



NO CHOICE BUT CHANGE

The Military Covenant in its Strategic Context



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The views expressed within are wholly the authors own and are a contribution to the debate on the future of Britain's defence policy.

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Defence Policy	7
3. The Relationship between the Public and the Armed Forces	9
4. Delivering Military Effectiveness	10
5. The Military Covenant	12
6. A New Strategic Security and Defence Review	15
7. Options for the Future	18
8. Conclusion	22
Appendix	23
Footnotes	27

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January 2008, I was asked by the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, to consider the implications of the debate surrounding the state of the 'military covenant' that is said to exist between the nation and our service personnel.
- 1.2 That debate has largely focused on welfare issues that affect servicemen and women and their families and, in some cases, veterans of the Armed Forces. Discussion has been focused at the tactical level which has been useful in drawing attention to specific problems, many of which are longstanding. But there has been little effort to place the Covenant debate within a wider defence context.
- 1.3 I have concluded that without a wide-ranging strategic security and defence review the military covenant will be irreparably broken.
- 1.4 The fragility of the military covenant today is not just a symptom of inadequate welfare. It indicates a deeper malaise in Britain's defence policy. What this Government expects our armed forces to achieve and the financial and human cost required are no longer in balance.
- 1.5 The continuing exodus of so many of our best soldiers is as much a result of political decisions to fight 'wars of choice' as it is a result of welfare issues such as compensation and access to healthcare and education. The decision to deploy simultaneous and enduring operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has stretched our forces far beyond what they are configured and resourced to undertake. This is bound to exact a human price.
- 1.6 While the terms and conditions of service constitute a legal and explicit agreement between the government and the individual serviceman or woman (with entitlements and obligations often being defined in the Armed Forces Acts), the 'military covenant' is an implicit contract based purely on expectations.
- 1.7 For example, what standard must be met for the requirement for 'fair' treatment to be satisfied? Does 'fair' mean that a soldier must be deployed with the best equipment available irrespective of cost or merely that he should have the best equipment available within budgetary constraints? And to what standard should forces families be looked after?
- 1.8 Expectations are clearly not being met and seasoned armed forces personnel are leaving the forces in great numbers. Repeated and prolonged breaches of the 'military covenant' will eventually lead to a diminution in the willingness of personnel to remain in the Services. While it is perhaps possible to recruit more people (recruitment has largely been on target for the past couple of years¹) it is not possible to compensate for loss of experience. This will have a significant effect on military effectiveness and the ability of the UK's Armed Forces to conduct the full spectrum of tasks set out in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR).

- 1.9 The Liberal Democrats addressed armed forces welfare issues in the December 2007 paper entitled 'Our Nation's Duty'. The executive summary and proposals of this paper are set out in the Annex to this report. The MoD has, moved to meet some of the concerns raised by the British Legion, Liberal Democrats and others. It is only because of the intense pressure brought to bear over a sustained period that the Government has finally acted. Much more can and should be done to improve the lot of our armed forces on issues such as housing, access to long-term healthcare and pay and conditions. The specific issue of housing is addressed in this report.
- 1.10 Much of the stress and strain on the lives of our servicemen and women is due to the strategic failure of the Labour Government's defence policy. The July 2008 Defence Committee report on recruitment and retention noted that due to "unprecedented tempo" soldiers are being driven out of the Forces by "continuously deploying on operations, poor accommodation and pay".² As the MoD Annual Report this year noted, such is the impact of overstretch on the armed forces, fewer than half of all military units are ready to deploy on operations in an emergency.
- 1.11 Overstretch is compounded by poor procurement decisions and spending priorities. While the defence budget struggles to fund more fast jet fighters, our soldiers have to put up with housing described by their superiors as "frankly shaming".³
- 1.12 The rate of attrition of vehicles and helicopters in Afghanistan continues to cause alarm, with little evidence of early replacements in the pipeline. The lack of helicopter lift leaves our forces dangerously and unnecessarily exposed to roadside bombs and ambush. In this respect, the honouring of the military covenant and military effectiveness are surely one and the same.
- 1.13 Despite the real-terms increase that Government awarded to the MoD in the latest spending round, the funding gap is estimated to stretch into billions. Already, cuts to equipment and programmes are being openly discussed and reported in the media.
- 1.14 Our defence policy has entered a dangerous period of drift. We cannot go on as we are. Our military has been operating beyond its planning assumptions for years; its budget is in crisis and there remain huge deficiencies in the quality, quantity and utility of the military equipment we have available for current operations.
- 1.15 There is an urgent need for a public and political debate over what we want from our Armed Forces and, crucially, how much we are prepared to pay for them. The Liberal Democrat Policy Paper 'Security and Liberty in a Globalised World' that was passed at our autumn party conference sets out in detail the security challenges that Britain faces in the 21st Century. Central to this is the conclusion that:

*"The defence budget crunch, combined with doubts over when and how Britain should play a role in expeditionary deployments, is ample evidence... that Britain must take a long hard look at whether we can continue to afford to design our armed forces as an almost miniature version of the American military with a wide variety of military platforms."*⁴

1.16 Only a wide-ranging strategic security and defence review can address this challenge, and only government has access to all the information necessary to undertake such a review.

1.17 In Chapter 7 of this paper, four broad options for the future are set out. They are:-

1. **Carry on Regardless** - continue to base defence policy on the strategic assumptions of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR), without the financial commitment to address shortfalls in the equipment budget. This will lead to a slow decline in capability and consequent decline in Britain's standing and influence in the world.
2. **Do Everything and Do it Properly** - fund the assumptions of the 1998 SDR properly to maintain both expeditionary and large scale war fighting capability. This would require significant net spending increases for the Defence Budget financed either by tax rises or from reallocating other public spending.
3. **Roll Back** – depart from the assumptions of the 1998 SDR and replace the expeditionary strategy with one of strict regional defence. This would include contributing to NATO and European defence assets for the purposes of protecting the region from direct attack. Such an option remains a real choice but would be unpopular with allies and would diminish Britain's influence in the world.
4. **Focus on the Wars of Today** – prioritise expeditionary and peacekeeping missions over state-on-state or full-spectrum war fighting capabilities. This would see prioritisation of armoured vehicles, helicopters, strategic lift and intelligence gathering technology over large scale procurement such as fighter jets, aircraft carriers, nuclear capabilities and submarines. With such an approach 'latent deterrence' would diminish and reliance on NATO and EU capabilities would increase.

1.18 There are some tough choices to make. Our armed forces are qualitatively second to none in the world. They do a phenomenal job for our country every day, without challenging the wisdom of their deployment. But they are owed a better standard of leadership from their political masters. It is time for decisions.

2. DEFENCE POLICY

2.1 UK Defence Policy went through a process of evolution after the Cold War ended. The emphasis shifted from the defence of Europe and the UK through the contribution of forces to NATO, to an expeditionary strategy based on the Joint Rapid Reaction Force configured for interventions overseas. The largely welcomed 1998 Strategic Defence Review (SDR) formalised this shift. Subsequent White Papers have essentially confirmed it.

2.2 SDR and subsequent policy statements are based on explicit assumptions which remain relevant. Among these are:

- There is no direct military threat to the UK.
- Major operations are likely to be conducted as part of a coalition with the United States in the lead.
- The Gulf (and subsequently South Asia) will define the range and reach of British expeditionary capability.
- The purpose of the strategic nuclear deterrent is inherent rather than directed deterrence; the UK's capability will be the minimum necessary; and, as a nuclear power, the UK will be exemplary in encouraging multinational disarmament.
- British forces will be agile, highly interoperable and capable of early intervention.
- Moral motivation will be a principal reason for military intervention in addition to direct national interest. The UK is a 'force for good' in the world.

2.3 There are also implicit assumptions such as:

- Capacity for military intervention is a way of asserting international influence and a 'strong suit' for the UK.
- Influence over the behaviour of the US through early military contribution to interventions is a way of shaping the global security environment in the interests of the UK. The UK-US relationship is fundamental to UK's security policy.
- The UK needs strategically significant intervention forces to achieve this influence. The necessary significance entails a high degree of operational autonomy and this is a defining factor in deciding the scale and capabilities of UK forces.
- Influence is best effected through a contribution at the beginning of a campaign implying a high degree of reactivity, proactivity, and agility. The UK's system of governance with a powerful executive aids proactivity.

- The ability to be a framework nation for smaller interventions or for elements of a larger campaign, particularly in a European context, also contributes to influence.
- Long term ground commitment is to be avoided. There are other nations more appropriately configured to undertake 'garrison' tasks.

2.4 But recent operations have called a number of these assumptions into question. Issues that need to be addressed in the evolution of UK defence policy will include:

- Public lack of confidence in the Government's ability to make sound judgements in the use of military forces for intervention which has resulted from the Iraq War.
- Resultant pressure and initiatives for constitutional change which form current debate over war powers. (Constraints on the proactive use of military force would contradict the premise that early engagement brings influence.)
- Lack of public and political will for ground interventions in the future particularly where these might entail legal and moral responsibility for long term commitment.
- Affordability and the matter of funding current operations. (Although Government contends that these are funded centrally and not from the defence budget, this does not address the longer term implications of commitments such as: the transfer of Urgent Operational Requirements (UORs) into permanent service; attrition of morale and problems of retention; and the incorporation of longer standing theatre commitments into the defence budget. Rising unit costs require hard balance of investment decisions over capability priorities for the future. A worsening economic situation will put greater pressure on the defence budget.)
- The conundrum of funding the current pattern of principally ground operations while there is public and political reluctance to support operations of this sort in the future.
- The nature of the US-UK relationship and, in particular, the question of UK's influence over US behaviour bearing in mind the perception that this was not manifest in the planning and execution of the Iraq War.
- Public perception of the relationship between overseas intervention and asymmetric attack in the form of terrorism at home.
- The undermining of international influence if there are insufficient funds to maintain autonomous operational capability.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE ARMED FORCES

- 3.1 The UK has a long history of professional armed forces. Conscription was introduced in both World Wars and National Service endured until the 1960s but the national culture is not influenced by the concept of the citizen army or of total defence as found in the Scandinavian models. There are a number of specifically British features of this approach.
- 3.2 The British public holds the Armed Forces in high esteem but does not claim ownership as in the US and other Western democracies. Together with a detached affection there is a broad view that the forces are paid to do a job which they have volunteered to do and can be expected to bear a certain amount of risk to life and limb.
- 3.3 That view depends on acceptance that government decision to commit military force have been made wisely and in the national interest. Operations in the former Yugoslavia and in Kosovo in particular raised some questions as to government's ability to make the right decisions but intervention in Sierra Leone was generally approved. The public distinguishes the Armed Forces from government in criticism of military intervention. It continues to respect the former.
- 3.4 There is concern that this British model of the relationship between society and the armed forces is changing including:
 - The view that the public's understanding of the military has deteriorated with the abolition of conscription, the reduction in size of the Armed Forces and of the reserves in particular, and a restructuring of the Army that has weakened geographical associations. (On the other hand 24 hour media coverage has greatly enhanced public awareness and understanding of the military and of the tasks they are asked to perform.)
 - The view that the nation is not sufficiently appreciative of the Armed Forces particularly when units return from operations. (A contrary view is that the approach of the British public is consistent with a detached affection for the services. It should be noted that the British Armed Forces have a very high profile in major public events such as the State Opening of Parliament and in ceremonial events such as the Trooping of the Colour.)
 - The view that the military should have a higher profile achieved through the wearing of uniforms in public. (There is a contrary view that the UK's culture of shunning the public display of military features except in specific ceremonial circumstances remains as appropriate as ever.)

4. DELIVERING MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

- 4.1 Military effectiveness is measured by the Armed Forces' ability to achieve success across the spectrum of operations – from non-combat humanitarian relief missions to high intensity conflict. It is the latter which is the most demanding and success depends upon the ability to generate and deploy fighting power. In British Defence Doctrine⁵, fighting power comprises three components: the Conceptual, the Physical and the Moral.
- 4.2 The Conceptual component relates to the thinking which enables the Armed Forces to fight; this is derived from military doctrine and concepts, and underpinned by the Principles of War. The Physical component refers to the generation and development of the means with which to fight – manpower, equipment and the support which facilitates preparedness and sustainability. The Moral⁶ component is concerned with creating the will to fight and depends on individual and collective motivation, strong leadership and competent management.
- 4.3 Of the three components, the Conceptual is least at risk. The UK has a sound doctrinal base and rigorous process for review and updating. All UK doctrine sits within a hierarchy at the top of which is British Defence Doctrine and from which all single service doctrine is derived. In addition, the Armed Forces have a comprehensive command and staff training system which aims to develop the critical and conceptual reasoning abilities in personnel. Such a system is necessary to ensure that individuals do not become dogmatic in their application of doctrine.
- 4.4 There are, at present, many pressures on the Physical component. Since 2001, the Armed Forces have been operating at levels that exceed the MoD's Planning Assumptions⁷, and are not resourced adequately to meet their commitments. While the marginal cost of operations (including Urgent Operational Requirements) is met from the contingency fund, the enduring nature and tempo of current operations is taking its toll on equipment (which is reaching the end of its life earlier than expected as a result of high usage rates), stocks (which are depleting rapidly) and capability (as units are unable to train for other tasks). General Sir Richard Dannatt said in 2006 the Armed Forces are 'running hot'⁸. Things have certainly not improved since then. The Equipment Plan has been estimated as being underfunded by £15Bn over its ten year period⁹ and the MoD faces the dilemma of getting the short-term versus long-term balance correct – should the funds be spent on armoured vehicles that the Army needs now and will likely need for at least the next five years or should they be spent on maintaining an anti-submarine warfare capability that we do not need right now but may need in fifteen years' time?
- 4.5 In the face of tough funding decisions, it is invariably the people-focused programmes and policies that suffer and this puts the moral component at risk. For years, successive Governments have traded on the goodwill and 'can do' attitude of the Armed Forces to compensate for shortcomings in equipment and support. Motivation to get the job done is still high and that 'can do' attitude remains but Continuous Attitude Surveys¹⁰ show that there are areas, particularly those relating

to family life, where many military personnel feel that they are getting a raw deal. Though there is little evidence that dissatisfaction in these areas is creating a widespread recruitment crisis, manpower shortages exist in so called 'pinchpoint trades' in all three Services which cause harmony guidelines¹¹ to be routinely breached for the personnel serving in those trades. Voluntary outflow rates are beginning to edge upwards in some specialisations¹² which compounds the manpower shortages. Many of these personnel and welfare issues are swept up in debates about the Military Covenant and it follows that failure to uphold the Military Covenant adversely impacts on the moral component and therefore eventually will degrade the ability to generate, deploy and sustain fighting power.

5. THE MILITARY COVENANT

- 5.1 The 'Military Covenant' was first described in 2000 in Army Doctrine Publication 5 (ADP5) entitled 'Soldiering: the Military Covenant'¹³. The document details the moral basis for what the Army does, explaining how 'unlimited liability' makes soldiering a unique activity and clarifying what soldiers should expect in return for forfeiting some of their civil liberties.
- 5.2 Soldiers will be called upon to make personal sacrifices – including the ultimate sacrifice – in the service of the nation. In putting the needs of the nation and the Army before their own, they forego some of the rights enjoyed by those outside the Armed Forces. In return, British soldiers must always be able to expect fair treatment, to be valued and respected as individuals, and that they (and their families) will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service. In the same way the unique nature of military land operations means that the Army differs from all other institutions, and must be sustained and provided for accordingly by the nation. This mutual obligation forms the Military Covenant between the nation, the Army and each individual soldier; an unbreakable common bond of identity, loyalty and responsibility which has sustained the Army and its soldiers throughout its history.'
- 5.3 As currently defined, the term 'Military Covenant' actually applies only to the Army. The wording in ADP5 stresses that it is the unique nature of land operations which sets the Army apart from all other institutions and posits that it is this difference that requires that the Army be sustained and provided for by the nation. The Military Covenant is not articulated in Navy, Air Force or Tri-Service documents and there has been no indication from the MoD that there is any intention of formally extending the Covenant to apply to all three Services. However, most people would recognise that the principle of the Covenant applies to personnel in all three Services and Ministers have frequently used the term in the context of tri-Service issues¹⁴. Soldiers, sailors and airmen have different roles but they have all undertaken a commitment to serve their nation, they have all forfeited personal freedoms and ultimately they all carry the burden of 'unlimited liability'. Thus, it is reasonable that all servicemen, irrespective of the colour of their uniform, should expect the same level of support from the government and the public.
- 5.4 The term 'covenant' is defined variously as a 'compact'¹⁵ or 'bargain'¹⁶, 'a binding agreement'¹⁷ or a 'contract'¹⁸. All of these definitions imply an arrangement that is knowingly entered into by two or more parties. However, while the terms and conditions of service constitute a legal and explicit agreement between the government and the individual (with entitlements and obligations often being defined in the Armed Forces Acts), the Military Covenant is an implicit contract based purely on expectations. Though there may be a moral requirement to honour the terms of the Covenant, there is no legal requirement to do so.
- 5.5 The Government's recent command paper on forces welfare, "The Nation's Commitment"¹⁹ was widely welcomed by the British Legion and across the political

divide. The paper contains some good proposals on access to public services for the armed forces, for whom unavoidably high mobility remains a challenge. It also proposes an improved compensation package for injured soldiers. Of course the Government has raised expectations with these proposals, and it remains to be seen whether it can deliver.

- 5.6 There remain difficulties with Defence Medical Services both Regular and Reserve, which provide first line care to those injured on operations. The Territorial Army has provided over half of the medical commitment in Afghanistan and Iraq and the HCDC recommended that the MoD takes care to ensure that recruitment and retention remains buoyant and that the Reserve forces do not end up overstretched.²⁰ In the Regular forces, there are considerable shortfalls in several clinical specialisations which necessitate greater reliance on Reserve personnel and contractors.²¹ In a Memorandum²² submitted in April 2008 to the HCDC inquiry into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces, the British Medical Association reported that ‘there remains a shortfall of 47% in fully trained, deployable doctors. The deficits in trained strength are felt most in crucial specialties such as surgery (50% shortfall), general medicine (45% shortfall), psychiatry (55% shortfall) and rehabilitation medicine (58% shortfall).’ The BMA warned that the undermanning of DMS doctors is of real concern and increases reliance on reservists who are already under pressure not only from the impact of operational deployments but also from their employers. This is an issue which needs to be taken seriously to ensure that the excellent standards of medical care provided by DMS staff can be maintained.
- 5.7 Meanwhile the issue of accommodation remains as acute as ever. The recent paper contained no new commitments to speed up the accommodation modernisation programme. It is therefore important to consider this issue as it has a direct impact on retention, and therefore becomes an issue of national interest, not solely one of welfare.
- 5.8 The appalling state of a significant proportion of Service-provided accommodation is the result of decades of under-investment by successive governments. It is also indicative of priorities set by Service Chiefs of Staff and senior commanders as evidenced by the variation in the state of accommodation between the Services; it is generally the Army estate which is in the worst condition. The Government is making some headway with its refurbishment and building programme but the task is huge – there are at present 47,000 family houses and 110,000 single living accommodation spaces in the UK alone²³.
- 5.9 Service accommodation is assessed against a four-tier grading system where one is the highest standard and four is the lowest. Almost 60% of the long-term Service Families Accommodation (SFA) requirement for the UK is now classed as ‘Standard 1 for condition’ but various environmental factors mean that only 18% is ‘Grade 1 for Charges’.²⁴ Of the 19,000 houses that remain below Standard 1 for condition, 138 are at Standard 4 and a further 2,000 are at Standard 3. These properties typically require new kitchens and bathrooms, rewiring, new plumbing and insulation and may be in poor decorative order.²⁵ The Public Accounts Committee recommended that priority

should be given to Standard 4 followed by Standard 3 (irrespective of location) and that no property be allowed to deteriorate to Standard 4.

- 5.10 At the end of June 2007 less than 25% of worldwide Single Living Accommodation was Grade 1 with half remaining at Grade 4.²⁶ At the current rate of progress and assuming there is no further deterioration of existing stock, the number of SLA bedspaces at Grade 1 will be around 75,000 by the end of 2012-13 which will leave approximately 35,000 bedspaces below standard.²⁷ In September 2007, the MoD announced an extra £80M for Phase 2 of the Single Living Accommodation Modernisation Programme which would allow an additional 1350 new bedspaces to be built.²⁸ The Armed Forces Pay Review Body stated that the latest forecasts suggested that by 2018 53% of SLA will be Grade 1. In its response to the HCDC's report into the Work of Defence Estates, the MoD stated that the latest figures showed that 45% of SLA will be of a good (Grade 1 or 2 for charge) standard by the end of 2007/08 and 50% by end 2008/09.²⁹
- 5.11 It is clearly desirable that the pace of modernisation of Service-provided accommodation be accelerated. As part of the CSR settlement, funds from the disposal of Chelsea Barracks were ringfenced for improvements on accommodation.³⁰ Receipts from future sales of defence estate should similarly be ploughed back in to the refurbishment programme.
- 5.12 Many Service personnel find it difficult to buy their own homes or secure social housing. The Government has made efforts to address the former issue by granting service personnel in London, the South East and East of England Key Worker Living status.³¹ When the Housing and Regeneration Bill 2008 becomes statute, the legislation regarding the requirement for a local connection in order to access social housing will be removed which will give Service and ex-Service personnel the same access to social housing as civilians. This is a welcome change but, until it becomes law, the Government should encourage local authorities to ensure that Service personnel are afforded appropriate priority.
- 5.13 The debate on the military covenant must move beyond moral considerations and due heed must be paid to the fact that failure to honour the Covenant will ultimately result in an inability to generate, deploy and sustain military fighting power. Retention issues are already beginning to emerge in certain trades and, although recruitment is buoyant, meeting recruitment targets will not compensate for the loss of experienced personnel who choose to leave before they have to. Making explicit the link between the Covenant and the capability of our Armed Forces should naturally lead to some consideration of what the Armed Forces are for. What do we want them to do? How should they be used? Are we willing to continue to meet the costs – in blood and treasure – of an interventionist foreign policy?

6. A NEW STRATEGIC SECURITY AND DEFENCE REVIEW

- 6.1 The case for a new strategic defence and security review is compelling. This need not mean the principles, concepts and objectives of the 1998 SDR must be abandoned. But the world of 2008 is very different to that of 1998. We need to take some tough choices:
- 6.2 The first tough choice is about Britain's role in the world. Taking part in aggressive war fighting operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq has stretched our armed forces to the limit. British forces have fought these 'wars of choice' to a great extent on behalf of US foreign policy objectives. In neither case could Britain have gone it alone. We can still use our economic influence or our role in international organisations, or take part in military interventions as part of a coalition. But the ability to operate independently, diplomatically or militarily, and to achieve significant geopolitical objectives no longer exists. If Britain wishes to remain influential, it can only do so by choosing and integrating its strategies with allies who share the same goal.
- 6.3 The resistance in the UK to military integration with European partners is born of an outdated nationalism. It must be challenged. Integration in Europe does not mean the creation of a European Army. But common procurement, interoperability and force specialisation can be achieved if the political will exists to do so. I return to these issues later.
- 6.4 The second tough choice is about what 'expeditions' British forces should undertake; the partners with whom we could and should undertake such missions; and the equipment which our forces will need. The assumptions which underpinned the expeditionary strategy of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review must be revisited in the light of experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. This includes reassessing not only the Defence Planning Assumptions, which set out the scale of operations our armed forces are capable of undertaking, but also the equipment that ought to be prioritised for their use in future.
- 6.5 The deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan are widely accepted now to be unsustainable simultaneously. Senior officers have admitted as much.³² Withdrawal from Iraq will not eliminate overstretch. This is because the deployment in Afghanistan is now an enduring operation of a scale and type unforeseen by the 1998 SDR.
- 6.6 The 1998 SDR was predicated on fighting one "relatively short war-fighting deployment" and one "enduring non-war fighting operation"³³. Any future review must therefore address the consequences of a high-tempo, long-term deployment like Afghanistan and how our forces can achieve the strategic endurance necessary to stay the course.

- 6.7 The SDR also foresaw deployment on smaller scale peace-keeping missions. The recent deployment to Kosovo this year stretched the Army to its absolute limits,³⁴ with the recent MoD annual report showing that only half of war-fighting units are available for operations.³⁵ The UK has been able to contribute very little of substance to the UN mission in Darfur, despite the political and public pressure to do so. The SDR assumptions that we could contribute to such smaller scale operations is hardly valid.
- 6.8 Given that the MoD finds its long-term equipment plan in dire straits, under-funded and uncertain, some argue that the principle focus of a defence review ought to be the equipment plan itself. At bare minimum, a review must better match resources and capabilities to the realities of our current commitments.
- 6.9 The dependence on Urgent Operational Requirements (UOR) is indispensable in the short-term, but long-term reliance will undermine industrial strategy as well as the strategic dimension of the long-term equipment plan and the challenge of long-term maintenance. UORs and other operational costs are funded through the Treasury contingency fund. But this is not a long-term solution. Thus far, the cost of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 is around £10bn³⁶. A review is necessary to get the industrial and procurement strategy back on a more realistic track.
- 6.10 It is also clear, following the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, that any review must urgently consider Britain's response to so-called "operations of choice". Such operations arguably do not represent a response to a "direct threat" in the pre-9/11 sense, but are claimed to be in the wider national interest, and contribute to Britain's role as "a force for good in the world".
- 6.11 Britain's armed forces will always be prepared to stretch beyond formal requirements. But if too much is asked for too long we put national security at risk. There must be a mechanism for weighing up the merits of an operation against the dangers of overstretch, or even weighing up the benefits of one intervention against another. We must have robust and clear criteria for identifying our red lines. Otherwise, what is the point of setting strategic Defence Planning Assumptions only for them to be spectacularly surpassed?
- 6.12 The importance of the UK-US military relationship is central to the assumptions of the 1998 SDR, but any future review must contain a hard-headed assessment of how far that relationship has led to over-commitment of British forces. Given the effect of the Iraq war on overstretch, and the still controversial origins of Britain's involvement in that conflict, a first step must be a full inquiry into the workings of government both before and after the decision to go to war. It is in the interests of the transatlantic relationship in the long term that Britain is open and transparent with the US and the British people about the kind of contribution can make.
- 6.13 A second area for re-appraisal is European defence cooperation. There are significant possibilities for developing and pooling European military capabilities through the

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Its development should be a diplomatic priority for the UK.

- 6.14 The argument over whether ESDP would undermine NATO is largely settled. The US now feels sure enough of ESDP's potential to improve NATO's capabilities that it has thrown its weight behind the policy. The former US Ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland recently said, "Europe needs, the United States needs, NATO needs, the democratic world needs – a stronger, more capable European defense capacity. An ESDP with only soft power is not enough."³⁷
- 6.15 With Nicolas Sarkozy repositioning France and contemplating rejoining the NATO command structure, Britain has both a responsibility and an opportunity, to shape and lead the future of European defence cooperation.
- 6.16 According to Nick Witney, former Chief Executive for the European Defence Agency, "Europeans have no choice but to pool their efforts and resources."³⁸ In a recent paper for the European Council on Foreign Relations he wrote that pooling resources "should cover joint funding of defence research, armaments co-operations, sharing maintenance of common equipments, creating more multi-national forces and even sharing defence roles."
- 6.17 Though Witney is scathing about the lack of progress made by Europeans in this field over the last ten years, he believes that by pooling resources more effectively, defence budgets need not be hiked. European defence capability is "not at bottom a problem of money. In 2006, total defence spending within the EU amounted to almost one quarter of global defence expenditure. But the money has been spent on Cold War-style militaries, rather than the modern, expeditionary forces that ESDP, and indeed NATO, now needs. And with Member States persisting in trying to "go it alone", duplication further reduces the yield on investment."³⁹
- 6.18 Our present Government is shy of leadership on the issue of European defence. Meanwhile the ideological opposition of the Conservatives to the European Union leaves them at odds with the both American and French leadership on defence cooperation.
- 6.19 The question of the future of Britain's nuclear deterrent must also be considered in any serious strategic defence review. Renewing the Trident deterrent to which Government has already made an unnecessarily early commitment, has a significant budgetary impact. The 2010 Non-Proliferation Conference could change the assumptions upon which a 'minimum deterrent' would be based.
- 6.20 In truth, the key questions for a defence review are straightforward: What are our foreign policy objectives? What defence capability is required to meet those objectives? How much should we spend on our armed forces? What do we want from them? How should they work with our allies?

7. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

7.1 Carry on Regardless

- 7.1.1 Despite the pressing need for a strategic reappraisal of defence policy, the Government says it has no plans to embark on such a review and appears content to base current policy on the 1998 SDR and subsequent white papers.
- 7.1.2 Even under a scenario in which the UK is committed only to Afghanistan, the 1998 SDR assumptions do not provide for long-term deployment of the kind that is being sustained in Afghanistan. In the current climate, with overstretch and retention problems and a lack of key equipment, there must be questions about the sustainability of the Afghanistan operation. It is essential that the commitment there does not prejudice or undermine the integrity of overall defence strategy.
- 7.1.3 There is an equipment budget shortfall of somewhere between £7bn - £15bn, and a shortfall over the next two years of around £2bn. There is now an almost complete lack of strategic planning. The Government has not yet issued its follow-up to the Defence Industrial Strategy. While orders go ahead for new aircraft carriers, desperately needed new helicopters are in short supply.
- 7.1.4 Orders to make up for run-down vehicles or vehicles which the forces are lacking will continue to be bought according to UORs, which further undermines strategic planning of future equipment and creates further uncertainty for industry. It seems likely that the results of overstretch, human and equipment, will worsen. The deficit in the equipment budget can only worsen over the medium-to-long term, such is the high level of inflation linked with hi-tech defence procurements.
- 7.1.5 Government plans for new vehicles for the Army - the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) – may well be delayed or cut. Accommodation modernisation will continue at the same, slow pace. The symptoms of overstretch will persist.
- 7.1.6 The dangers of continuing in this vein are self-evident. There is unlikely to be any sudden collapse in capability - such is the professionalism and commitment of our Armed Forces – but we will surely witness a slow decline in that capability. Such a decline would not only diminish our national security, it would undermine the principles on which our defence policy has been based and lead to a diminution in Britain's standing and influence in the world.

7.2 Do Everything and Do It Properly

- 7.2.1 If the Government were determined to make the aims and objectives of the 1998 SDR a reality, there would be no alternative but to fund a substantial increase in defence spending. There would need to be an accompanying review of some form to re-state and up-date the current Defence Planning Assumptions. But the

maintenance of both an expeditionary and “state-on-state” capability long into the future would not come cheaply.

- 7.2.2 Funding would need to be increased to cover the equipment budget deficit of £15bn, and there would need to be significant short-term budget hikes. Long-term commitment to retaining the variety of capabilities and platforms necessary could be expected to grow more expensive as defence equipment inflation continues to rise.
- 7.2.3 The Government would need to speed up the modernisation and refurbishment of accommodation. In order to reduce concern over manning pinch-points, there would need to be further financial inducements to encourage personnel to stay on board. Given the particular demands of a long-term commitment in Afghanistan, there would be a need to increase the size of the Army to add further infantry battalions.
- 7.2.4 Most significantly, there would need to be increased expenditure on vehicles and helicopters for Afghanistan. In summer 2007, the Defence Committee described helicopter operations as “not sustainable at the present intensity”.⁴⁰ That extra commitment would need to be borne without affecting the long-term equipment plan. The reliance on Urgent Operational Requirements would need to be reduced by bringing in the FRES programme more quickly.
- 7.2.5 Assuming that a reinvigoration of the 1998 SDR would leave Britain with the “go it alone” approach to large scale platforms such as Eurofighter Typhoon, aircraft carriers, tactical air-lift and the joint-strike fighter, further funding would need to be found to bring all of these programmes in on time without sacrificing vehicle and helicopter capability. Arguably a fully resourced 1998 SDR approach should also provide extra capability to lend to missions such as the UN mission in Darfur.
- 7.2.6 It is clear that to deliver the 1998 SDR properly and to resource operations in Afghanistan, as well as other peace enforcement missions, would require significant defence spending increases. These increases in spending would need to be financed either by tax rises or be found elsewhere from public spending. It is difficult to see how either of these would be palatable.

7.3 Roll Back

- 7.3.1 Britain could opt for a radical departure from the 1998 SDR and turn its back on the capability for expeditionary warfare. It could be argued that Britain does not need to prepare for any other eventuality than to meet significant “state-on-state” threats, no matter how difficult to identify or predict.
- 7.3.2 Indeed, an argument can be had over the success of the expeditionary deployments of which Britain has been part. Have they contributed sufficiently to the national interest and to British security to have been worth the sacrifice? Are Britain’s best interests sufficiently well-served by the funding and operation of an expeditionary strategy? A defence review would need to answer these questions.

- 7.3.3 Britain would have to be explicit that it would not join in expeditionary wars, except perhaps in circumstances when there was a direct threat to national security. There would be a scaling back of operations in Afghanistan and other peace enforcement roles that were not deemed absolutely crucial to the national interest. The UK would contribute to NATO and European defence assets only for the purposes of protecting the region in case of direct attack.
- 7.3.4 Key platforms would include fast jets to maintain air superiority and naval assets to secure territorial waters, including submarines. There would be much less emphasis on a highly mobile, swiftly deployable army, and less need for helicopters and armoured vehicles. The UK would build its defence policy around defending against potential aggressors. Such a strategy could be funded from current defence spending, perhaps even with savings in the long-term but would run against Britain's recent military transformation. It would be difficult to justify to allies, not least with the United States.
- 7.3.5 To row back now from the kind of commitments we have made to NATO in Afghanistan would be unpopular among allies and might even hasten the demise of NATO. The 1998 SDR concluded that such an option represented "a real choice, but not one the Government could recommend for Britain".⁴¹ That view almost certainly retains the majority backing of the House of Commons, but in the light of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the case for an active role for Britain in the world is perhaps not as widely supported by the public as it once was.

7.4 Focus on the Wars of Today

- 7.4.1 A final option would be to make a decisive move towards equipping our armed forces for operations such as that in Afghanistan and other expeditionary peacekeeping missions, and to prioritise such a strategy over the maintenance of "state-on-state" war-fighting capability. Sir Rupert Smith has argued in his book "The Utility of Force", that "interstate industrial war" has now been replaced by the phenomenon of "wars among the people". The means, he argues, to fight the "new" kind of war is very different and states have not yet fully realised the profound impact this should have on the configuration of their forces.
- 7.4.2 Sir Richard Dannatt has publicly opposed this view saying that, "Defence is about an insurance policy as well as the ability to conduct current operations – and we do not throw away our home insurance policies just because crime statistics are down in our neighbourhood."⁴² Dannatt insists that as far as the Army is concerned it must be able to do both kinds of war-fighting.
- 7.4.3 There is a spectrum of views over how far the armed forces should be configured for "wars among the people" at the price of major combat operations. It needs to be resolved in one way or another by a new review.
- 7.4.4 A defence review that were to take this perspective might prioritise equipment such as armoured vehicles, helicopters, strategic lift, intelligence gathering technology, perhaps even more infantry, and come at the expense of those big-ticket items such

as the Typhoon, aircraft carriers, the higher-specification aspects of FRES and the Joint Strike Fighter.

- 7.4.5 One argument against such a radical move is that Britain would give up not just the capability to fight and defend itself in a 'state on state' confrontation but would also lose a certain "latent deterrence" that protects Britain simply through having but not necessarily using the capability. Others, like Sir Richard Dannatt, point to the impossibility of predicting the nature of future wars.
- 7.4.6 An option for the preservation of continuing major combat capability would be through deeper collaboration and sharing of assets with NATO and ESDP allies in order to continue to have aircraft carriers, fast jets etc. Such an approach might mean a similar or greater spending in the short-term but might produce significant savings over the long term.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The 1998 SDR was widely welcomed but it has come loose from its moorings. Its assumptions and aspirations are not grounded in the reality of Iraq and Afghanistan. If Britain needs to have the platforms necessary to fight in Afghanistan for the long-run as well as maintaining serious capability to insure against the re-emergence of a strategic threat to NATO and Europe, we will surely have to pay for it.
- 8.2 Alternatively Britain's military capability will suffer a long and painful decline and the aspirations of the 1998 SDR will look more and more dated and outlandish. The worst of all options is to muddle through and hope the problem disappears.
- 8.3 The option to fall back on an ultra-minimalist defence position is not appealing. It goes against Britain's history, against generations of expertise, experience and professionalism. There is something to be said for a far tougher realism about what interventions can achieve and for how long they should be undertaken, but it is not in our interests to retreat from the world.
- 8.4 The option to focus the fight on "the wars of today" demands consideration. Although it has been criticised as the equivalent of abandoning an insurance policy, it remains the most urgent critique of our performance in Afghanistan. How can Britain be committed to Afghanistan yet lack enough helicopters to do the job properly? What use is the expensive insurance policy of aircraft carriers and a fleet of fast-jets if Britain were to fail in Afghanistan because our soldiers were not adequately equipped for that very different task? Can we afford to lose the war of today by preparing for another that may never happen? These are all fundamental questions requiring fundamental answers.
- 8.5 The starting premise of this paper was that there is little distinction between honouring the military covenant and military effectiveness. They go hand in hand. But the state of the covenant reveals a deeper malaise. Our armed forces are qualitatively second to none in the world. They do a phenomenal job for our country every day, without challenging the wisdom of their deployment. But they are owed a better standard of leadership from their political masters. It is time for decisions.
- 8.6 I have not sought to provide answers to what are difficult questions. Before we can properly construct a defence policy for the 21st century, we need a debate nationally about our political objectives. The certainties of the Cold War have long since evaporated, although in the Caucasus as we have seen spheres of influence are still attractive to major powers. The success of intervention in Sierra Leone and our ill conceived adventures in Iraq tell different stories. We need a new narrative.

APPENDIX

Executive Summary & Key Proposals From *Our Nation's Duty*

December 2007 (Liberal Democrat Proposals for Armed Forces Welfare)

Britain's Armed Forces are second to none in the world for their commitment, bravery and professionalism. Without them, our country would have a fraction of the influence it holds on the world stage today. Whether they are deployed in controversial or widely supported operations, they give their utmost for their country and are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice without asking questions.

For this, our servicemen and women receive the vocal support of the Government and opposition parties, and there is rightly a strong sense of national pride in our Armed Forces. They are the embodiment of those British values of duty, active citizenship and responsibility of which Prime Minister Gordon Brown so often talks. But look behind recent headlines and there is a mismatch between this rhetoric and the reality of daily life for our servicemen and women. Whether it is shoddy housing, faulty equipment, the strains of overstretch, the sufferings of bereaved families waiting for long-delayed inquests, low pay or paltry compensation, there is a growing sense that the Government is failing our Armed Forces.

The Liberal Democrats have long supported a fair deal for the Forces. We recognise that signing up to serve your country is a unique vocation. That is why we have campaigned over the years for a better package for servicemen and women and their families. We have campaigned for a fair deal for Ghurkhas, we championed the rights of soldiers who were unfairly treated by the Government's 'Manning Control' policy, and we have run a successful veterans' medal campaign across the country.

Today, however, there is a heightened sense of urgency over the state of our Armed Forces. There has been a wave of unprecedented outcries from senior military figures, both serving and retired. The Royal British Legion, not known for outspoken criticism of government, has launched a public campaign called "Honour the Covenant", highlighting issues such as compensation, health care and treatment of veterans.

It is clear that the present situation is unacceptable and untenable. We are witnessing a dangerous combination of critical overstretch, brought on by fighting two major operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the cumulative effects of decades of failure by Labour and Conservative Governments to invest in the quality of care and fair treatment that service personnel deserve.

In declaring its intention to publish a white paper on forces' welfare Labour has at last recognised that it must do better. We await the MoD proposals with interest and hope that they are serious in intent. Yet we are concerned by the Government's refusal to look at the strategic picture. It is almost a decade since the 1998 Strategic comprehensive defence review. We believe that overstretch and its associated welfare problems are now so serious that they can only be answered by a new Defence Review. This review must

take place alongside a serious public debate about what we expect of our Armed Forces. We should not have to rely on our Armed Forces to raise concerns over their treatment. Government and Parliament should have the courage to tackle these issues head on.

Of course, we cannot wait for the results of a new Strategic Defence Review to provide a better deal for our servicemen and women. We believe that there are a number of solutions that can be set in train immediately. In this paper, we set out the Liberal Democrat analysis and provide key recommendations for alleviating some of the worst problems faced by today's Armed Forces.

Key Proposals:

- **Complete the withdrawal from Iraq.** Our armed forces are critically overstretched. The Government is now committed to a partial withdrawal from Iraq, but we are concerned that it is being undertaken too slowly and with too much concern for political considerations in Washington. Whilst we understand and support the need for future training and mentoring of Iraqi troops, we remain unconvinced that it requires such a large deployment. The Government must quicken the pace of British forces' withdrawal from Iraq. This is no cure-all for current problems, but it will provide some relief to the problems of overstretch.
- **Renewing the political and military covenant.** Learning from the failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, political parties should renew the nation's covenant with the Armed Forces by assuring them that we will not commit to any further interventions without providing the necessary resources, manpower and equipment that ensures our personnel are secure in the commitment.
- **A New Strategic Defence Review.** The Government should undertake a new Strategic Defence Review that revises and updates the assumptions of the 1998 Review based on changed circumstances and threats. We believe that personnel issues can no longer be tagged on to a Strategic Defence Review as an afterthought. They must be central to the conclusions of a future review. The Strategic Defence Review must become a regular review, as is the case in the United States with its Quadrennial Defence Review. We propose that a Strategic Defence Review be commenced six months after every General Election so that each new Government clearly communicates its defence policy, fully assesses how to match future operations with capabilities and can be held accountable on that basis.

The Government should make greater efforts to honour its obligations under the military covenant:

- **A written covenant for all three services.** We believe that the largely unwritten military covenant must be bolstered by real entitlements and greater public scrutiny of how far the government is meeting those entitlements.
- **Greater scrutiny of forces' welfare spending.** Commitments should be scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee and have strict benchmarking to enable effective

monitoring. For too long, bloated and uncontrolled procurement projects have eaten away into basic provision of decent homes for our servicemen and women.

- **Set up a Military Covenant Committee** Such a committee could perhaps be established in the House of Lords and be charged with conducting an annual review of the state of the military covenant. As a cross-party body it would be well-placed to provide credible recommendations drawing on the expertise and experience of its members.

The Government should improve the life-long provision of mental and physical health care for Service personnel and their families:

- **Review Armed Forces' health.** The Government should commission a full review of the state of Armed Forces Health. This should incorporate physical and psychological health and make recommendations for how to address the current failings in health care provisions.
- **Military-only wards.** Where serving personnel are being treated the Government should consider more special military-only wards to provide treatment to injured personnel within a military environment. This will help injured personnel to recover and also ease the transition from service to civilian life.
- **Sustained mental health support.** Proper support must be offered to troops returning from service including appropriate medical care and counselling.⁴³ More should be done to ensure post-conflict de-briefing and counselling for Service members and towards creating an environment in which issues can be addressed openly. Measures should be put in place to monitor the mental health of personnel over a longer period, as the impact of PTSD often emerges after a few, if not many, years.
- **Greater availability of information on medical and mental health care.** Increasing the amount of information available to local medical centres will help ensure that GPs and medical staff are fully aware of the needs of service personnel and that top level measures filter down to reach the people in surgeries and clinics across the country.

The Government should invest substantially more in improving armed forces accommodation:

- **Ring-fenced housing budget.** Spending on welfare and accommodation improvements should be ring-fenced within the defence budget to guarantee that the years of neglect are remedied rapidly.
- **Faster upgrade of service accommodation.** The programme of upgrading Single Living and Family Accommodation units must gather pace as a matter of urgency. The Government should use proceeds from the cancellation of the unnecessary third tranche of the Typhoon fighter jet and invest this in the programme for modernisation of housing.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Memorandum from the Ministry of Defence to the House of Commons Defence Committee investigation into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/memo/recruit/rr04.pdf>
- ² 14th Report of House of Commons Defence Committee: "Recruiting and retaining Armed Forces Personnel", 15 July, 2008 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/424/424.pdf>
- ³ General Sir Mike Jackson, Richard Dimbleby Lecture, December 2006
- ⁴ Liberal Democrat Policy Paper 86, Security and Liberty in a Globalised World, (2008) p31 para 8.1.5
- ⁵ British Defence Doctrine 2nd Edition dated October 2001
- ⁶ The word 'moral' is used in this context with a specific military doctrinal meaning. Its meaning should not be confused with the standard meaning of 'concerned with goodness or distinction between right and wrong (Concise Oxford Dictionary)' although issues of morality in a conventional sense are relevant to the Moral Component.
- ⁷ Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces (2006), Report by the National Audit Office, para 1.5
- ⁸ Quoted in The Guardian, September 4th 2006
- ⁹ 'The Underfunded Equipment Programme – Where Now?' in RUSI Defence Systems Vol 9 No3
- ¹⁰ <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/PublicationScheme/SearchPublicationScheme/ContinuousAttitudeSurveysResultsForServicePersonnel.htm> accessed 26 May 2008
- ¹¹ Each service has harmony guidelines which lay down the amount of time that it is acceptable for personnel to spend away from their families and the interval that units should enjoy between operational tours
- ¹² Memorandum from the Ministry of Defence to the House of Commons Defence Committee investigation into Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/memo/recruit/rr04.pdf>
- ¹³ Soldiering: The Military Covenant, Army Doctrine Publication 5 dated 2000
- ¹⁴ For example Under Secretary of State for Defence, Derek Twigg spoke of the Military Covenant at the Veterans UK 2008 Conference. <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/People/Speeches/MinVet/20080313UkDefenceForum13March2008.htm> and Minister for the Armed Forces, Bob Ainsworth mentioned the Covenant in his response to the launch of the Royal British Legion's 'Honour the Covenant' Campaign. <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/ModWelcomesTheHonourTheCovenantCampaign.htm>
- ¹⁵ Concise Oxford Dictionary
- ¹⁶ Concise Oxford Dictionary
- ¹⁷ Collins Dictionary
- ¹⁸ Collins Dictionary
- ¹⁹ "The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans" Ministry of Defence, July 2008 <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm74/7424/7424.pdf>
- ²⁰ HCDC Medical Care in Armed Forces Seventh Report of Session 07-08 18 Feb 08
- ²¹ Answer to written parliamentary question 158364 Armed Forces: Health Services 29 Oct 07 available at <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.com/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm071029/text/71029w0076.htm#0710313000008>
- ²² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/memo/recruit/ucm1002.htm>
- ²³ National Audit Office Report Managing the Defence Estate: Quality and Sustainability 23 March 2007
- ²⁴ Armed Forces Pay Review Body Thirty-Seventh Report 2008
- ²⁵ House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Managing the Defence Estate Quality and Sustainability Nov 07 at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmpubacc/537/537.pdf>
- ²⁶ Armed Forces Pay Review Body Thirty-Seventh Report 2008
- ²⁷ National Audit Office Report Managing the Defence Estate: Quality and Sustainability 23 March 2007
- ²⁸ A Defence Policy and Business News article available at <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/Extra80MillionForNewArmedForcesAccommodation.htm>
- ²⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee First Special Report: Work of Defence Estates: Government Response to the Committee's Fifteenth Report of Session 2006-2007 dated 23 Nov 07

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- ³⁰ Defence Spending breakdown available at <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation/KeyFactsAboutDefence/DefenceSpending.htm>
- ³¹ <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/PeopleInDefence/FirstSoldierTakesUpKeyWorkerHousing.htm>
- ³² Sir Jock Stirrup, Chief of the Defence Staff, Andrew Marr Show, 13 July, 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/andrew_marr_show/7504076.stm
- ³³ P. 137 Strategic Defence Review, 1998
- ³⁴ "Paper-thin Army as final troops deploy" Daily Telegraph, 29 April, 2008 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1906392/'Paper-thin'-Army-as-final-troops-deployed.html>
- ³⁵ MoD Annual Report 2007/2008 <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/AnnualReports/MODAnnualReports0708/>
- ³⁶ Parliamentary Answer to Michael Ancram, Hansard, 8 July, 2008
- ³⁷ Speech by Vistoria Nuland, US Ambassador to NATO, Paris, 22 February 2008
- ³⁸ Nick Witney, "Noises off: European Defence" European Council on Foreign Relations, 29 July, 2008, http://www.ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_witney_european_defence_cooperation/
- ³⁹ Nick Witney, Re-energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy, European Council on Foreign Relations, July 2008
- ⁴⁰ 13th Report of House of Commons Defence Committee, Operations in Afghanistan, 3 July 2007, p. 5. <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmdfence/408/408.pdf>
- ⁴¹ P.23 Strategic Defence Review
- ⁴² General Sir Richard Dannatt, Speech at RUSI, "The Land Environment – Moving towards 2018", 12 June, 2008
- ⁴³ Campbell, 'Conservative and Labour Governments have failed our armed forces', 2 February 2007