability, forge trust between the UK and the host nation and facilitate the UK selling and delivering training to other countries in their own environment. The British Army in Africa has traditionally been particularly prominent in this field.\(^\text{75}\)

Turning now to personnel, almost every day of the year a high or working level engagement visit takes place either in the UK or around the world. These business meeting and social interactions build relationships, exchange information and ideas and inculcate good will towards the UK. On a more personal basis, heads of services form relationships with their foreign counterparts and with a longer term view, Defence Attachés support the FCO’s ambassadors by offering military advice to international partners and acting as the continuous commitment aspect of the visits programme. They are also the mechanism for organising access, basing and overflight permissions. Finally loan or exchange personnel are a means of providing support for host nations, gaining understanding of them, building relationships and demonstrating inter-government good will. They have a unique ability in communication with the UK to verify or advise against open source

information either gained through diplomatic discussion or via media and news articles. It is also vital that the British government and the senior leaders in the UK Armed Forces do not forget the cultural diasporas based in the UK and within the military ranks themselves. As stated in the introduction, 13% of the current population in Britain are not originally British and it is the desire of the government that the UK MoD should aim to recruit a proportional representation of British society in the military. In actual fact, the proportion of ethnic minorities in the UK Regular Forces was at a record high in July 2013 but was still only at 7.2%, some significant way short of the statistics for the UK population as a whole. Indeed the RAF have a particularly poor performance in this area being made up of just 2% vice the Army’s 9.9% and the Royal Navy’s 2.6%.

These cultural and ethnic groupings hold a vital source of awareness and information in people already in many ways, particularly those in the military, predisposed to supporting the UKs prosperity and power projection agenda. Approaching them and using their expertise must of course be done with care not to offend, but should be seen like any other area of expertise or knowledge and should be capitalised on. It is therefore no surprise that recruitment of ethnic minorities is a priority for Service Chiefs, not just to ensure equal opportunities, but for the greater good of capability and influence in this new world of soft power. One area where policies may complement each other in a synergistic fashion is the parallel drive to reduce regular forces and increase reserve forces. Not only could this reduce costs in terms of taking risk against a reduction of fully committed manpower, using reserve forces to mitigate, but also providing the opportunity to access experts in a wider range of cultural diasporas in general society, who would not normally be prepared to commit to a full time career in the Armed Forces.

Finally looking at equipment, the predominant contribution is through defence sales and the development of international programmes for defence procurement, in addition to the provision of support for those equipment packages. While sales may form the initial commitment, the real relationship building potential lies in the provision of long term support for equipment packages and the associated supply chain solution. Previously established relationships can assist development of these contracts and the brand reputation that the UK and its individual armed services can bring will also support. Having introduced the broad concept of defence engagement, the paper will now focus onto the air sector and analyse in detail the contribution air power can make.

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AIR POWER CONTRIBUTION

First, the specialisations of land and maritime power will be briefly considered to set the context. The Royal Navy have traditionally played a large role in defence engagement throughout history with ship and port visits in addition to the well-known ‘cocktail party on the bridge’ hosting local dignitaries. This is essentially primary duties for the Royal Navy as they patrol, exercise and operate warships, frigates and carriers throughout the world’s oceans. The purpose of this activity is core role aimed at developing technical interoperability and both social and professional cooperation through staff engagement, but with the secondary purpose of capacity building to ensure maritime support is available to assist the Royal Navy if the situation dictates this to be necessary. To further co-ordination with other nations, a Tier 2 security collaboration list has been formulated with increased seniority level applied to visits, in addition to the importance of the ship visit programme being amplified. In terms of integration both technically and operationally, MoD focus groups have been established to manage a Tier 1 list of complex war fighting partners, drawn up to work and develop relations with. Both these objectives are achieved through the normal operational programme, shared training, staff visits and exchanges. The British Army, which also has a big role to play, is mainly focussed on combined training and exercises in the UK and overseas. Their traditional world-wide footprint is a real benefit, which they can now exploit, to maximise the benefits available. Where the Army can really adapt to support the IDES, is through the cessation of combat operations in Afghanistan and a return to contingency, predominantly based in the UK. This reconfiguring into reactive and adaptive brigades provides the opportunity for planned and focussed training, operating with nations of interest to foster relationships, build capacity and gain more detailed understanding.

Having considered in brief the key capabilities the other 2 armed services can use to support the IDES, namely diplomacy for the Royal Navy and security for the British Army, the paper will now focus on the Royal Air Force’s (RAF) particular unique attributes, using Cialdini’s tools of influence as a lens to analyse them. The RAF is distinct in its broad reaching ability to cover all aspects with a good degree of capability. Firstly, every aircraft that leaves the UK’s airspace is a potential defence engagement opportunity. The publicity accrued and international support gained from every diplomatic overflight agreement, foreign landing, air show contribution, exercise participation, to name but a few, all contribute to the social proof and liking that Cialdini discusses and create an impression and reputation for the RAF and UK government to lever off. What is essentially a brand reputation, is further amplified by internationally renowned assets such as the RAF Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, and more domestically, the search and rescue services currently provided by the RAF, the Royal Navy and a civilian operator, and the quick reaction alert (QRA), delivered from bases in the North and South of the UK to protect territorial airspace. This internal soft power development, and building of reputation and liking, create the scarcity Cialdini recommends and
hence desire from other countries to operate alongside and in conjunction with the RAF, which enhances the UK’s status and authority. The counter argument to this is the historical connotations of actions such as carpet bombing during the Second World War, which may have soured some to the organisation. However, albeit not the largest, the RAF is globally recognised as a leading air force and is well perceived by a wide array of nations. Continuing to operate alongside the USA in coalition operations, which has the best air force in the world, only enhances this.

Secondly, the RAF is in the process of replacing both its strategic and tactical air lift platforms to create one of the most modern and capable air transport fleets in the world. The Voyager, operating alongside the C17 and replacing the VC10 and Tristar, and the A400M replacing the C130, means the UK will be second only in capability to the USA in this arena, albeit there are other countries with greater capacity. This ability to deliver support to regional stability and humanitarian relief operations, providing the reciprocity and commitment Cialdini outlines, will enhance the UK’s chance of future influence.

Thirdly, similar to the other Services, the RAF has a dedicated International Defence Training team to manage both UK and overseas training, bringing personnel onto role specialist UK courses, sending UK personnel onto partner nation’s courses and co-ordinating combined exercise and training programmes. This couples neatly with the Defence attaché network, which the RAF is expanding, and the loan service personnel which are again being supplemented. Future RAF command plans should continue this trend and should aim to leverage off the personnel with cultural links already serving in the RAF, including those with foreign parents or relations, even if they themselves are British born, and should work to improve knowledge and understanding of other nations through increased language and country specific training for both serving personnel and their spouses. The liking or identity this would create, which supports both Cialdini and Pinker’s guidelines for successful influence, will also make for a more diverse and flexible force better able to react to the scenarios a cessation of combat operations in Afghanistan and a return to contingency may bring.

Finally, and possibly most significantly, air power requirements contribute to the vast majority of UK defence exports. As discussed, the UK is the largest exporter of defence equipment and services in Europe and the second largest in the world after the United States, with over £8 billion of sales last year. The industry directly employs some 155,000 people with a further 145,000 in associated support related roles with the air sector being by far the largest contributor to this, indeed 82% of all UK defence exports are air related. It is also an area expected to continue to

78 http://topyaps.com/top-10-strongest-air-forces-of-the-world
expand, for example the weapons area in particular is anticipated to grow by approximately 50% in
the next 10 years, albeit multi-purpose weapon developments may reduce this potential. Owning
this industry is a privilege and gives the UK a strategic opportunity, recognised by the government
through creation of the Defence Growth Partnership (DGP), jointly administered by the MoD and
the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). It has great potential to forge new
relationships with international partners to increase reciprocity, commitment, consistency and
social proof as Cialdini would advise, also promoting the co-operation and altruism Pinker suggests
possible. In addition to defence engagement objectives, it has the side-effect of tightening the
relationship already in place between government and industry, which has the long term capability
to contribute significantly to the UK’s prosperity agenda, noting that approximately 30% of revenue
raised through exports is returned to the Treasury through taxation and export levies.

The aerospace industry has a global market value in the region of $250bn with the UK contributing
about $40bn broken down into about 20% defence production and support with the vast majority,
the remaining 80%, concerned with producing products for the civil market. It directly employs
about 100,000 people, almost 2/3 of the total defence employment base, forming a work force that
is a highly skilled and experienced creating mostly low volume, high technology, niche capability
products. The UK is the 2nd most advanced aerospace research and development country, after
the USA, and is a world leader in services outsourcing. This latter attribute, services outsourcing, is
a key skill that many countries struggle with, post-acquisition, particularly in support of high
technology capability, so it is an area the UK can capitalise on in terms of defence engagement.
Services outsourcing is a relatively new concept which involves the contracting out the process of
supporting a facility or equipment to a third-party, usually either to avoid non-core business costs
such as peripheral expenses, taxes, energy or labour rates but can also be done to avoid
government regulation or to overcome a lack of available resources locally. This is particularly
common in information projects or other highly complex technologies, such as air power
equipment, where a knowledge gap can be filled by contractors who specialise in an area non-core
to the main operator. Services outsourcing is also a form of longer term, relationship-building work,
which lends itself well to the commitment and consistency tools that Cialdini identifies. In sum, the
UK aerospace industry has much to offer, possibly more than any other nation in the world, in
terms of exports and service delivery. However, the MoD, the RAF and air power can do much
more than currently to contribute to this by linking the work, often already in progress, to the
outcomes defence engagement desires. The three main areas for improvement are governmental
support to industrial progress, minimising restrictions on export rulings and minimising system and
user requirements to maximise exportability.

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81 MBDA statement during industry partner lecture in DPSM phase of ACSC 17.
82 Defence Growth Partnership, Securing Prosperity: A strategic vision for the UK Defence Sector, Sep 2013, accessed at
Apr 14.
First, the UK is relatively unique in not having dedicated government policy aimed at developing exportable technological solutions for their own air power requirements. Other countries, for example France, provide much greater governmental support to aid exports and have a closer working relationship with industry such as Airbus to further sales and profit alongside political ambitions of international relations and influence. The UK government has improved in recent years with the trade initiatives and missions set up by the current Prime Minister, David Cameron, who stated regarding the trade agenda within the NSS that he would “have like to have done even more even sooner”, because as he put it, “it will be part of our future national success”. Yet still the UK has an obsession with capitalism and private industry rather than adopting the traditional, more nationalised industry approach, with closer links between government and industry in terms of forward strategy. This means in some respects that UK industry is at a disadvantage on the global stage, which in turn reduces the opportunities for UK government influence overseas.

Looking deeper into this issue, it is important to be aware that about 50% of the aerospace industry is working at the small to medium enterprise level, known as tier 2, manufacturing parts and managing supply chains to the larger manufacturers who have the main flagship projects on their books. This is an area often neglected in the government’s approach to industrial support on export missions, which mainly focus on the large, well known and well supported industries and projects, thus missing out on potentially 50% of the opportunities available. Despite this, industry must realise that any government support will expect a return from industry which contributes to the NSS, over and above revenue, which will require some degree of risk-taking and investment from industry. It is an area where both industry and government could do more. Industry has a lot to offer in terms of commercial expertise and marketing skills so industry leaders should consider increasing industrial country presence alongside UK military staff in the programmes already running. Indeed, the recent sale of Typhoon to Saudi Arabia provides a fantastic opportunity for UK industry and government to work alongside their Saudi counterparts. However, thought should also be given, well upstream, to where the next sale may come from and industry should be invited to contribute staff to work alongside FCO and military staff in embassies in countries of interest to forge relationships early. Drawing on a common language and utilising the unique operational experience and joint and combined knowledge that UK forces and industry in support of them have amassed, much upstream investment can be committed to deliver relationships with influence where needed most in the future. This is a difficult investment to get either party to make, given the lack of immediate results, but it is an investment that both would reap the benefits of.

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Secondly, while the MoD provides support to BIS in terms of specialist advice on export approvals, their combined tendency is to create a relatively constrained environment with significant control restrictions on exports. This tight control may increase competition in a smaller market, indeed potentially playing to the scarcity tool outlined by Cialdini, but also has the side effect, both budgetary and politically, of constraining the market and industrial growth, in addition to limiting the opportunity for defence engagement. Also, scarcity only has a limited time effect which will eventually cause potential customers to lose interest, and it is not only the initial sale which is lost, but the longer-term potential for in-service support contracts with the most significant relationship building potential. It is therefore vital to put a greater emphasis on a cross department/cross government approach to the issue and to establish a co-ordination function so that opportunities are created, planned for and maximised when they occur. Some degree of risk must be taken with exports to facilitate a wider global UK industrial footprint to facilitate relationship building contracts. The FCO, DFID, MoD and BIS need to work closely together to ensure that wider governmental objectives are considered when each and every application is considered, it might be worth taking risk against proliferation or compromise of technology development security if there is a broader need across government to gain influence within that country. There is a risk that international relations with other countries could be soured if the UK decides to trade with nations of instability, in the interests of defence engagement and influence. Indeed there may be significant backlash from some, either from a moralistic perspective or even from a view of competition. However, as outlined earlier, in an age of austerity where interest based intervention or engagement is more prevalent, perhaps the risk of souring one relationship for the benefit of another is a risk worth taking. The UK government has already made progress towards achieving this aim through the establishment of the Stabilisation Unit which links the main Government departments of relevance together with civilian aid and development organisations, but it is an important area which if the government are serious about defence engagement, should have more time, resources and money invested in it.

Finally, the UK MoD has a tendency to set user and system requirements very specifically tailored to UK forces needs where perhaps a 90% solution would have delivered sufficient capability to adequately complete the task. This tendency to create unique system design criteria means the products industry produce on the MoD's behalf are rarely exportable without significant modification. The common need to modify before products are attractive on the wider market means prices go up and the products are less competitive. It also means that industry has to rely heavily on the civil sector to remain profitable, which has the effect from a government perspective of reducing control and influence over their own national industry. While this may reduce the leverage the government has over the industrial base, it does have the advantage of facilitating significant read-across and technology transfer from the civil market into military product

http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/about-us.html
development, which is a positive effect in terms of product development. It is important to determine early what sovereign capability should be retained as sovereign capability, thus limiting opportunity, and where broader solutions could be acceptable, which will open up the potential for defence engagement. This balancing act requires long term planning and more detail in the guidance to industry and the Defence Equipment and Support organisation (DE&S). If developing the best technology is of most importance, perhaps very unique criteria and requirements are an advantage. But in this day and age of globalisation where influence and soft power are more important than hard military might, perhaps the relationships forged through wider industrial opportunities that export would bring are actually more important than creating the best product. The issue is also exacerbated by a reducing home market due to austerity, which reduces the ability to trade overseas based on 'as used by UK forces' advertising.

However, by keeping UK specific specifications as minimal as possible and through proactive engagement with industry and direct support of them to demonstrate equipment on combined exercises and at trade and air shows, sales drives will be assisted, relationship formed and the potential for influence established. Possible policy changes to assist might include wider training for the operators and engineers working in DE&S and MoD to understand, not only the implications for their own projects, of setting narrow requirements, but the wider implications for industry and UK government. Much discussion has already taken place in military circles about creating defence acquisition career streams but perhaps the changing focus onto influence rather than hard power and technology means times have changed, such that a defence engagement career stream is needed, or at least role specific defence engagement training to understand the strategic opportunities associated with posts individuals are working in. Finally, requirements setting and acquisition are typically associated with operator and engineer branch specialisations but there is an argument that a wider diaspora of personnel should be considered for work in these areas. For example, the employment of cultural experts, FCO embedded staff in DE&S, or DE&S liaison officers in the International Policy and Plans (IPP) area of MoD to get broader information sharing and agreement on shared objectives for projects. These proposals could provide the building blocks critical to ongoing relationships, which will assist in facilitating longer term development of influence.

As an aside, there is also a strong link between the aerospace and space industries. The clarity and improvements set out above could deliver benefit in both markets, which could widen the scope of potential opportunities, again in a market which is rapidly expanding. Space is a unique sector which has very globalised connotations, both due to the ubiquitous nature of space power and the massive reliance on it for services such as imagery, navigation and communications. It is an industry where the global giants are involved, for example ‘google maps’, and hence it has the potential to provide opportunities for powerful relationships in terms of influence and also in terms
of combatting the negative cyber related attributes of globalisation, such as black markets and serious crime. Relationships formed in this sector, with any degree of influence, could also provide some degree of mitigation for the intense reliance on services such as GPS, as discussed in the earlier section of this paper. However, it is a congested area with many companies vying for a foothold, so careful planning and well thought out strategy would be needed if this were to be brought into any plans for expansion of defence engagement ambition.

Before concluding, to bring to life the analysis covered, some historical attempts to ‘buy influence’ through trade agreements in the air power arena, levering off industry in the air sector, will now be considered. The USA’s sales of F16 aircraft to Pakistan and F14 aircraft to Iran, will be contrasted, the first of which could broadly be considered a defence engagement success and the latter of which could be considered a failure.

In December 1981, the USA agreed to sell Pakistan 40 F-16A/B fighter aircraft in a series of deals known as ‘Peace Gate I and 2’. The aircraft were delivered between 1983 and 1987. In December 1988, Pakistan ordered 11 additional aircraft under the ‘Peace Gate 3’ programme. These aircraft were fully paid for, but were never delivered due to controversy between the USA and Pakistan over Pakistan’s suspected nuclear weapons capability and their steadfast refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The 11 Peace Gate III aircraft were stored in the USA awaiting resolution of the disagreement but in the meantime, the USA accepted further orders under ‘Peace Gate 4 and 5’ for an additional 60 aircraft, albeit a stop-work order affected many of the aircraft being built. Pakistan had already paid $685M on the contract and insisted on delivery or getting its money back. After a detonation of five nuclear devices by India in May 1998, in a remote area close to its border with Pakistan, US president Bill Clinton offered to deliver the stored F-16s to Pakistan in return for their agreement not to respond. However, Pakistan chose to answer India by detonating an unknown number of nuclear devices themselves in a show of force in retaliation. At the end of 1998, the USA agreed to pay Pakistan $467M in compensation to settle the eight-year dispute. However, after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, Pakistan became strategically important to the USA and a major ally in the war on terror. So they decided to redeliver the stored aircraft, which following a long series of negotiations, became a revised contract for the acquisition of 18 new F-16C/D aircraft and an option for another 18 more. The sale was viewed in international media as a sign of deepening strategic ties between Pakistan and the USA and was described by Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, as an attempt to “break out of the notion that [India and Pakistan are in] a hyphenated relationship”. However, analysis shows that the sale was really only used to further the USA’s broad strategic interests, to assuage Pakistan’s fears of

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an existential threat from India and to divert their attention away from nuclear development. Regardless of the real motivations, what the deal did do was to break through the bad history between the USA and Pakistan and forge a strong partnership over the USA led war in Afghanistan, with Pakistan not only being a key Muslim ally but also providing a critical land line of communication into the country across the Khyber Pass. It has also set the scene for future influence and the USA have already used this to good effect to attempt to gain access to Abdel Qadeer Khan, the creator and proliferator of the Pakistani nuclear bomb, and to get Pakistan’s leadership to commit to their weak democratic election process.

Conversely when Iran managed to negotiate a deal with the USA in 1974 to purchase 80 F14 Tomcat fighter aircraft, 79 of which were delivered by 1978, the end result was not so positive. Following the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the final aircraft was withheld and a strict arms embargo against Iran was imposed by the West after the aircraft were in service, causing a severe spare parts and maintenance issue for the Iranian Air Force. Although the F14 provided a capable deterrence during the Iran-Iraq war, indeed the Iraqi Air Force were advised not to engage with the aircraft, the spares shortages meant the Iranians could only fly a very small section of the fleet, largely supported by cannibalizing spares from other aircraft. Relationships between the USA and Iran have remained strained since and despite the recent developments in terms of their nuclear weapon programme, the effort and expense invested by the USA in the Iranian F14 programme has gained little in terms of relationship building and influence.

Assessing these examples through the lens of Cialdini’s tools of influence, it can be seen that in both cases while the reciprocity, authority, social proof, liking and scarcity were all in place, the critical aspects of commitment and consistency were not. Even in the Pakistani case, the lack of consistency from the USA meant the ability to gain influence took decades to achieve and has only delivered a thin layer of commitment in return from Pakistan. Also, in Iran, while the sale of the initial F14 fleet went through, the longer term relationship building work of assisting them to support the fleet was ignored, which soured any potential for gaining lasting influence. As a result, until recently, the USA has struggled to gain any significant diplomatic leverage with Iran to bring them into the international fold and to persuade them to cease their nuclear weapon programme and their outward hostilities to neighboring states and international partners. It reaffirms the conclusion drawn earlier that defence engagement is an art rather than a science and that it is an imprecise form of engagement where decisive victory is rarely possible and difficult to attribute.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while Britain may remain a major power, given its position in the world, it's economy, it's military capability and it's outward looking policy, it does this in an unstable world shaped by globalisation and connectedness, which has created a population increasingly aware of the global imbalance of prosperity and affluence and hence, in some regions, a population only too conscious of its own inequality. Britain holds this position of responsibility in an age where finite natural resources are becoming scarce and with an uncertain future ahead, the reducing trend in conflict occurrences seen over recent decades may level or even reverse due to increasing competition amongst nation states to maintain the affluent hydrocarbon-reliant existence currently enjoyed. In addition, the world is operating in a period of austerity and Britain is no different to any other nation in this regard. With little perceived existential threat and a population more concerned with personal security threats such as standards of health and education, than real security threats such as national prosperity and global stability, the UK MoD is being forced to operate with an ever shrinking defence budget in real terms. Set this against rising technology costs, and the ongoing debate regarding the importance of technology over mass, and the ability to employ hard power becomes increasingly difficult. This leads to the conclusion that the changing global environment and increasing difficulty in maintaining the capabilities necessary to credibly force adversaries through the use of hard power to comply with desires, means that soft power is becoming more relevant in today's contemporary operating environment both on the global commons, in international relations and critically even on the battle field.

Soft power and psychological warfare is nothing new, indeed it's importance was understood hundreds of years ago by the truly successful military commanders and defence attaches and diplomats have been operating for hundreds of years. However, it is only recently that both its true utility has become apparent and that the international environment has melded to suit it being the most likely method of achieving influence. This paper has recognised that soft power is no panacea and indeed has discussed how soft power relies on hard power to maintain its own success. But given it is cheap and given the shape of the world in the future, it is the only approach likely to deliver the longevity of solution and provide the stability in political relationships needed to manage the vertical and horizontal power shifts seen in recent decades. The influence soft power can provide must not be confused with coercion, it relies on persuasion and attraction instead of bullying and force and hence uses all 3 levers of power, not just political or diplomatic, to deliver an amicable agreement between negotiating governments. It faces the difficulty that it's success is difficult to measure and even if the outcome of a situation is positive, it is usually hard to say whether soft power and influence were the critical factors in facilitating that condition. However, given the current state of the world, it may become the only viable way for outward looking governments such as that of the UK, to continue their global aspirations. Militaries must contribute
to this through defence engagement, using their unique attributes to best effect to buy influence and understanding rather than coercion. As a result they must realign to best deliver this contribution to government strategy and must be wary of holding on to past models of the military’s role in strategic affairs. The paper has discussed the general principles of defence engagement, drawing on the BSOS and the IDES to see where each of the three Services can contribute to the four pillars of security, diplomacy, exports and stability. It has analysed the mechanisms available to do this and set out the ends, ways and means of delivering them. However, in considering the examples of Uganda and Sierra Leone it has concluded that there is little conclusive evidence available to determine whether defence engagement can really buy influence and understanding but that the current financial situation dictates that this is an area forces must address to ensure they are aligned with the NSS.

The main focus of the analysis has considered where air power can contribute best, particularly focussing on the unique opportunity Britain’s thriving aerospace industry and export market provides. It has highlighted how the RAF is distinct in its broad reaching ability to cover all aspects of defence engagement with a good degree of capability. Every aircraft that leaves the UK’s airspace is a potential defence engagement opportunity and given the RAF is globally recognised as a leading air force and is well perceived by a wide array of nations, this brand enhancement and advertising, providing scope for relationship building and understanding, is a key attribute. The RAF also has one of the most modern and capable air transport fleets in the world, which allows it to rapidly deliver support to regional stability and humanitarian relief operations worldwide, thus enhancing the UK’s chance of future influence. However, in addition to the routine training exchanges managed by the RAF’s dedicated International Defence Training team, the real niche area for air power lies in the aerospace defence export market. The paper has discussed how the UK is the largest exporter of defence equipment and services in Europe and the second largest in the world after the United States, with 82% of all UK defence exports being air related.

However, the analysis has highlighted that the UK is relatively unique in not having dedicated government policy aimed at developing exportable technological solutions for their own air power requirements and also that the smaller, tier 2 companies, manufacturing parts and managing supply chains to the larger manufacturers are often neglected in the government’s approach to industrial support on export missions, potentially missing up to 50% of the opportunities available. It has discussed that both industry and government could do more, even though it is a difficult investment to get either party to make, given the lack of immediate results. Management of exports has also been drawn out as an area where more could be done. The tight control exercised by MoD and BIS may increase competition in a smaller market, but it also has the side effect of constraining the market and industrial growth, in addition to limiting the opportunity for defence engagement. The paper concludes that some degree of risk must be taken against proliferation or
compromise of technology development security to facilitate a wider global UK industrial footprint to facilitate relationship building contracts, if there is a broader need across government to gain influence within that country. This conclusion was not reached without being cognisant of the additional risk that international relations with other countries could be soured by potentially trading with nations of instability, but has concluded that in an age of austerity where interest based intervention or engagement is more prevalent, perhaps the risk of souring one relationship for the benefit of another is a risk worth taking. The final conclusion the paper draws surrounding air power’s contribution, addresses the tendency the MoD has to set user and system requirements very specifically tailored to the needs of UK forces. This tendency means the products industry produce on the MoD’s behalf are rarely exportable without significant modification, which means prices go up and the products are less competitive. It highlights the importance of determining early what sovereign capability should be retained as sovereign capability, thus limiting opportunity, and where broader solutions could be acceptable, which will open up the potential for defence engagement. Therefore, having analysed the current set-up in MoD and DE&S, the paper concludes that longer term planning and more detail in the guidance to industry and the Defence Equipment and Support organisation (DE&S) is needed, noting that in this era of globalisation where influence and soft power are more important than hard military might, perhaps the relationships forged through the wider industrial opportunities that export would bring are actually more important than creating the best product. Possible policy changes, which the conclusions indicate might assist, include wider training for the operators and engineers working in DE&S and MoD to understand the wider implications for industry and UK government of their project, the potential development of a defence engagement career stream, or at least role specific defence engagement training to understand the strategic opportunities associated with posts individuals are working in and finally the employment of a wider diaspora of personnel such as cultural experts, FCO embedded staff in DE&S, or DE&S liaison officers in the International Policy and Plans (IPP) area of MoD to get broader information sharing and agreement on shared objectives for projects.

In looking at case studies of the USA’s sales of F16’s to Pakistan and F14s to Iran, it reaffirms the conclusion that defence engagement is an imprecise art. The Pakistan scenario might have been successful in terms of buying Pakistan’s allegiance during the war on terror, but how much did this long and acrimonious process actually contribute? The Iranian scenario is very similar but a different chain of events has meant little good has come out of the whole engagement.

Globalisation and austere financial conditions may have driven governments and military forces to defence engagement, but their success is uncertain, unlikely to be attributable and will require significant rethinking to deliver. Air power is well placed to contribute to this, due to the strength of the aerospace export market, and with some strong policy action, it could be a leader of what may well be this decade’s revolution in military thinking.
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